

English Language Teachers Attitudes Towards Diverse Ethnic Groups: A Quantitative Study

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Abstract

This study investigates the English language teachers' attitudes characterized of a set of emotions, beliefs and behaviors towards cultural diversity. Teachers' attitudes are fundamental for school learning due to the effect they have on the classroom operation and students' achievements. In this research, teachers in primary education, originally from Greece, were asked to complete a questionnaire, which was created for this scope. The number of responders was equal to 280, out of which 263 were women, and they had to rate each item of the questionnaire on a five-point rating scale. Attitude's questionnaire development is based on a combination of literature review and consultation of other instrumentation used to measure teachers' attitudes. Moreover, 12 items were chosen to fit across the three dimensions of attitude, i.e. items correspond with emotion, behaviors and beliefs, whereas another five items refer to personal information. Data collected and analyzed using the SPSS software. According to the findings, the 81,2% of the teachers neither agree nor disagree with the state: 'I am initially suspicious of people, who have a different nationality, culture and cultural heritage than myself' and only 9,6 % of them believe that there are 'good' and 'bad' cultures. Additionally, the results showed that teachers have positive emotions towards diversity (M=3,8 SD=0,6) and, the 87,9% of them do not adopt an attitude of "passivity" on human rights issues. However, most teachers accept any form of diversity (M=4,22 SD=0,7). This study highlights attitudes which are problematic and may be a barrier to intercultural teaching.

Keywords: Attitudes, Beliefs, Diversity, Cultures, English language teacher