The Effect of Ethnicity and Generation on Cultural Values

Launa Beck
Western Kentucky University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses
Part of the Psychology Commons, and the Race and Ethnicity Commons

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses/742

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses & Specialist Projects by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.
THE EFFECT OF ETHNICITY AND GENERATION ON CULTURAL VALUES

A Thesis

Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Psychology
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Launa Rohrer Beck
August 1999
THE EFFECT OF ETHNICITY AND GENERATION ON CULTURAL VALUES

Date Recommended 6/16/99

Director of Thesis

John O'Connor

Date 7/27/99

Director of Graduate Studies
Acknowledgments

My sincere appreciation is extended to Dr. Sally Kuhlenschmidt (chair) for her patient editing and excellent instruction. Thank you to Dr. Jacqueline Pope-Tarrence and Dr. John O’Connor for lending their experience and expertise. I am grateful to my family and friends for their unconditional support and encouragement for the duration of the project. Particularly, thank you to Brad and Becky Schantz for their sense of humor and their help in preparing the manuscript. I give my deepest gratitude to my husband, Brent, whose unswerving encouragement and love made the completion of this project possible.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of the Literature</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck Value Orientations Model with Alternative Solutions</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANOVA table, Main Effect for Ethnicity on Four Worldviews</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Means and Standard Deviations of Worldviews for Ethnic Groups</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Means and Standard Deviations of Worldviews for Generation Groups</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using an existential perspective, the researcher investigated the world views of 155 people divided first by ethnic group and then (n = 144) by generation. African Americans and White Americans, Baby Boomers and Generation Xers completed the Scale to Assess World Views (Ibrahim & Owen, 1994) at a grocery store in the Midwest. Results indicate significant differences between African Americans and White Americans on the Pessimistic, Traditional, and Here and Now world views but no difference in rank order. Coefficient alphas for the subscales ranged from (.42) to (.67) with an overall value of (.82) for the scale. A confirmatory factor analysis was also calculated for the scale. The potential applications for therapeutic relationships are discussed.
The effect of ethnicity and generation on cultural values

The cultural make-up of the United States population is rapidly changing. From 1980 to 1995, the ratio of minorities to the total population has increased from one in five Americans to one in four (Francese, 1995). At current trends, persons of color will represent 1 in 3 Americans by 2005 (Schreiber, 1998). This change has necessitated increased interactions between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Cultural groups are comprised of people who recognize themselves as a group with “shared ideas, values and assumptions about life” (Brislin, 1990). Unfortunately, miscommunication often occurs between members of different cultural groups. Cultural misunderstandings are not desirable in any situation; however, misunderstandings may be especially detrimental in the work of helping professionals. Understanding the values, ideas, and assumptions esteemed by different groups may facilitate communication in cross-cultural interactions, particularly those within the area of student development, counseling or psychotherapy (Carter, 1990; Ibrahim, 1985).

In today’s rapidly changing society, it is necessary to include cohort (members of the same generation) as an aspect of culture. Given the pace of change, adolescents today may be experiencing a different culture than those who grew up 20 years ago. Examining cultural values of those individuals within the same generation may provide a basis for increased understanding in cross-cultural relationships. The present study represents
an investigation of values held by two ethnic groups: African Americans and White Americans, and the values of Baby Boomers and Generation X cohorts.

Literature Review

Changing U.S. Population

“We are becoming a multicultural, multiracial, multilingual society” (Sue 1991, p. 99). The number of members of nonwhite cultural groups continues to increase in the United States. Between 1990 and 1995, nearly two-thirds of the total population growth occurred among the minority population (Francese, 1995). In 1980 minorities numbered one in five Americans, but by 1998 the ratio has grown to one in four (Schreiber, 1998). With current trends, it is predicted that minorities will represent 55% of the American population by 2050 (Schreiber, 1998).

Because of this diverse population, cross-cultural interactions are increasing. Misunderstandings or conflicts may occur between members of different cultural groups (Triandis, 1975). The Los Angeles riots, the debate over affirmative action, and the recent mistreatment of Blacks by white New York City police officers are examples demonstrating the extreme cost of cultural discord or disputes. Maladaptive cross-cultural interactions may or may not be intentional, may be due to actual or perceived value differences, or may even be prejudicial (Campbell, 1967; Judd & Park, 1993). Cultural discord may possibly lead to a loss in relationships, finances, knowledge, power, or physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. Conversely, cross-cultural relationships may also be facilitated by an increased understanding of values that are expressed through one’s worldview (Pedersen, 1991). While the information gathered in
this study may not be applied to all cross-cultural interactions, data on values would assist various professionals working with diverse cultures to gain understanding of various racial-ethnic groups (Sue, 1991). To this end, the worldviews of various groups are examined in the present study.

The potential harm stemming from these misunderstandings is amplified for one professional group in particular—the therapist. Within a helping relationship, understanding is necessary for attaining the goal of behavior change. However, in the past some minorities have felt that professionals misunderstood them (Migette & Meggart, 1991). Persons from underrepresented groups "frequently feel disowned, devalued, demeaned, [and] disinvited" in therapeutic relationships (p. 137). Such misunderstandings may slow the progress of therapy or may even cause the relationship to dissolve, thereby contributing to "negative racial and ethnic attitudes" (p.137). Successful therapy relies on communication and understanding. To this end, professional training programs seek to develop psychologists and therapists' cultural understanding (Ibrahim, 1999; Lonner & Ibrahim, 1996; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992; D’Andrea & Daniels, 1991). Cultural understanding may be facilitated through an increased awareness of values held by cultural groups. However, before cultural understanding is addressed, it is helpful to examine issues surrounding the definition of culture.

Definition of Culture

Brislin’s (1990) definition of culture offers a more inclusive description of culture. Culture refers to "the widely shared ideas, values, formation and uses of categories, assumptions about life, and goal-directed activities that become unconsciously or subconsciously accepted as ‘right’ or ‘correct’ by people who identify themselves as
members of a society...” (p. 11). In other words, people who recognized themselves as a group with shared “ideas, values and assumptions about life,” are members of a particular culture. The group may be people within the boundaries of a country, or an ethnic group, or a segment of the population such as a social stratum (Brislin, 1990).

Defining culture is a challenge due to the lack of agreement in the literature and the inclusion of multiple definitions and multiple variables. Culture is often a narrow term involving learned behavior that is shared with others in the group (Robertson, 1987). One aspect of understanding culture is to distinguish it from other constructs. Race is a biological classification based on physical and genetic characteristics – for example, Caucasoid, Mongolid and Negroid. Ethnicity is a classification based on shared social and cultural heritage (e.g., Native Americans) (Johnson, 1993, p. 68). Ethnic groups may share a social and cultural heritage but not be of the same race, such as the Jewish community.

In the present study, the time period or generation also distinguishes culture from ethnicity. Often ignored in the literature, generation may be a characteristic of groups that helps define culture as distinct from ethnicity. While ethnic groups may share social and cultural heritage, people raised within a specific time period may also share a unique culture. Entertainment, language, and the sociopolitical climate change rapidly in today’s modern society. Society is changing so rapidly that the youth of 20 years ago have had substantially different life experiences than the youth of the 90’s. Technological change (e.g., the use of the internet) and political revolution (e.g., end of the U.S.S.R.) alone have dramatically altered life possibilities from 20 years ago. Thus, people born within the same generation or cohort may share a unique culture. They may communicate and
share unique values, ideals and beliefs which Brislin describes in his definition of culture (Berger, 1988, p. 127).

Superficial vs. Philosophical Culture

Exploring values of cultural groups has not been the only approach to cultural awareness. In the past, awareness of “cultural differences” meant differences in cooking methods, typical clothing, forms of entertainment, etc. Those aspects traditionally viewed as culture (e.g., food, dress, and music, etc.) are labeled as “Superficial” aspects of culture. The Superficial approach tends to focus on the surface manifestations of culture without understanding the purpose and meaning of such behaviors.

A more recent approach is identified as the “Philosophical” approach. The Philosophical approach is congruent with the concept of values, world views or beliefs described in the definition of culture. Thus, to have a holistic, non-fragmented view of a cultural group, one must understand the values and beliefs that drive the superficial behavior patterns (Jackson & Meadows, 1991). Focusing on the superficial aspects of culture allows one to view a cultural group only in contrast to his or her own group. Such a narrow view of culture does not facilitate increased understanding in cross-cultural relationships. Professionals who concentrate only on the manifested outcomes of a deeper culture have a “fragmented view” of the other culture thus increasing the potential for misunderstandings (Jackson & Meadows, 1991, p. 73).

Context of Therapeutic Relationship

While it is desirable for people to be knowledgeable about cultural beliefs and values when relating in cross-cultural situations, the need is heightened for those interacting within the therapeutic relationship. Along with communication skills, a
cultural knowledge base may facilitate understanding as well as the curative aspects of therapy. At best misunderstandings have no effect; at worst, misunderstandings may cause additional psychological injury or cause the relationship to dissolve. For example, if a client “perceives spiritual phenomena as closely tied to daily functioning, neglect of the client’s spiritual reality may hinder the development of an effective counselor-client relationship” (Jackson & Meadows, 1991, p. 74). The therapist awareness of this value may avoid unnecessary frustrations.

Values Research

The Philosophical approach to understanding culture has centered around values, beliefs and world views. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck’s (1961) theoretical model identifies five Value Orientations each with three choices or “Alternatives.” The five Value Orientations include (a) Human Nature Mode, (b) Person/Nature Modes, (c) Time Sense Mode, (d) Activity Mode, and (e) Social Relations Mode. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck suggested these Value Orientations are existential issues common to all human beings. The three Alternatives within each of the Value Orientations are the common outcomes for all people (see Table 2).

The Intercultural Values Inventory (Kohls, Carter, & Helms, cited in Carter, 1984) is based on Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck’s five Value Orientations and their Alternatives. Participants answer “yes” or “no” to 30 statements to indicate whether the statements “reflect a value by which they would either live their lives or rear their children” (p. 73). Using this instrument, Carter (1990) examined the cultural values of African-American and White American college students. The results of the study suggested that members of each group share some aspects of culture. The results
Table 1

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck Value-Orientations Model With Alternative Solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Alternative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Nature</td>
<td>Evil: People are born with evil inclinations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person/Nature Mode</td>
<td>Mixed: Humans are born both good and evil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Sense Mode</td>
<td>Good: Humans are born basically good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harmony-with-Nature: Nature is one's partner in life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mastery-Over-Nature: Nature is used for one's own purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity Mode</td>
<td>Past: Traditional customs are paramount.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present: Here and Now events are most important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Future: Planning for events that are to occur is important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Relations Mode</td>
<td>Being: Activity is spontaneous self-expression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being-in-Becoming: Long-term developmental goals of self-expression and satisfaction are emphasized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doing: Action-oriented self-expression is emphasized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lineal: Lines of authority are clearly established based on kinship or heredity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collateral: Individuals are subject to group decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individualism: Individual goals are most important.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

indicated the two groups rank ordered the following highest Alternatives similarly: Mixed Human Nature, Harmony with Nature, Future Time, Doing Activity, and Individual Social Relations. Carter suggests that this similarity demonstrated by both African-American and White American students may be indicative of a shared American culture (p. 77).

However, some Alternatives were rated higher by one of the cultural groups (i.e., higher mean scores). For example, the results suggested that African-American students in comparison with White American students believe in “one’s helplessness with respect to external and environmental factors” and believe “that human nature is basically evil” (1990, p. 76). Carter attributed the influence of racism and discrimination to the development of such values. Additional results indicated that White Americans scored higher on individualism and collaterality (i.e., relationships that correspond in position) than African Americans. Carter explained these results may reflect the White American students’ developmental stage of expanding their sphere of influence beyond their family of origin to include friends and the larger society. The individuation process may influence the While American students’ present values. Carter’s study did not, however, consider age of the respondent as an influential variable.

Kluckhohn and Strodbeck’s value orientations were also the basis for the Scale to Assess World Views© (SAWV) developed by Ibrahim and Kahn (1984). However, Ibrahim and Owen (1994) modified the Value Orientations, restructuring them as four World Views through a factor analysis. The first world view, Optimistic, is characterized by the development of the total person, human nature which is basically good and in harmony with nature. The Traditional world view emphasizes lineal-hierarchical
relationships, subjugation and control of nature, and focus on the future. The third world view, Here and Now, focuses on present time and spontaneous activity. The last world view, Pessimistic, is characterized by a view of human nature as inherently bad with relationship orientation that is collateral-mutual and an acknowledgement of the power of nature (see Appendix A, Ibrahim & Owen, 1994, p. 207).

The SAWV, consisting of 45 statements, allows more response variability than the Intercultural Values Inventory through the use of a 5-point Likert scale. The items are rated on the degree to which the statements reflect the individual’s "attitudes toward the world and people" (Ibrahim & Kahn, 1987). An individual receives a mean score on each of the four World Views. The highest mean is the primary set of values or world view; the second highest mean indicates a second world view. The SAWV has been used to assess world views of White American, Mainland Chinese, Taiwanese, and African students (Sodowsky, Maguire, Johnson, Ngumba & Kohles, 1994); South Asian Americans, (Ibrahim, Ohnishi & Sandu, 1997); Fijians and American students (Berhow, Richmond, & Page, 1994); American, Chinese (from Taiwan) and Irish graduate students (Cheng, O'Leary, & Page, 1995); Chinese international students from mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong-Kong (Kwan, Sodowsky, Ihle, 1994); college students and graduate students (Mau & Pope-Davis, 1993). Samples in the studies using the SAWV and the Intercultural Values Inventory have focused on the traditional college-age or graduate student population. Time as an aspect of culture was not considered in these earlier studies. Research is needed with other age groups to determine if values are influenced by developmental issues.

Generational differences are worth studying because a more precise definition of
culture should include reference to the notion of generation given the rapid pace of change. The events experienced by people during the time period or generation in which they live may influence their values and produce a unique culture. Specifically, the cultural values of the Baby Boomers, those born from 1946 to 1965, and Generation X, born from 1966 to 1978, will be examined (Maguire, 1998; Francese, 1995). In addition, past research has focused on the traditional college-aged students. Results from past studies may have been affected by developmental issues experienced by traditional college-aged students (Berger, 1988.) Furthermore, differences that appear to be due to culture may actually be due to cohort effects. Although it is difficult to separate developmental issues from cohort effects, the present study will provide an additional comparison of generational groups. Lack of shared values may indicate a unique culture, while shared values may be due to maturational events.

Based on images in the media, it seems likely that Generation X would adhere more to a Here and Now orientation and Baby Boomers would be more Traditional in their World View. Levinson’s stages of Adulthood (as cited in Berger, 1988) may provide additional support to the notion that Baby Boomers may take a more Traditional approach to world views while Generation X may express a Here and Now World View. According to Levinson the Baby Boomers (ages ranging from 35 to 53 years) may struggle with the crisis of the increasing responsibilities of family and career. The Baby Boomers approaching 40 and 50 may typically face a time of reflection of life goals and direction. They may experience a sense of time urgency, focusing on the future and what they still hope to accomplish. Each of these developmental stages would suggest a Traditional World View. Conversely, Generation X still mostly in their 20s (21 to 33
years old) are concerned with the present experiences and making choices in “love, occupation, friendships, values and lifestyles” (Berger, 1988, p.432). It is plausible that they may becoming aware of needs for achievement and affiliation (Berger, 1988). These experiences may be reflected in the Here and Now World View.

Present Study

It is the goal of this researcher to enhance understanding about differences and similarities in cultural values across groups. The SAWV is used to assess values in two ethnic/cultural groups and two cohort groups. Carter’s (1990) results suggested that these groups are of interest because they share some qualities but still retain separate cultures. Shared values by the groups may indicate a shared culture. The present study examines the rank order of the values of each cultural group for support of Carter’s premise.

Carter (1990) also indicates that African Americans may support some values (the power of nature and evil nature of humans) to a greater degree than do their White American counterparts, thereby suggesting a Pessimistic World View. However, Sodowsky et al. (1994) note that Africans studying in the U.S. reported high scores in (a) a belief that human nature is basically good, (b) inner and outer personal development, and (c) a fear of nature with some acceptance of living in harmony with nature. Each of these is congruent with an Optimistic World View. Although the participants in the Sodowsky et al. (1994) study were natives of Africa, White (1990) contends that these core beliefs may have been transmitted to African Americans from their ancestors and thus are represented in today’s African American culture.

To summarize, the hypothesis of this study is as follows:

1. Based on Carter (1990), African Americans will score a higher mean on the
Pessimistic World View than White Americans.

2. Data from Sodowsky et al. (1994) and White (1990) suggest that African Americans will score higher on the Optimistic world view than White Americans.

3. If the two groups (African American and White American) represent completely unique cultures, then they will rank order the world views differently.

As mentioned earlier, Levinson’s adult stage theory and popular media suggest that Baby Boomers may have a preference for a Traditional World View and Generation X may prefer a Here and Now World View. Therefore,

1. Generation X will have a higher mean score than the Baby Boomers on the Here and Now world view.

2. Baby Boomers will have a higher mean score than Generation Xers on the Traditional World View.

3. If the two groups (Baby Boomers and Generation Xers) represent completely unique cultures, then they will rank order the world views differently.
Method

Participants

African Americans (n = 78) and White Americans (n = 77) completed the Scale to Assess World Views at a grocery store in the Midwest. Three Latinos, 1 Asian American and 10 Native Americans also participated. The study also examined responses from two generational groups: those born from 1946 to 1964 and those from 1966 to 1978 (McGuire, 1998; Frances, 1995). The range of years corresponds to the two generational labels of the “Baby Boomers” (n = 63) and “Generation X” (n = 81). Persons born before 1945 (n=21) and born after 1978 (n=8) also completed the survey. The educational background of the sample ranged from “less than high school” (n=11) to post-graduate degrees (n=7). Most of the participants were high school graduates (n= 112). The sample was comprised of 129 females and 44 males. Due to the small number of Latino, Asian American and Native American participants, world views were not calculated for these ethnic groups. However, these participants’ responses were included in the analyses for generational comparisons if the criterion for age was met.

Prior to data collection, the project proposal was submitted to and approved by the Western Kentucky University Human Subjects Review Board (see Appendix B). After the permission was granted by the local business (Appendix C), participants were recruited within the store. For their participation, subjects’ names were entered in a drawing for two $50 gift certificates from the store.
Instruments

In this present study, the researcher used the Scale to Assess World Views© (SAWV, Ibrahim & Kahn, 1984). The SAWV consists of 45 statements that are rated on the degree to which the statements reflect the participant’s attitudes toward the world and people. The self-descriptive statements are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The SAWV can be administered individually or to a group. The amount of time required to complete the inventory is approximately 15 minutes.

Scale construction

Items included in the Scale to Assess World Views were determined by 20 judges identified as experts in “cross-cultural psychology” (Ibrahim & Kahn, 1987). The judges categorized 120 statements into one of five existential categories (human nature, relationships, nature, time orientation, and activity orientation) or indicated the statement did not apply in any category (Ibrahim & Kahn, 1987). Items rated as part of a category by at least 60% of the sample of 20 judges were included in the SAWV (p. 168). Reliability of the item total was .98 (Ibrahim & Kahn, 1987).

Since the initial construction, the logically developed five existential categories have been modified into four world views (Optimistic, Traditional, Here and Now, and Pessimistic) through factor analysis (Ibrahim & Owen, 1994). The four-factor solution accounted for 65% of the item covariation. The Alpha-reliability estimates for the scaled scores ranged from .57 to .73 (p. 203). In the present study, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to compare the item loadings with Ibrahim & Owen’s results.

A personal data sheet accompanied the inventory. The personal data sheet (see
appendix D) includes questions requesting demographic information about the participants' background and personal characteristics (e.g., gender, educational level, birthdate, and cultural/ethnic identity).

**Materials**

Materials utilized include clipboards, pens, raffle tickets, consent forms, personal data sheet and the SAWV.

**Procedure**

Participants within the store were asked to complete the Scale to Assess World Views (Ibrahim & Kahn, 1984). After the subjects read and completed a form indicating their agreement to participate (Appendix E), they were given a coded questionnaire. The names were not connected to the responses; the responses were held in confidence. The principle investigator informed participants that they may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were permitted to ask questions at any time during the survey. The scale required approximately 15 minutes to complete. Following the completion of the questionnaire, participants entered their names in a drawing for two $50 gift certificates to the grocery store. Persons over 18 were allowed to participate and enter the drawing.
Results

Overview of Analyses

The responses from 281 completed questionnaires were analyzed. Coefficient alpha and a confirmatory factor analysis were performed for the SAWV. The assumptions for multiple analyses of variance (MANOVA) were met: independent observations, normal distribution of observations, and homogeneity of variances (Stevens, 1996). A MANOVA was completed for main effects and interaction effects by ethnicity and cohort. All tests used the $p < .05$ significance level. A significant MANOVA was followed by an analysis of variance to explore the main effect for ethnicity. Means and standard deviations were calculated for each group.

Reliability of the Scale

Coefficient alpha was calculated for the entire scale (.82) as well as the subscales: (a) Optimistic (.67), (b) Traditional (.66), (c) Here and Now (.60) and (d) Pessimistic (.42).

MANOVA

The sample met the assumptions for the MANOVA. Specifically, the observations were independent and normally distributed. Although the Optimistic subscale demonstrated the greatest deviance from a normal distribution ($p<.001$ on Kolmogorov-Smirnov), the $F$ statistic is robust with regard to Type I error against non-normality for the sample (Stevens, 1996, p. 244). Similarly, the sample met the
assumption that the population covariance matrices were equal (Box's M, \( p = .54 \)) (homogeneity of variance assumption).

The MANOVA was significant for ethnicity on three subscales: (a) Traditional F (1,127) = 23.76 \( p < .001 \); (b) Here and Now, \( F (1,127) = 13.47\ p < .001 \); (c) Pessimistic, \( F (1,127) = 4.26, \ p < .04 \) (see Table 2). The MANOVA was not significant for the Optimistic subscale. For the Traditional subscale, African Americans earned a mean score (\( M = 2.99 \)) significantly higher than the Caucasian subgroup (\( M = 2.58 \)). The Here and Now world view score was significantly higher for African Americans (\( M = 3.20 \)) than White Americans (\( M = 2.79 \)). The African Americans (\( M = 3.42 \)) demonstrated significantly more agreement with the Pessimistic subscale than did the Caucasian participants (\( M = 3.26 \)).

The MANOVA was not significant for main effects of cohort or for any interaction effects between cohort and ethnicity.

**Hypotheses for African Americans and White Americans**

1. Congruent with previous research, (Carter 1990), African Americans scored a higher mean score (\( M = 3.42 \)) on the Pessimistic World View than did White Americans (\( M = 3.27 \); see Table 3).

2. Data from Sodowsky et al. (1994) and White (1990) suggested that African Americans would score a higher mean score on the Optimistic World View than White Americans. The results did not support this hypothesis (African Americans: \( M = 3.91 \); White Americans, \( M = 4.00 \)).
Table 2

**MANOVA table: Main Effect for Ethnicity on the Four World Views**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Hyp. MS</th>
<th>Error MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimistic</td>
<td>.00680</td>
<td>.23908</td>
<td>.02844</td>
<td>.866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>7.24726</td>
<td>.30493</td>
<td>23.76691</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here and Now</td>
<td>.48100</td>
<td>.48103</td>
<td>13.47306</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pessimistic</td>
<td>.99959</td>
<td>.23422</td>
<td>4.26768</td>
<td>.041*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* $N = 131$, $df = 1, 127$.

*significant at the .05 level.
Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of World Views for Ethnic Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World View</th>
<th>African-Americans (n = 78)</th>
<th>White Americans (n = 77)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimistic</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pessimistic</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here and Now</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>.704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>.568</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. If the two groups (African American and White American) represented completely unique cultures, then the group means on the world views would be rank ordered differently. The group means of both ethnic groups indicated the same order ranking of world views from highest to lowest: Optimistic, Pessimistic, Here and Now and Traditional (see Table 3).

**Hypotheses for Baby Boomers and Generation X**

1. Generation X will have a higher mean score than the Baby Boomers on the Here and Now world view. This was not supported by the mean scores (Generation X, $M = 2.82$; Baby Boomers, $M = 2.70$).

2. Baby Boomers will earn a higher mean score than Generation Xers on the Traditional World View. Although, the mean scores indicated a trend for Generation X ($M = 3.07$) toward more agreement with the Here and Now world view than the Baby Boomer participants ($M = 2.87$). The difference was not statistically significant.

3. If the Baby Boomers and Generation Xers represented completely unique cultures, then they would rank order the world views differently. The generational group means were ranked in the same order from highest to lowest: Optimistic, Pessimistic, Here and Now and Traditional world views (see Table 4).

**Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

To obtain additional information regarding these results, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed to examine the four factor loadings. Of the 32 items, only 5
items loaded on the same scales as in the exploratory factor analysis in Ibrahim and Owen’s 1994 study.
Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations of World Views for Generational Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World View</th>
<th>Baby Boomers (n = 63)</th>
<th>Generation X (n = 81)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimistic</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>.522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pessimistic</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here and Now</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>.586</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

With the increasing change in U.S. demographics, the potential for cultural misunderstandings has also increased. Understanding the values and assumptions of cultural groups may facilitate communication in cross-cultural situations. The literature on multiculturalism has encouraged helping professionals—particularly those involved in cross-cultural counseling—to be informed about the impact of values or world views on behavior (Carter, 1990; Pedersen, 1991; Lonner & Ibrahim, 1996; Sue, et. al., 1992).

One of my goals in the present study was to examine the world views of two cultural groups, specifically African Americans and Caucasian Americans. Also included in the present study was the aspect of time in the definition of culture. Thus, the cultural values of generational cohorts were also examined. There were no significant differences for Generation X and Baby Boomers. Perhaps the lack of differences reflects aspects of a shared American culture.

Ethnic Differences

Scoring on the SAWV identifies a primary and secondary world view (highest and second highest mean score, respectively.) The primary world view, Optimistic, values the goodness of human nature, “an emphasis of both inner (spiritual) and outer (material) development, and a focus on living in harmony with nature, acknowledging the power of nature” (Ibrahim & Owen, 1994, p. 207). African Americans and White
Americans both indicated agreement with this worldview as primary (M = 3.91, 4.00, respectively.)

The secondary world view, Pessimistic, holds that while “human nature is inherently bad, some allowance is given to the belief that human nature may be a combination of good and bad qualities. There is some emphasis on collateral-mutual relationships, and an acknowledgement of the power of nature” (1994, p.207). Although this world view is secondary for both cultural groups, African Americans (M = 3.42) earned a significantly higher mean score than did Caucasian Americans (M = 3.26). This cultural difference supports the present study’s hypothesis. The significant difference may be due to the way blacks understand human nature relating to the discrimination and prejudice African Americans face in this country. As Carter observed, “it may be necessary for African Americans to assume that people, regardless of ethnicity, would react as white Americans have done given the power to do so” (1990, p. 76). Conversely, White Americans who have not faced the same societal barriers as African Americans may hold a more optimistic world view toward others.

The results on the last two world views also revealed differences between African Americans and Caucasian Americans. Although both cultures had a similar order of group means (Here and Now as third, and Traditional world view was fourth), African Americans earned a significantly higher mean score than did Whites on both world views. Perhaps Whites demonstrated less agreement with this value set due to the White American cultural focus on planning tasks and activity rather than being present-in-the-moment. Further, the agreement with the Here and Now world view may stem from the
idea that, relative to whites, African Americans prefer to focus on the life events occurring in the present where activity is spontaneous (Nobles, 1980).

Both cultures agreed least with the Traditional world view, and one should interpret the following results within this context. Compared to White Americans, African Americans demonstrated significantly more agreement with this perspective. The Traditional world view "defines social relationships by hierarchy and power, although some collateral-mutuality is accepted. There is an emphasis primarily on the future, and to a much lesser extent on the past; there is not present focus...nature can be controlled" (Ibrahim & Owen, 1994, p. 207). Similar to Carter's (1990) results, the African Americans may be identifying with the structure of social relationships of the Traditional world view. African Americans may prefer the "hierarchical" relationships "determined by generational authority and kinship lines. Power and authority are gained through age and one's role in the social hierarchy" (p. 76).

White Americans may have demonstrated significantly less agreement with the Traditional world view due to the influence of individualism on white culture. The same attributes that encourage free-thinking and the rights of the individual may also lead to a lack of community affiliation, decrease in relational commitment, and valuing the good of the individual over the good of the group. Thus, Whites may demonstrate less agreement with the Traditional world view's orientation toward hierarchical social relationships.

Generational Differences

One hypothesis suggested mean differences for Baby Boomers and Generation X. The results supported the hypothesis that Generation X (M = 3.07) would earn a higher
mean score than Baby Boomers (M = 2.87) on the Here and Now world view. Although not significantly different, the higher mean on the Here and Now orientation may indicate a greater focus on the present with spontaneous, unstructured activity for Generation X. Generation Xers may be more focused on the present time orientation, concerned with meeting their current needs for relationships, occupations and lifestyles (Berger, 1988).

However, the data did not support the hypothesis that Baby Boomers (M = 2.70) would earn a higher mean score than Generation X (M = 2.82) on the Traditional world view. Both generations agreed with this world view least and the results should be interpreted within that context. One aspect of the Traditional world view is the focus primarily on the future. As the data were obtained in the year prior to 2000, perhaps both generations have a focus on the future and coming Millennium. This phenomenon may effect all persons regardless of generation.

Possible Aspects of Shared Culture

No significant differences between Baby Boomers and Generation X’s world views were found. One possible explanation for the lack of significant differences between generations may relate to the impact of technology on U.S. culture. During the “Information Age” technology allows us to communicate with increasing ease. Persons are bombarded with messages from the media: (a) print, (b) TV, (c) radio, and the (d) Internet. Perhaps there are no significant differences between generational groups because all are receiving similar messages of the shared culture. Furthermore, cultural values due to ethnicity are likely a more integral and salient part of cultural identity—throughout the life span. Perhaps this identity is handed down to us collectively by our families and communities in the form of world views and values. The differences
between African Americans and White Americans identified here are more closely tied to our cultural experiences as an ethnic group than to generational factors.

**Ranking of Group Means** The group means for each group were not ranked in a different order indicating a unique culture. Although unexpected, the order of group means holds interesting information. The group means of each generation were ranked in the same order from highest to lowest: (a) Optimistic, (b) Pessimistic, (c) Here and Now and (d) Traditional world views.

Similarly, both ethnic groups ranked the world view subscales in the same order from the highest to the lowest: (a) Optimistic, (b) Pessimistic, (c) Here and Now and (d) Traditional. Thus, both blacks and whites seem to share an “American” culture with the Optimistic and Pessimistic subscales as primary and secondary world views. This concept of shared culture supports some past research with African Americans and whites (Carter, 1990).

**Limitations**

These findings must be interpreted with caution. The psychometric properties of this scale were not sufficient to instill much confidence in the results. The coefficient alphas of the subscales ranged from .42 (Pessimistic world view) to .67 (Optimistic world view). According to Nunnally and Berstein (1994) an internal consistency of ≥.70 is adequate. These alpha coefficients are lower than those in prior research: alpha = .53 to .73 (Ibrahim & Owen, 1994).

Due to the lack of reliability and support for the hypotheses, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to further explore the psychometrics of the scale. Only 5 of the 32 items loaded on the same subscale as the prior factor analysis conducted by Ibrahim
and Owen (1994). For this scale to be utilized more fully, additional items should be added to bolster the reliabilities of the subscales (Ibrahim & Owen, 1994).

In addition, an increased description of the application of the world views would be helpful. The SAWV describes how to score the instrument, indicating most persons have a primary world view and a secondary world view; if the means are equal, then a tie exists between the world views. Further issues requiring attention include detailing a theoretical framework for utilizing the primary and secondary world views (e.g., are the world views complementary? Utilized exclusively in specific settings, etc.?). In the present study, the Optimistic and Pessimistic subscales identified as the primary and secondary world views raise questions regarding the seemingly incompatible world view labels. According to the scoring system, it is understood that the Optimistic world view received more self-perceived agreement from both ethnic groups than any other world view. Unfortunately, the label “Pessimistic” appears to be a negative or incongruent label of values toward human nature, relationships, and the power of nature. Perhaps a more appropriate label such as “external fate control” could be selected.

One of the strengths of this research study was the target population. Unlike previous research (Carter, 1990; Sodowsky et al., 1994; Ibrahim & Kahn, 1987, Ibrahim & Owen, 1994.) this study explored the world views of a nonacademic population. Sampled from a local business, the educational background for the majority of the participants (n = 123) was a high school diploma or less. It was hoped that this population would add to the generalizability of the values research.

However, an additional barrier to gathering this information became apparent during data collection. Several persons asked the researcher, “What does ‘contemplation’
mean?" referring to the vocabulary of one of the items. Although the total scale is written at the 7.7 grade level (Flesch-Kincade Grade Level), some of the items demand a familiarity of vocabulary from a higher grade level. (E.g. item 26: “Although people are intrinsically good they have developed institutions which force them to act in opposition to their basic nature.” Grade 12 reading level). The educational level of the participants may have influenced the psychometric properties of the sample. Further, as education is a factor in measuring socioeconomic status (SES) it seems appropriate to consider examining effects of SES on world views as well. Unless the items are adjusted, it is recommended that the SAWV be used cautiously with participants who have less than or are not currently pursuing their undergraduate education. Researchers should be aware that the educational level of the sample may confound the responses to world views.

Future research may explore the issue of SES and values. According to Robertson (1987), the sociological literature suggests that middle and upper-class people feel they have control over their lives and often defer gratification with future rewards in mind (Traditional world view). The working and lower-class people may feel their lives are influenced primarily by luck and may be more focused on immediate gratification (Here and Now world view.) Class differences may hold greater distinctions in world views than generational cohorts. Future research that explores world views by SES (measuring education and occupation levels) may contribute information more relevant to cross-cultural relationships. Differences usually attributed to ethnicity may actually be a function of SES. For helping professionals working outside the academic context where SES is likely more constant (Robertson, 1987), information about differences in world views due to SES or education may be the most helpful.
Implications for the therapeutic relationship

The findings in this study support previous research comparing the world views of African Americans and Caucasian Americans. African Americans and Caucasian Americans differ on some aspects of world views. When Baby Boomer or Generation X clients exhibit a world view different from that of the therapist, differences in values are likely due to ethnicity rather than generational influences.

As human beings, we are drawn to the differences around us. Our sensory system detects the “just noticeable differences,” as children, we are taught “Which of these kids is doing his own thing?” by the educational TV program Sesame Street; in research, differences are measured and discussed. Clearly, it is the therapist’s responsibility to understand the client’s “individual culture”—values, worldviews, priorities which guide the person’s behavior. Perhaps this is one of the greatest strengths of individual therapy: we attempt to understand the world view of the individual. Group differences are helpful but offer only one additional piece of information.

However, when working intimately in cross-cultural situations, therapists should be mindful of the shared aspects of culture – that is, more is similar than different between blacks and whites. As the current study supports, African Americans and White Americans agree with the Optimistic world view as their primary value orientation. Conclusions drawn from research may provide a framework for the therapist’s becoming familiar with a client’s world view. Hopefully, increased information may assist in decreasing misunderstandings between the therapist and client.
References


Four Worldviews from the Scale to Assess World Views
Ibrahim & Owen (1994)

Worldview I: Optimistic

This perspective is characterized by values in three areas: Human nature, Activity orientation, and Nature. There is a belief that human nature is essentially good. Activity must focus on inner and outer development (i.e. spiritual and material). There is a need to be in harmony with nature, with an acceptance of the power of nature.

Worldview II: Traditional

The emphasis in this perspective is on Social Relationships, Time and Nature. Social relationships are defined by accepting that relationships are primarily lineal-hierarchical, with some expectations for collateral-mutual relationships. Time is both mostly future oriented, with some emphasis on the past. Regarding Nature, there is a belief in subjugation and control of nature.

Worldview III: Here and Now

The worldview reflects the assumptions from two value dimensions, Activity and Time. The Activity focus is primarily on spontaneity. Time emphasis is mainly on present time, with some attention to the past.

Worldview IV: Pessimistic

This perspective reflects assumptions from three value areas: Human Nature, Social Relationships, and Nature. Human nature is considered primarily bad, with some allowance for it being a combination of good and bad qualities. There is an acceptance of the power of nature. The relationship orientation is collateral-mutual.
Appendix B
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
Human Subjects Review Board
Office of Sponsored Programs
104 Foundation Building
502-745-4652; Fax 502-745-4211
E-mail: Phillip.Myers@Wku.Edu

In future correspondence please refer to HS9929(revised), March 3, 1999

Launa Rohrer Beck
C/o Dr. Sally Kuhlenschmidt
Department of Psychology
Western Kentucky University

Dear Ms Beck:

1. Your revisions of the research project "The effect of ethnicity and generation on cultural values," has undergone review by the Western Kentucky University IRB for human subjects of research and it has been determined that risks to subjects are: (1) minimized and reasonable; and that (2) research procedures are consistent with a sound research design and do not expose the subjects to unnecessary risk. Reviewers determined that: (1) benefits to subjects are considered along with the importance of the topic and that outcomes are reasonable; (2) selection of subjects is equitable; and (3) the purposes of the research and the research setting is amenable to subjects’ welfare and producing desired outcomes; that indications of coercion or prejudice are absent, and that participation is clearly voluntary.

2. In addition, the IRB found that: (1) informed consent will be sought and documented from each prospective subject. (2) Provision is made for collecting, using and storing data in a manner that protects the safety and privacy of the subjects and the confidentiality of the data. (3) Appropriate safeguards are included to protect the rights and welfare of the subjects. Please store all data securely at an on campus location for a minimum of three years after the project is completed.

3. Your research therefore meets the criteria of Full Board Review under the institutional human subjects protocol and is approved based on the revisions. Please note that the institution is not responsible for any actions regarding this protocol before approval. Copies of your request for human subjects review, your application, and this approval, are maintained in the Office Sponsored Programs at the above address. Please report any changes to this approved protocol to this office. A Continuing Review protocol will be sent to you in the future but no less than a year from now to determine the status of the project.

Kindest regards.

Sincerely,

 Phillip Myers, Ph.D.
 Director, Office of Sponsored Programs and
 Human Subjects Coordinator

C: Human Subjects File9929(revised)
Dr. Sally Kuhlenschmidt, Department of Psychology

HSApprovalBeck9929(revised)
Appendix C
Permission to gather data on the business premises

Project Title: The effect of ethnicity and generation on cultural values

Investigator: Launa Rohrer Beck: Psychology Department; 875-0318

The following is to obtain your permission to talk with your patrons on the store premises. This research project is part of my Masters thesis through Western Kentucky University.

1. Nature and Purpose of the Project:
The purpose of this project is to gain increased understanding of persons' attitudes toward the world and people.

2. Explanation of Procedures:
I would like to ask your business patrons to complete a questionnaire on their attitudes about the world and people. The questionnaire takes about 15-20 minutes to complete. The project requires responses from approximately 60 White Americans, 60 African Americans, 60 Babyboomers, and 60 Generation Xers. I will continue to collect data to reach these numbers. I will confirm the dates of data collection.

3. Discomfort and Risks: There are no known risks to any patrons. Participation is voluntary. Participants may perceive a minor inconvenience due to the 15 minutes needed to complete the questionnaire.

4. Benefits for your patrons: For their participation, persons are eligible to enter a raffle for free merchandise from the store. Two persons will receive a $50 gift certificate. Each participant receives one chance to enter. I will purchase the merchandise in the form of gift certificates.

5. Benefits for the business: Your business will add a sense of generosity to the patrons' shopping experience as they have a chance to win free merchandise. Your business will facilitate gathering information leading to increased understanding for cross-cultural interactions and relationships.

6. Confidentiality: Participants' names will not be connected with their responses; their responses will not be given or sold to anyone and will be held in confidence. Participants may decline to participate or may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty.

This project is being conducted for educational and research purposes only. The information gathered will not be knowingly shared with other business or used in marketing strategies. Your cooperation in the project is greatly appreciated.

A:

Witness: Position

3-6-99

Date

Signature: Position

3/6/99

Date
Appendix D
Background Information Sheet
SCALE TO ASSESS WORLD VIEWS
©Ibrahim & Kahn (1984; 1994)

Gender:   female_____   male_____

Birthdate: day_____ month_____ year_____

Race:  African American ________
       Caucasian American ________
       Latino ________
       Asian American ________
       Native American ________
       Other ________

Educational background:  
   Less than high school ______
   High school ________
   A.S. ________
   B.A./B.S. ________
   MA/ MS ________
   Post graduate degree ______

Religion ________
   (insert)

Environment you grew up in:  Urban ________ Suburban ________ Rural ________

Political Affiliation:
   Democratic ________ Republican ________ Independent ________ None ________
Appendix E
Agreement to participate

I am asking for your help in a study. My goal is to gather information about persons’ attitudes toward the world and other people. Please complete the following survey. You may ask any questions you have to help you understand the project. For your help, you are eligible to enter a raffle for free merchandise. Two people will receive a gift certificate for $50 of merchandise from the store. Each participant receives one chance to enter. If you decide to help in the project, please sign your name at the bottom of this page.

You will be asked to give your honest answer to a set of questions about values. There are no right or wrong answers. It will take about 15-20 minutes. Your name will not be connected with your answers; your answers will not be given or sold to anyone and will be held in confidence. If you are uncomfortable with any questions you may leave them blank. You may decline to participate or may withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

I would like to participate in the study. I understand that combined results may be published. I understand that care has been taken to remove risks; I do not hold any researcher or business responsible for any risk or damage.

Signature of Participant ___________________________ Date _____________

Witness ___________________________ Date _____________

The effect of ethnicity and generation on cultural values project by Launa Rohrer Beck; Psychology Department; (535-7388). The dated approval on this consent form indicates that this project has been reviewed and approved by the Western Kentucky University Human Subjects Review Board. Approved: 2/22/99