

## Learning to Live Together: Cross-cultural Perceptions of Student Teachers

Corinne Meier

*Department Early Childhood Education, School of Teacher Education,  
University of South Africa, South Africa  
E-mail: meierc@unisa.ac.za*

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**ABSTRACT** Historically the socio-political landscape in South Africa has been shaped by colonial rule and segregation policies. Some ethnic groups were from the outset of colonial rule suppressed and according to the social identity theory, this issue can have an impact on the forming of a critical self-consciousness in and about suppressed groups. When South Africa became a democracy in 1994, South Africans had to learn to live together in an integrated country. This article encapsulates the findings of a quantitative study undertaken to determine how three sample populations of student teachers from different ethnic backgrounds perceive themselves and the groups different from themselves. The research instrument took the form of a multiple-choice questionnaire. The findings suggest that Black respondents' perceptions of their ability to achieve certain objectives differed meaningfully from their perceptions of Whites as well as Asians ability to achieve the same objectives. Implications for the design of teacher training programmes are considered in view of its critical role in improving students' capacity for unbiased thinking about cross-cultural issues.

### INTRODUCTION

Historically the social and political landscape in South Africa has been shaped by colonial rule and apartheid policies. The first democratic government in 1994 inherited a country which was deeply divided along ethnic lines and the social status ascribed to groups largely reflected this divide. The policy of apartheid ruled that the four racial groups in South Africa (White, Black, Asian and Coloured) be segregated in all possible ways. Whites were favoured in all state planning and non-Whites were treated as second rate citizens. This resulted in Whites' perception of Blacks as inferior. When apartheid was lifted, South Africans thus had to learn to live together in an integrated country, yet the media are still reporting that society and schools are characterised by cross-cultural tension, antagonism and a rising tide of racism (Sunday Independent 2012; Cape Times 2012; Mbateti 2010; Bateman and Da Costa 2008: 3; Vally and

Dalamba 1999). The ghost of the past, the policy of segregation or apartheid, and ironically, against expectation, also the new democracy, have contributed and are still contributing to the forming of perceptions that militate against the establishment of a tolerant society.

Research has clearly documented that the basic conditions for national unity (Braddock and Gonzalez 2010) and effective integrated education is a learning environment that supports constructive cross-cultural contact because biased cross-cultural perceptions negatively influence classroom teaching and learning. The promotion of positive attitudes among teachers towards learners from a variety of cultural groups is a priority in teacher education worldwide (Peters-Davis and Shultz 2005: 1; Solomon and Levine-Rasky 2003: 3; Irvine 2003: 15-16). Thus, an important aim of teacher education programmes should be to encourage and help prospective teachers to change negative feelings which they might have of themselves and learners from groups that they perceive to be relatively remote from their own cultural predisposition and to develop a more tolerant and empathetic disposition towards such groups instead (Clauss-Ehlers 2006: ix; UNESCO 2001: 1-2). Following from this aim, the question arose: What are the cross-cultural perceptions of student teachers from different ethnic groups in South Africa?

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*Address for correspondence:*

Corinne Meier  
Department Early Childhood Education  
University of South Africa, PO Box 392  
Pretoria-0003  
Republic of South Africa  
Phone: +27 12 361 7232  
Phone: +27 866 343923  
E-mail: meierc@unisa.ac.za

### **Aim and Rationale of the Research**

The research is undertaken to determine how three sample populations of student teachers from different ethnic backgrounds perceive themselves and each other. The rationale for investigating this aim is highlighted in recent research by Brondolo and Libretti (2012:358-384) which focuses on the issue that discrimination and racism may obstruct the development of positive cross-cultural relationships. Brondolo and Libretti (2012:359) propose that positive cross-cultural relationships can be considered a potential mediator of the effects of racism on economic opportunity, health, and well-being. According to them, positive cross-cultural relationships provide the context in which individuals develop the abilities and the motivation needed to function in a wide variety of personal and professional domains. Peers who are classmates or colleagues can support intellectual engagement, share knowledge and skills, and provide the social influences that create economic opportunity. Cross-cultural peers who are friends satisfy fundamental needs for belonging and can support the development of social norms and habits, including those necessary for physical and psychological health. Positive cross-cultural perceptions and relationships can create the type of social cohesion that stimulates national unity. National unity that is desperately needed in a post-apartheid South African society.

This paper describes the research design and presents the findings of a section of the research done on the cross-cultural perceptions of student teachers at a South African Higher Education Institution. The findings of the research are directly linked to a theoretical framework and literature review which highlights factors influencing the forming of self- and cross-cultural perceptions in South Africa.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is primarily informed by the social identity theory with the focus on the self-esteem hypothesis and the cultural contracts theory.

Social scientists have long hypothesized that the history of slavery, legalized segregation, prejudice and discrimination experienced by African Americans, extorted a psychological toll, resulting in damage to the Black psyche and

thus social identity and self-esteem (Scott 1997). Theories arguing that self-esteem develops from other people's views of the self, lead to the hypothesis that Blacks as the target of prejudice and discrimination, should suffer from low self-esteem (Cooley 1902; Mead 1934 in Twenge and Crocker 2002). Jones (1999) has argued that with the act of discrimination the dominant or more powerful group defines what is valued in a society. Because these definitions almost always favour the qualities of the dominant group, the consequence is a generalised devaluation of subordinate groups (Brondolo and Libretti 2012: 363). It was widely accepted in the 1950's that according to this hypothesis, the believe that internalization of stigma ("I am not good enough") leads to low self-esteem among subordinated groups and in the words of Erikson (in Twenge and Crocker 2002) "there is ample evidence of the inferiority feelings and morbid self-hate in all minority groups".

More recent studies however raised reservations about the soundness of this hypothesis. Studies done by Gray-Little and Hafdahl (2000) and Porter and Washington (in Twenge and Crocker 2002) concluded that Blacks have self-esteem equal to or higher than that of Whites even though Blacks were the subordinate group. These studies have found that Blacks have psychological resources that enable them to deflect the negative views of them. One factor in the high self-esteem of African-Americans may be the self-protective properties that membership in a disadvantaged group generates. Several researchers have suggested that membership in racial disadvantaged groups may protect or buffer, self-esteem (for example, Crocker and Major 1989; MacCarthy and Yancey 1971; Rowley et al. 1998 in Twenge and Crocker 2002:372). The social identity theory, as adjusted by Tajfel and Turner (in Gray-Little and Hafdahl 2000) suggests that when group identity is prominent and the group is devalued, people strive to achieve a positive in-group identity by emphasizing the desirable aspects of their group, redefining negative stereotypical qualities as positive and favouring in-group members over out-group members. Crocker and Wolf (in Twenge and Crocker 2002:373) are of the opinion that "having a positive and central racial identity may be related to using in-group members as a reference group for social comparison and disengaging one's self-esteem from reflected appraisal".

As a result, people with devalued racial identities experience transformed consciousness, which entails moving from awareness and acceptance of their devaluation to resistance and ultimately redefinition of the meaning and value of their racial identity (Adams in Twenge and Crocker 2002: 373). Feagin (in Byng 2012: 707) is of the opinion that although history and contemporary racialized social phenomena are informed by and interpreted through a White racial frame it is noticeable how minority groups have resisted and developed counter-frames to the oppressive conditions of systemic racism. Christensen (in Twenge and Crocker 2002: 373) holds that from a social identity perspective, it can be predicted to find fairly high self-esteem in many racial disadvantaged groups. Although this particular amendment to the social identity theory is also just a hypothesis, both the discussed hypotheses (original and amended) should be taken as valued points of reference when subordinate groups' identity and cross-cultural perceptions are studied.

This study is secondly informed by the 'cultural contracts' theory which explains how people negotiate their identities and/or cultural world views in the cause of their interaction with each other (Hect et al. 2002). People regulate their relationships and exchange codes of cultural identity in the process of their interaction (Jackson and Crawley 2003:5). The regulatory and exchange process creates a cultural contract of a particular type depending on the nature of the process of social interaction, which depends in turn on the precepts informing the participating cultures; hence the term "cultural contract in token of the premise that a specific cultural worldview is a trait shared by humanity at large as a fixed and unchangeable entity in each individual case, although as indicated, it depends on and is variable in accordance with the interaction between the parties concerned.

That is to say, cultural perceptions and ideas are influenced by differences between people and how they interact cross-culturally. The culture is used as a template for interaction so that while seeking to preserve their core identities people are constantly involved in subtle value exchanges as they interact across cultural difference. These exchanges are considered the ways and means, or the negotiation of terms and conditions forming the substance of cultural contracts.

Jackson and Crawley (2003) identify three types of cultural contracts: *ready-to-sign*, *quasi-completed* and *co-created*.

*Ready-to-sign* contracts are prenegotiated and no further negotiation is allowed. For these persons the goal may not be to 'sign' or regulate their relationship with others.

*Quasi-completed* cultural contracts are partly prenegotiated and partly open for negotiation. These persons are not ready to fully cooperate and not necessarily rule out retention of their own worldview. These individuals 'straddle the fence' in that they refuse to renegotiate their privilege and prefer to retain a measure of control. Arguably, this is due to a perceived sense of vulnerability. This is probably the least durable type of contract.

*Co-created* cultural contracts are fully negotiable, the only limits being personal preference. This is often perceived as the best way to regulate relationships across cultures as it means there is an acknowledgement and appreciation of cultural differences. These cultural differences are not ignored, yet do not become the only factor regulating interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds. The emphasis is truly on mutual satisfaction rather than obligation.

Each contract type is a result of how identities have been personally and socially constructed and explored. The next section will explore the factors that have shaped the identities of South Africans.

### Factors that Shaped South Africans' Identities

In South Africa citizens' identities were and are formed through extreme experiences, varying widely from one side of the political and social spectrum to the other.

The political history of South Africa has been characterised by cultural segregation in all walks of life since as early as 1676. Dutch settlers who colonised southern Africa claimed the right to differentiate on the grounds of ethnic group and colour. An extensive legal apparatus enforced ethnic segregation for more than three centuries. Ethnicity has thus shaped all kinds of identities in South Africa and have become dominant mechanisms in the forming of cross-cultural perceptions and ethnic consciousness in South Africa. Segregated education was never equal education because, unlike Black educa-

tion, education for Whites was compulsory and free of charge and better endowed with state funding. Strong resistance to the gross inequality of education and the forcibly imposed social system was met with severe repressive measures by the state (Fraser et al. 1996).

The vast majority of Black youths became actively involved in the political struggle in the 1970s against White racism. Beliefs in collective action continued to increase in popularity among Blacks throughout the 1980s. Years of deprivation, segregation, humiliation and violence effectively destroyed any hope of establishing a viable culture of learning among these Black learners (Mokwena 1992: 34; Van Zyl 2002). Swanepoel and Booyse (2003: 95) consider that in view of the above situation the different racial groups in South Africa are bound to have drastically divergent views of each other and each other's abilities to obtain success in all spheres of life, for example to have confidence in themselves, have self control, to express themselves, be able to read, write and do mathematics, to be aware of their responsibilities, to develop moral integrity. It is probably fair to say, too, that in conformity with the 'cultural contracts theory' race groups preferred, 'ready-to-sign' contracts, during this period (1970s and 1980s), where no negotiation regarding cross-racial understanding was invited. Whites were not interested in learning about Blacks and *vice versa*.

In 1994 the new democratic government introduced a desegregated national education system that resulted in an influx of large numbers of Black learners into the formerly White schools. None of them could be refused admission on grounds that they have received, historically, an inferior basic education, which had certainly been the case, to which was added the aggravating circumstance that their low intellectual accomplishments were mistakenly attributed to an inherent genetic (that is, a racial) predisposition. They were therefore accepted into formerly White schools under duress and remained subject to the prejudice of inherent inferiority on the part of those who had to take over their education (Fraser 1995: 43). Peterson-Lewis and Bratton (2004), Jencks and Phillips (1998) and Steinberg (1996) refer to studies on ethnicity related academic achievements in the United States of America (USA) which contend that the achievement disparities that exist between Black and White learners are in part due to many Black

learners' presumption that academic success is incompatible with Black identity and that some African American learners, repeatedly exposed to conditions of underachievement among African Americans, assume academic achievement to be a White domain and thus avoid committing themselves to sustained achievement behaviours that might link to White pursuits. It was further found that some urban Black learners concealed their academic achievements from their peers because they feared that peers would label their achievement behaviours as acting White. He found learners who felt compelled to choose between being popular among peers and demonstrating the level of academic performance that teachers would accept. Findings also indicate that African American learners attempted to please both peers and teachers by displaying achievement behaviours to please teachers and class clown behaviour to appease peers.

Since 1994, in a 'new' desegregated education system in South Africa, branding learners from former Black schools as stereotypically incompetent, illiterate and ignorant was often used as a pretext by parents of White learners to resist the entry of these learners into former White schools. These perceptions were supported by the arrival from former Black schools apparent lack of discipline and scholarly disposition (low academic commitment). Moreover White educators are often unmotivated to teach Black learners because they share the media's biases against Black learners and tend to share their own family prejudice. They are especially caught off-balance by the Africanisation of learning content and the sudden overpopulation in classrooms. Such experiences contribute to the discontent in some communities regarding the dropping of standards in schools (Soudien and Sayed 2004: 11, 112; Rademeyer 2004: 11). As noted above, poor governance of schools and social integration is a major issue that is bound to cause tension, especially given the continuous neglect of former Black schools by the democratic dispensation.

The restructuring of education contributed to the heightening of ethnic consciousness in South African communities. The introduction of an outcomes-based curriculum led to significant under achievement by learners in the Monitoring Learner Assessment (MLA) study conducted with Grade 4 learners - South African learners were placed last on the list of 12 partic-

ipating countries (Soudien 2007:187). As noted by Spady, international expert on outcomes-based education, the new curriculum failed dismally in South Africa (Rademeyer 2008:1). White parents are of the opinion that the Black government has seriously undermined an education system that worked in the apartheid era merely to erase all possible traces of 'apartheid'. Mismanagement of the restructuring exercise led to overcrowding in classrooms (De Vries 2004: 1; Pretorius 1995: 1) which is unacceptable to many White parents who believe that it will compromise teaching standards and teacher enthusiasm (Swanepoel and Booysse 2003: 96). Findings of a research project undertaken by Swanepoel and Booysse (2003: 94-100) report teachers' negative experiences of educational change. Here are some of the White participants remarks: "... we haven't been taught how to deal with multiculturalism or multi-lingualism in the classroom"; "Very elementary teaching methods (mainly because) the Black kids did not have the background knowledge required". Some remarks from Black teachers indicate their frustration: "... new methods do not work so well within our cultural context, especially where it has been inherited from the White culture."

Black/White cross-cultural tension still features quite prominently in South African society, for example as shown by an incident where students in residence at a South African Higher Education institution played a foolish and most unfortunate prank on Black employees who were cleaning staff at the residence. The prank was not done in a consciously malicious way, but it demonstrated the inveterate low esteem in which the workers were held by White students. Naturally the University authorities took a dim view of their silly behaviour, which was blown up by the media to the extent that it caused an international outcry and came within and ace of leading to their summary expulsion and a charge of *crimen injuria* (Titus 2008: 16; Ndlangisa et al.2005: 1; ANC Today 2004). Fortunately calm was restored, but the matter did cause quite a stir as people sought to gain political capital from it.

On the other hand, Whites feel that affirmative action, the general and rapidly worsening crisis in the delivery of basic services and infrastructure in the midst of increasingly prohibitive costs and taxation, and a most strategic failure being in the power sector, the total collapse of state medical services, the extremely high inci-

dence of murder and rape in the country, the incapacity of municipalities to work with their budgets paint a picture of complete failure of government at all levels (and government is seen by many Whites essentially as Black). The worst and most paralysing influence comes from the highest echelons (for example, Commissioner of Police jailed for tender irregularities while the Metropole Chief and the State President in his capacity as President of the African National Congress (ANC) were under similar cloud). Recently cyber hate speech rocked South African society when the African Youth League posted a letter expressing extreme anti-White sentiment on Facebook (Mbabeti 2010). These are legitimate and profound concerns that affect everybody in South Africa, but Whites seem to be particularly affected (for example, emigration, farm murders etc.). Many South Africans have become cynical and apathetic about the prospects of South Africa in the immediate to longer term (Smetherham 2008: 4; De Lange 2008: 4; Franci 2003: 183).

Endemic maladministration can be shown to be the result of deficiencies in the education system as well. A spokesperson for the current administration has acknowledged in commentary on the National Development Plan (NDP) Vision for 2030 that "education remains the single most serious challenge of our democratic dispensation over and above poverty, unemployment and inequality" (Mchunu 2013:10). As noted, failure to address the governance issue first and foremost through competitive education, is bound to cause and perpetuate cross-cultural tension.

The above are just some of the vexed issues that contribute to raising a tide of race consciousness and questioning of abilities to achieve success across ethnic boundaries. According to Jackson (2000: 37) "it has much to do with both socio-cultural history and race as a biological construct". For example, skin colour suggests certain feelings, apprehensions and insecurities for some people. Race as a biological construct is social and physiological and carries with it a memory of concomitant experiences. Moeng (2009: 9) notes that the problem with racist behaviour is that it is learned over time. Many people get socialised into internalising racial stereotypes that naturally inculcate their own race.

This general climate of sentiment will naturally be reflected in the mindset of student teach-

ers. According to Jackson and Crawley (2003: 2): “Even though it seems researchers are beyond discussing culture and race as a Black and White dynamic, we contend that the remnants of a racially charged national climate render individuals hopelessly unequipped to cope with cultural difference”. Against this background it seems likely, subject to further substantiating evidence that many South Africans may not be able to enter into ‘co-created’ or ‘quasi-completed’ cultural contracts.

Teacher education programmes in South Africa therefore should equip student teachers to manage cross-cultural perceptions. Students should be told on how to change negative feelings of ethnic bias that they may have against some learners and instead cultivate a positive disposition towards the groups’ learners concerned. Given the high profile of the issue of ethnic bias in South African society at present, a research project was undertaken to determine how three diverse sample populations of student teachers (Black, Asian and White) perceived themselves and each other.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

### Research Design

The research was planned and executed as follows.

### Research Strategy and Methods

The research project initially formed part of a larger international study undertaken by the International Bureau of Education (IBE), a subsidiary of UNESCO, to investigate student teachers’ perceptions about learner diversity. The research under review was done locally by using the same data-gathering instrument that was used in the international study. The research is quantitative in nature.

### Development of the Questionnaire

The data-gathering instrument used in the project was a Likert Scale rating questionnaire, which was developed and provided by the IBE. It consisted of seven sections aimed at analysing a sample of prospective teachers’ perceptions about and attitudes towards learners from

specific ethnic groups (Black, Asian and White). The questionnaire was structured according to subsections from which a number of categories or dimensions were extracted in terms of the different items listed under ‘*Objectives-dimensions*’ below. Statistical analyses of the internal consistency of the questionnaire were done by the IBE and these demonstrated that the questionnaire was a valid and reliable research instrument to use.

### Selection of Respondents

Purposeful sampling was done by selecting third-year undergraduate pre- and in-service education students who had practical experience of cultural diversity in schools as well as a theoretical foundation in multicultural education, gained by studying a module “Multicultural Education” in a teacher education programme. The sample consisted of student teachers whose teaching experience varied widely. Some had never been in a classroom while others had extensive experience. Data collection ended up with a sample of 273 ( $n = 273$ ). The questionnaire was part of the students’ compulsory assignments.

## RESULTS

The following section contains a presentation of the research findings of a certain section of the questionnaire, namely Question 2, (it will be too lengthy to report on the other 6 sections in the questionnaire in this paper) which followed on participant responses to Question 1. In Question 1, participants needed to indicate what importance should be attributed to a list of educational objectives (for example, to have confidence in themselves, to have a critical attitude) in primary and secondary schools of South Africa.

Question 2 (with several items) dealt with the perceived level of complexity experienced by Black, White and Asian populations in attaining these objectives listed in Question 1. Perceptions were measured on a four point Likert rating scale describing the perceived attainment complexity level (very easy, easy, difficult, very difficult) for each population group. Black, Asian and White respondents completed the questionnaire, resulting in three population groups expressing perceptions on how difficult or easy it was for their own group to achieve the

listed objectives and how difficult or easy they thought it was for the two other groups to achieve the listed objectives. The perceived level of complexity experienced by Black, White and Asian populations in attaining the listed objectives was then evaluated according to auto-, hetero- and differential evaluation approaches. In this report only the results of the auto-evaluation will be presented due to a too lengthy analysis if all three approaches would have been discussed. All statistical analyses were conducted with the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) software package, version 9.3.

### Analysis Methodology

A particular methodology was followed to facilitate the evaluation of the perceived objectives-attainment complexity-ratings awarded by respondents to the different population groups.

### Objectives-Dimensions

As a first step in the analysis methodology the items which probe related objectives were categorised into subsets referred to as *objectives-dimensions*. This approach was adopted because it was argued that the evaluation (and analyses) of 27 individual items (listed in Question 1 and repeated in Question 2) would not necessarily lead to easily interpretable results as the ethnic-perceptions phenomena on objectives-attainment because trends and indications could be obscured by the sheer volume of information produced in this way. The wealth of analytical detail produced needed to be summarised in a more concise and informative way. Four subsets of objectives-related questionnaire items were constructed in the following way:

- ♦ *Instrumental objectives-dimension*
  - 1 to have confidence in themselves
  - 10 to learn self-control
  - 13 to express themselves easily
  - 14 to be interested in how things work
  - 16 to develop their imagination
  - 18 to appreciate the arts
  - 20 to be able to read, write and count
  - 22 to adopt clean habits
  - 25 to develop sporting abilities
- ♦ *Moral objectives-dimension*
  - 2 to be aware of responsibilities
  - 6 to develop morals
  - 12 to weigh up their options

- 19 to have a sense of pride
- 23 to respect themselves
- ♦ *Community objectives-dimension*
  - 3 to have a critical attitude
  - 4 to show understanding for others
  - 7 to be familiar with their own culture
  - 9 to form part of their community
  - 15 to be active citizens
  - 24 to be aware of the difficulties facing their country
  - 26 to help each other and to cooperate
- ♦ *Conformity objectives dimension*
  - 5 to concentrate and be studious
  - 8 to be orderly and punctual
  - 11 to be interested in different disciplines taught at school
  - 17 to obey
  - 21 to show respect for authority
  - 27 that boys should act like boys and girls like girls

### Dimension-Scores

It was decided that a summary dimension-perception measurement could be calculated for each of the four objectives-dimensions. The summary scores would then express respondents' perceptions on the attainment-complexity rating of each race group in attaining the four objectives dimensions as measured by themselves as well as the other ethnic groups. The summary-measurements would thereby reduce the number of perception-evaluation measurements from 27 (x3) individually scored perception ratings per respondent (per ethnic group) to four (x3). Parsimony in the volume of analysis output could be achieved in this way.

The dimension-perception measurement for each respondent was calculated as the mean score of perception ratings awarded by each respondent to the relevant subgroup of questionnaire items describing a particular objectives-dimension. The summative mean dimension scores/measurements were calculated separately for the perceived complexity ratings which Blacks, Asians and Whites were presumed to experience regarding the attainment of the listed objectives.

### Calculation of Internal Consistency Reliability

Internal-consistency reliability was established via scale reliability testing (also referred

to as item analysis). For each of the four objectives-dimensions for each of the three ethnic-group perceptions, item analyses were done and a Cronbach alpha coefficient calculated. The alpha coefficient serves as a measure of internal-consistency reliability.

### ***Evaluation of Perceived Objectives-Attainment Difficulty Level***

Perceptions expressed by respondents (via the calculated dimensions scores) were evaluated from different perspectives. Auto-, hetero- and differentiated-perspective approaches were used. Due to the lengthy analysis of auto-, hetero- and differentiated-perspectives, this article will be confined to the respondents' auto-evaluation perspectives.

#### *Auto-evaluation in Terms of Objectives Attainment*

For each objectives-dimension in the auto-evaluation perspective, data were segregated according to the ethnic groups to which respondents belonged. Separate analyses of variance were performed on the dimension-scores of each *respondent ethnic group* (either Black, Asian or White).

Data were separated in this way since auto-evaluation compared how each group of respondents perceived themselves in relation to how they perceived the two other groups. For example, Black respondents' perception of their own abilities compared against perceived abilities of Asians, and again, perceived Black abilities compared against perceived White abilities. To facilitate this kind of comparison, Bonferroni multiple comparisons of means tests with a control were performed on mean dimension score values calculated in each analysis of variance procedure. The ethnic-group included in the particular analysis acted as control or anchor group. The analyses of variance results and multiple comparisons of means-tests results are summarised and discussed in Tables 1-3.

### **Analysis of Results**

#### ***Scale Reliability Testing***

Scale reliability testing was conducted for Black, Asians and White populations in the sub-

sets of the questionnaire items constituting the objectives dimensions. Cronbach alpha coefficients reported on all dimension-objectives for all race populations varied between 0.79 and 0.94. Internal consistency reliability was thus established for all objectives-dimensions and all race populations, since all alpha values are greater than 0.7. The results are discussed in the sections which follow.

#### ***Auto-evaluation Results***

Auto-evaluation refers to a control/anchor respondent groups' perception (Black, Asian or White group) of difficulty experienced by their group in attaining certain objectives as compared individually against the control/anchor response-groups' perception on the difficulty level experienced by the other two response groups.

Analysis of variance and multiple comparisons of means test results, conducted on the perceptions data as structured according to the auto-evaluation approach, are presented below. The first row in each of the Tables 1, 2 and 3 (Anova calculations) represents a one-factor (ethnic group) analysis of variance. Multiple-comparison tests were conducted against a control in conjunction with the analysis of variance.

Once a significant race effect had been established via the F-probability associated with a particular analysis of variance (reported in the second column of the table), the nature of the established significant race effect could be determined by identifying significantly different pairs of mean dimension scores which the control mean score forms an element of each pair compared.

#### *Asian Respondents' Evaluation of Their Perceptions of Themselves and of Black and White Groups Respectively*

In Table 1, Asian respondents were regarded as the control/anchor group. No significant ethnic effect was established in any of the four analyses of variance which were conducted on the various dimension mean perception scores for the Asian data subset. This result implies that Asians' perception of the difficulty they experienced in attaining certain objectives did not differ significantly from the perceptions held by Asians of the difficulty experienced by either Blacks or Whites in attaining certain objectives.

#### *White respondents' perceptions of themselves compared to their perceptions of Black and Asian groups respectively*



**Table 1: Asian respondents’ evaluation of their perceptions of themselves and of Black and White groups respectively**

*Control/anchor: Asian perceptions* Asian respondents’ perception of the degree of difficulty they (the control group) experienced, compared to their perception of the difficulty experienced by Black and White population groups respectively, in attaining specified dimensions of objectives.

<i>Objectives dimension</i>	<i>F prob.: Anova and dimension effect</i>	<i>Control/anchor: Asian perception of Asians Mean dimension score</i>	<i>Compared to: Asian perception of Blacks Mean dimension score</i>	<i>p-values</i>	<i>Compared to: Asian perception of Whites Mean dimension score</i>	<i>p-values</i>
Instrumental	0.7135	2.79	2.76	1.0000	2.83	1.0000
Moral	0.4100	2.80	2.67	0.4688	2.79	1.0000
Community	0.9215	2.81	2.77	1.0000	2.77	1.0000
Conformity	0.6334	2.72	2.64	0.8351	2.73	1.0000

Significance legend:

- \*\*\* : Probability < 0.001 (0.1% significance level)
- \*\* : Probability < 0.01 (1% significance level)
- \* : Probability < 0.05 (5% significance level – default sign. level)
- ~ : Probability <0.1 (10% significance level)

In Table 2 White respondents were designated as the control/anchor group. No significant ethnic effect was established in any of the four analyses of variance which were conducted on the various dimension mean perception scores for the White data subset. This result implies that White respondents’ perception of the difficulty they experienced in attaining certain objectives did not differ significantly from

their perception of the difficulty experienced by either Blacks or Asians in attaining the same objectives.

*Black respondents perceptions of themselves, compared to their perceptions of Asian and White groups respectively*

In Table 3, a significant ethnic effect was indicated for the Instrumental and Moral objectives-dimensions on the 0.1% level of signifi-

**Table 2: White respondents’ perceptions of themselves compared to their perceptions of Black and Asian groups respectively**

*Control: White perceptions.* White respondents’ perception of the degree of difficulty they (as the control group) experienced compared to their perception of the difficulty experienced by Black and Asian population groups respectively, in attaining specified dimensions of objectives.

<i>Objectives dimension</i>	<i>F prob.: Anova and dimension effect</i>	<i>Control/anchor: White perception of White Mean dimension score</i>	<i>Compared to: White perception of Blacks Mean dimension score</i>	<i>p-values</i>	<i>Compared to: White perception of Asians Mean dimension score</i>	<i>p-values</i>
Instrumental	0.1105~	2.84	2.73	0.0899~	2.76	0.2839
Moral	0.5193	2.87	2.81	0.5495	2.85	1.0000
Community	0.6669	2.77	2.82	0.7599	2.80	1.0000
Conformity	0.3790	2.78	2.71	0.3824	2.77	1.0000

Significance legend:

- \*\*\* : Probability < 0.001 (0.1% significance level)
- \*\* : Probability < 0.01 (1% significance level)
- \* : Probability < 0.05 (5% significance level – default significance level)
- ~ : Probability <0.1 (10% significance level)

**Table 3: Black respondents perceptions of themselves, compared to their perceptions of Asian and White groups respectively**

<i>Control/anchor: Black perception</i>						
<i>Black respondents' perception of the degree of difficulty they (as the control group) experienced, compared to their perception of the degree of difficulty experienced by Asian and White population groups respectively, in attaining specified dimensions of objectives</i>						
<i>Objectives dimension</i>	<i>F prob.: Anova and dimension effect</i>	<i>Control/anchor: Black perception of Asians Mean dimension score</i>	<i>Compared to: Black perception of Blacks Mean dimension score</i>	<i>p-values</i>	<i>Compared to: Black perception of Whites Mean dimension score</i>	<i>p-values</i>
Instrumental	0.0003***	2.84	2.80	0.2278	3.18	0.0001***
Moral	0.0008***	2.83	2.94	0.3962	3.15	0.0004***
Community	0.9700	2.95	2.90	1.0000	3.02	0.8605
Conformity	0.2180	2.86	2.86	1.0000	2.99	0.2667

Significance legend:

\*\*\* : Probability &lt; 0.001 (0.1% significance level)

\*\* : Probability &lt; 0.01 (1 % significance level)

\* : Probability &lt; 0.05 (5% significance level – default sign. level)

~ : Probability &lt; 0.1 (10% significance level)

**Table 4: Frequency distribution of very difficult and very easy response ratings for Black perception of Black and Black perception of White difficulty experienced with attainment of instrumental objectives**

<i>Auto-evaluation by Blacks</i>					
<i>Instrumental dimension questionnaire items</i>					
<i>Frequency</i>	<i>B:B</i>	<i>B.B.</i>	<i>B.W.</i>	<i>b.W.</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Cell chi-square</i>	<i>diff++</i>	<i>easy</i>	<i>diff++</i>	<i>easy++</i>	
<i>Row Pct</i>		<i>++</i>			
q1 instil self-confidence	18	49	20	80	167
	0.4218	0.0016	0.3916	0.001	
	10.78	29.34	11.98	47.90	
q10 learn self-control	19	37	6	60	122
	0.8825	0.0557	3.538	0.0449	
	15.57	30.33	4.92	49.18	
q13 express themselves easily	16	30	14	78	138
	0.1024	2.6143	0.0095	2.1667	
	11.59	21.74	10.14	56.52	
q14 interest in functioning of things	13	36	13	67	129
	0.6328	0.0709	0.0014	0.4497	
	10.08	27.91	10.08	51.94	
q16 develop imagination	18	29	10	54	11
	1.1817	0.3533	0.2102	0.0147	
	16.22	26.13	9.01	48.65	
q18 appreciate the arts	26	44	18	53	141
	3.8816	0.1996	0.7494	3.1048	
	18.44	31.21	12.77	37.59	
q20 to be able to read write and count	15	59	15	86	175
	2.2162	1.237	0.5702	0.0608	
	8.57	33.71	8.57	49.14	
q22 adopt hygienic lifestyle	10	41	19	61	131
	2.531	0.2027	2.1049	0.0455	
	7.63	31.30	14.50	46.56	
q25 develop sport abilities	23	42	16	63	144
	1.3352	217E-8	0.0673	0.5068	
	15.97	29.17	11.11	43.75	
Total	158	367	131	602	1258
Statistic		DF	Value	Prob	
Chi-square		24	31,9693	0.1278	

**Table 5: Frequency distribution of total response rating for Black perception of Black and Black perception of White**

*Black respondents' comparative evaluation of Blacks and Whites: Totals per complexity rating*

Race Frequency Cell Chi-Square Row Pct	Complexity rating				Total
	Very difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very easy	
Black	158 0.6444 12.61	226 14.932 18.04	502 11.036 40.06	367 34.001 29.29	1253
White	131 0.678 11.01	115 15.722 9.66	342 11.62 28.74	602 35.801 50.59	1190
Total	289	341	844	969	2443

Probability (chi-statistic=124.44) <0.0001\*\*\*\*

Statistic Chi-square	DF	Value	Prob
	3	124.4361	<.0001

*Cochran-Armitage Trend Test*

Statistic (Z)	-8.0853
Out-side Pr<Z	<.0001
Two-side Pr> Z	<.0001

cance. The nature of the significant ethnic groups or the two dimensions is reflected in the comparatively paired sets of mean dimension scores (where Black respondents form the control group and are compared with one of the other respondent groups) for which significance was indicated. For both the Instrumental and the Moral

dimensions the mean score of Black respondents' perception of themselves differed significantly from their perceptions of Whites at the 0.1% level of significance.

The significance of the difference for the Instrumental and Moral dimensions is discussed in the following paragraphs.

**Table 6: Frequency distribution of 'very difficult' and 'very easy' responses of Blacks in recording their perceptions of themselves and of Whites for items of the moral dimension**

*Auto-evaluation by Blacks of Blacks and Whites. Per item distribution for extreme complexity rating levels*

Questionnaire items Frequency Cell Chi-square Row Pct	Extreme complexity rating levels				Total
	B:B diff++	B:B easy ++	B:W diff++	b:W easy++	
q2 responsibility awareness	15 0.0568 12.40	35 0.3213 28.93	9 0.3933 7.44	62 0.7757 51.24	12
q6 develop morals	18 0.6463 15.93	41 0.7031 36.28	5 2.7695 4.42	49 0.1489 43.36	113
q12 weigh up options	11 0.4025 10.89	25 1.5906 24.75	14 2.4319 13.86	51 0.4818 50.50	101
q19 sense of pride	21 0.1355 14.29	47 0.0009 31.97	13 0.0165 8.84	66 0.0273 44.90	147
q23 self respect	17 0.115 12.14	50 0.6626 35.71	16 0.7835 11.43	57 0.7965 40.71	140
Total	82	198	57	285	622

Statistic Chi-square	DF	Value	Prob
	12	13.2593	0.3505

*Black respondents' perceptions of themselves in comparison with their perceptions of Whites where the Instrumental dimension is concerned.*

Given the significant values found in the first analysis (*Instrumental and Moral objectives-dimensions on the 0.1% level of significance*) a further analysis was done on two subsets of the responses namely Black respondents' perception of themselves in comparison with their perception of Whites. Tables 4 and 5 represent the frequency distributions of Black participants' opinions regarding their difficulty in achieving the relevant objectives falling under the Instrumental and Moral dimension compared to their opinions of the difficulty experienced by Whites maintaining the same objectives. The values are reflected as 'very difficult' and 'very easy'.

The chi-square test reported a significant difference at the 0.1% level (see Table 3) between Blacks' perception of themselves, compared to their perceptions of Whites regarding the difficulty in achieving a list of objectives as stated in Question 2 of the questionnaire. The difference is verified by the values of the Cochran-Armitage trend test which implies that the trend across the two population groups differs significantly. The trend in this instance is the association between Black respondents' perceptions of themselves and their perceptions of Whites for both the Instrumental as well as the Moral dimensions.

The difference perceived between themselves and Whites as reflected in Table 4 and discussed above seems to be that according to Blacks the achievement of certain objectives is *easier for Whites (n = 602 = 48%) than it is for themselves (n = 367 = 29%)*. However these results are not statistically significantly different as  $p = 0.1278 (> 0.05)$ .

Although significance is not indicated for the extended table over the two extreme complexity levels of the scale (very easy and very difficult), the percentages indicated for each cell in the table points to Instrumental items where the ratings between races differed noticeably. Items (in declining order of rating) 13 (express themselves easily), 14 (interest in functioning of things), 16 (develop imagination), 10 (learn self-control), 1 (instill self-confidence), 20 (to be able to read write and count), 22 (adopt a hygienic life style) and 25 (adopt sport abilities) are items where Blacks perceive it as much easier for Whites to achieve as for themselves. This might be perceptions formed in the apartheid era of South Africa when Blacks were severely disadvantaged, the target of prejudice and discrimination which resulted in low self-esteem.

*Black respondents' perceptions of themselves compared to Whites for the Moral dimension.*

Due to the significant differences estimated in the first analysis (*Instrumental and Moral objectives-dimensions on the 0.1% level of sig-*

**Table 7: Frequency distribution of the complexity levels of total responses regarding Black perceptions of themselves compared to their perceptions of Whites regarding the moral dimension**

<i>Auto-evaluation. Total response pattern for Black perceptions of themselves compared to their perceptions of Whites</i>					
<i>Race</i>	<i>Group</i>				
<i>Frequency Cell Chi-Square Row Pct</i>	<i>Very difficult</i>	<i>Difficult</i>	<i>Easy</i>	<i>Very easy</i>	<i>Total</i>
Black	82 1.569 11.88	136 6.7325 19.71	274 0.5964 39.71	198 10.136 28.70	690
White	57 1.6579 8.73	76 7.114 11.64	235 0.6302 35.99	285 10.711 43.64	653
Total	139	212	509	483	1343
<i>Statistic</i>		<i>DF</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Prob</i>	
Chi-Square		3	39.1469	<.0001	
Cochran-Armitage Trend Test Statistic (Z)				-5.5665	
One-sided Pr<Z				<.0001	
Two-sided Pr> Z				<.0001	

nificance) a further analysis was done on two subsets of the responses namely Black respondents' perception of themselves compared to their perception of Whites. Tables 6 and 7 represent the frequency distribution of the 'very difficult' and 'very easy' responses of Black participants regarding the difficulty they experienced in achieving Moral objectives compared to their opinions regarding the same achievement for Whites.

The chi-square test reported a significant difference at the 0.1% level of significance (see Table 3) between Blacks perceptions of themselves compared to their perceptions of Whites regarding difficulty in achieving a list of Morality objectives as stated in Question 2 of the questionnaire. The difference is corroborated by the Cochran-Armitage Trend test (see Table 7) which implies that the trend differs over the two population groups.

The difference perceived between themselves and Whites as reflected in Table 6 and discussed above seems to be that according to Blacks the achievement of certain Morality issues are easier for Whites ( $n = 285 = 46\%$ ) than it is for themselves ( $n = 198 = 32\%$ ). However these results are not statistically significant as  $p = 0.3505 (> 0.05)$ .

Although significance is not indicated for the extended table over the two extreme complexity levels of the scale (very easy and very difficult) the percentages indicated for each cell in the table indicate morality items for which the ratings differed noticeably between ethnic groups. Items (in declining order of rating) 2 (responsibility awareness) and 12 (weigh up options) are items where Blacks perceive it as much easier for Whites to achieve as for themselves. The fact that Blacks had no rights in the apartheid era might have caused them to negotiate their identities and racial world views in the cause of their interaction with other racial groups in South Africa (Hect, Jackson and Ribeau 2002). People regulate their relationships and exchange codes of racial identity in the process of their interaction. In their interaction with Whites, Blacks were not assigned societal responsibilities and had no options to weigh up for them to be able to find it easy to achieve these objectives.

## DISCUSSION

The above analyses indicated that Black respondents' perceptions of their own ability to

achieve certain objectives differed meaningfully from their perceptions of Whites as well as Asians ability to achieve the same objectives which indicates that the Black participants in this research are more cognizant of their inabilities than their Asian and White counter parts. This could be ascribed to historical development over 300 years of White on Black institutionalised racism and racial segregation. Bron-dolo and Libretti (2012:361) is of the opinion that the failure to publicly acknowledge or recognize the valued representatives, icons, or traditions of a particular cultural group establish norms about the behaviours associated with group membership, and can strengthen existing negative attitudes toward ethnic group members. In turn, these presentations can influence beliefs about the degree to which group members merit full social inclusion. Furthermore, identities are being negotiated during interaction with others. In other words, although groups are seeking to preserve their core identities, they are constantly involved in value exchanges as they interact with others (Jackson and Crawley 2003).

In addition, ethnic groups as a biological construct is social because it carries with it a memory of a set of experiences (Jackson 2000: 37). If these experiences and interactions with other ethnic groups are intensely negative and focused on racial issues over a long period of time groups are bound to negatively perceive themselves. The social identity theory of Erikson and others (Cooley 1902; Mead 1934 in Twenge and Crocker 2002; Scott 1997; Jones 1999) predicted that legalized segregation, prejudice and discrimination experienced by subordinate groups, may extort a psychological toll, resulting in damage to the sub-ordinate groups psyche and thus social identity, self-esteem and the way they perceive themselves. Discrimination against Blacks in South Africa has led to a believe that 'Blacks are not good enough' and this believe might have led to a projected lower self-esteem in the instrumental and moral objectives dimensions as discussed above.

The fact that the findings did not indicate a statistically significant difference between the ethnic groups perception of their abilities regarding the Community and Conformity objectives may indicate that Blacks with devalued ethnic identities may have experienced transformed consciousness, which entails moving from awareness and acceptance of their devaluation

to resistance and ultimately redefinition of the meaning and value of their ethnic identity (Adams in Twenge and Crocker 2000:373).

### CONCLUSION

The significance of this study is that the data showed that Blacks (who participated in the study) presented a devalued perception of themselves in certain areas although Black South Africans have been living in a democratic country for almost 18 years since 1994 and are now politically and constitutionally not a sub-ordinate group any more. It however cannot be expected from a group to change their perceptions of themselves and cross-cultural perceptions of other groups in a matter of such a short time of being 'free'. It is mentioned that "while forgiveness remains at the core of our historic negotiated settlement, it does not mean that with forgiveness people have simply forgotten". Teacher education programmes therefore have a critical role in improving students' capacity for unbiased, independent, innovative thinking about cross-cultural issues in the classroom.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The ideal for citizens in South Africa is to enter into co-created cultural contracts with other ethnic groups since this relationship is fully negotiable, open to differences and implies an acknowledgement and appreciation of cross-cultural differences. The focus is then justly on mutual satisfaction rather than obligation. This ideal is however not in reach for some time to come in South Africa as racism is unfortunately on the rise in this country. South Africans will thus have to learn and be guided on how to live together and the ideal opportunity is through teacher education programmes that should encourage and help prospective teachers to change negative feelings which they might have of themselves as well as of learners from groups that they perceive to be relatively remote from their own racial predisposition and to develop a more tolerant and empathetic disposition towards such groups instead.

Teacher education programmes at both initial and in-service levels should ensure that all students develop appropriate knowledge, attitudes and skills to deal effectively with cross-cultural perceptions in South African schools.

Although it can be argued that cross-cultural themes and approaches should permeate the curriculum, it is seen from experience that the intention to sensitise learners to cross-cultural issues becomes 'lost' in other instructional content. In contrast, a dedicated module based on a cross-cultural social justice approach which challenges social and gender stratification, celebrates human diversity and promotes the provision of equal opportunities should be offered on first year level to provide a theoretical knowledge base about all cognitive and affective processes regarding cross-cultural issues. Students should be taught how to question society and its account of truth. The issues highlighted in this dedicated knowledge based module should then permeate all other modules in a teacher education programme. The remaining modules in a programme should build on the knowledge based cross-cultural module and be seen as skills based modules, where subject matter, from maths to literature, is used to instill social action and a more just and compassionate society. The cycle of knowledge, skills and application should then come to full fruition in teaching practice modules which can be seen as application based modules.

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