APPROACH OF FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION, PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT STUDENTS TO UNESCO CULTURAL DIVERSITY UNIVERSAL AGREEMENT

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ABSTRACT

"UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity", a convention (universal declaration) adopted unanimously by all member countries of the United Nations on November, 2001, and adopted and supported by the EU, as well, and binding on Turkey, among others, comes to the fore in all efforts undertaken for Turkey's future.

With this fact on mind, in this research, we first of all were analyzed the point of view and approach of faculty communication publicity and public relations department students toward Unesco based on an assumption that they would become society-shaping individuals in the future. Thereafter, we discussed their perception of the fact that cultural differences were highlighted within the framework of "Convention on Cultural Diversity", as well as their attitude and opinion about such articles of the convention as social integration, citizenship consciousness and human rights. Apart from that, data generated as the result of research conducted with aid of survey on students were evaluated statistically using SPSS software program as applied stage of research.

Keywords: Unesco, culture, communication faculty student, public relations practitioner, cultural diversity

"UNESCO KÜLTÜREL ÇEŞİTLİLİK EVRENSEL SÖZLEŞMESI"NE İLETİŞİM FAKÜLTESİ ÖĞRENCILERININ YAKLAŞIMI

ÖZET

Birleşmiş Milletler'e üye tüm ülkelerin Kasım 2001'de oybirliğiyle benimsediği, ve Türkiye açısından da bağlayıcılığı bulunan, AB tarafından da kabul edilip desteklenen "UNESCO Kültürel Çeşitlilik Evrensel Sözleşmesi" Türkiye'nin geleceğine yönelik tüm çalışmalarda da karşımıza çıkmaktadır.Kültür yapımızın güçlü ve zayıf yönleri ortaya konulduğunda siyasal ve idari yönetimlerin evrensel sözleşmeye duyarlı olması kaçınılmazdır. Öncelikle kültür yapımızın bu bildirge maddelerinden nasıl etkileneceği ve sorunların giderilmesi yolunda ne tür stratejiler geliştirilmesi gerektiği irdelenmelidir.

Araştırma bu doğrultudan yola çıkarak; özellikle iletişim fakültesi öğrencilerinin toplumu şekillendirici bireyler olduğu düşünülerek Unesco'ya bakış açıları analiz edilmeye çalışılacaktır. Daha sonra " Kültürel Çeşitlilik Evrensel Sözleşmesi "çerçevesinde kültürel farklılıkların ön plana çıkarılmasına nasıl baktıkları, sosyal bütünleşme, vatandaşlık bilinci, insan hakları gibi sözleşme maddeleri karşısındaki tutum ve düşünceleri irdelenmiştir. Araştırmanın uygulama safhasında ise öğrencilere uygulanan anket yardımı ile araştırma sonucunda elde edilen veriler SPSS yazılım programı kullanılarak istatistiksel olarak değerlendirilmiştir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Unesco, kültür, iletişim fakültesi öğrencileri, halka ilişkiler uygulamacıları, kültürel çeşitlilik

1. DEFINITION OF CULTURE

Culture comprises whole material and immaterial values handed down one generation to the next. In other words it is a value clew which can be acquired by learning. There is no certain definition on culture even for today. According to Wissler, culture is a system or sum of particular thoughts (Güvenç 1991:36).

According to another definition, culture is all of the values which provide feeling, thought and judgment union for each community, this

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meaning of culture comprises "all art values of one community such as customs, traditions, thoughts and art values" and shortly means "knowledge" (Okay 1999: 223).

Consequently, it is possible to consider culture as "sum of values which determine the life style and produced by society".

Cultural change is inevitable for societies. Globalization and development of communication technologies has accelerated heavy working communication processes and cultural values have become rapidly transferable from one community to another. Within this kind of structuring, communities are losing their cultural values and characteristics and facing up with the manipulation and deformation problem of new cultural values to communities and individuals. Community culture includes different social groups, religions, dialects, ethnic congregations, races and classes. These different culture groups are being changed and converted through communication media within globalized world. As a result local culture forms gradually disappear and the world has been heading to single cultured formation.

2. CULTURAL STRUCTURE OF TURKEY

Republic of Turkey established by Atatürk is a nation state in which various identities in terms of religion, language, race and similar origins live together. Contemporary Republic of Turkey accommodates many languages, religions and races within its structure. Being of its geography on the historical crossing point of communities spread three different continentals is the biggest reason of this.

Attitudes and perceptions of peoples and groups may differ from the others depending onto gender, education, region, ethnic and religious identity in Turkey where many changes are being experienced in an instant within the modernization and developing process. Turkish is the mother language of %90 of population in Turkey. There are approximately 70 different languages such as Caucasian and Kurdish dialectics, Arabic,

Greek, Latin and Armenia. In terms of ethnic origin, a community which comprises substantially from Turkish and in turn Kurdish-Zaza, Arabian, Caucasian, Balkan and non-Moslem people (www.milliyet.com.tr/ 2007/03/25/guncel/agun.html)

Turkish culture has a considerable richness due to variety of ethnic structure. This situation which appears as a result of frequent contract with other cultures and feeding from many sources in this distinctive geography has assisted Turkish culture to has a pluralist structure. So it is possible to consider our culture as a resultant of other interacted and contacted cultures. It accommodates a culture accumulation of a thousand years which is a result of many emigrations and carried even to Balkan and Anatolia from Middle Asia. Rich cultural accumulation puts cultural identity into a wider and richer frame.

The main problem of our cultural structure is insufficiencies of publicity and passing on to next generations. Nonexistence of sustainable, supportable and durable policies for this issue is the main reason of this.

Adoption of forward and encouraging measures for the areas regarding culture against undesired structuring which negatively effect the changing and especially unplanned and unhealthy urbanization is inevitable in developing countries like Turkey (http:// plan9.dpt.gov.tr/oik48_kultur/48kultur.pdf).

3. REQUIRED QUALIFICATION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONER WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Public Relations Specialist engages in a profession which needs to be conducted interactively with different corporation stakeholders and target groups. In this regard, this person should have a good dialogue with these groups which may carry different cultural properties.

According to Grunig and Grunig "culture shapes public relations, but public relations can help to change culture" (Grunig and Grunig, 2003: 336).
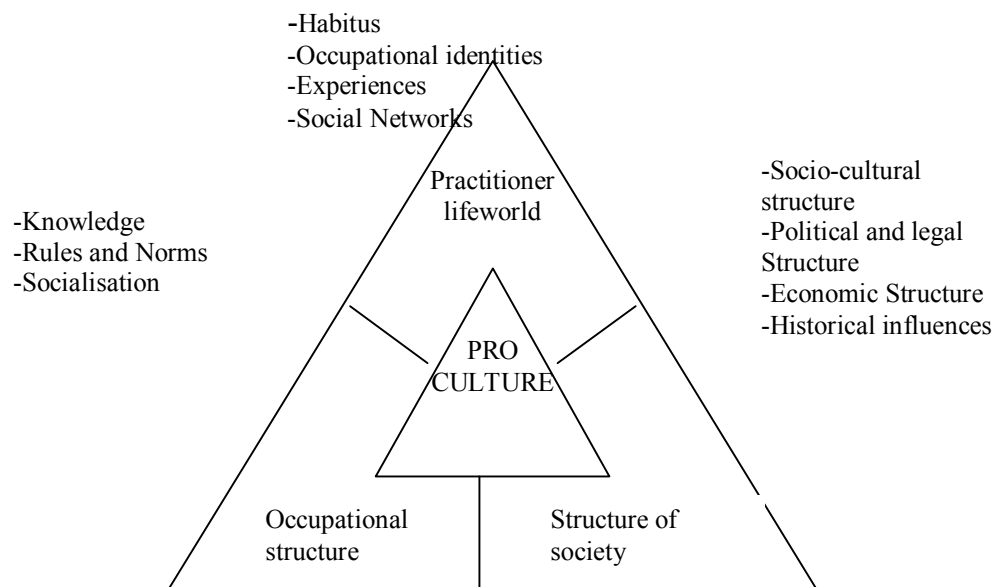
For example, cultural activities which were realized with the aim of public relations by many corporations in Turkey (e.g.; exhibitions, concerts etc.) have contributed to cultural diversity of people in recent years.

Public relations practitioner culture is defined as (Hodges 2006: 85):

- The practitioner lifeworld: -The totality of practitioners' thought, concepts, values and

assumptions about their occupation (referred to collectively as "habitus") and their occupational experiences and identities that guide their behaviour. These will evolve with contact with other practitioners (occupational socialisation) and with wider social and cultural influences.

- A system of occupational practices involving actions which "make a difference" to the world in some way.

-Habitus
-Occupational identities
-Experiences
-Social Networks

Practitioner lifeworld

-Knowledge
-Rules and Norms
-Socialisation

-Socio-cultural structure
-Political and legal Structure
-Economic Structure
-Historical influences

PRO CULTURE

Occupational structure

Structure of society

Figure 1. The circuit of cultural intermediation

We also try to direct and inform our students in our faculty in order to make them agent between various cultural structures as explained above.

UNESCO Cultural Diversity Agreement

UNESCO General Conference has adopted "Protection and Encouraging the Diversity of Cultural Expressions Agreement" which was debated by participating of Council President on behalf of European Commission and member states on 20 October 2005. This agreement which contains a compromise of international community with respect to directive principles and concepts on cultural diversity has taken shape on the base of "UNESCO Cultural Diversity Universal Agreement" which was unanimously adopted by all member states of United Nations in

November 2001 accordingly having a binding property on Turkey and also supported and accepted by EU. Turkey has been requested for "Getting Accustomed to the EU policies on protection of cultural diversity within the frame of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Cultural Diversity Agreement". In this case, "Culture 2000" program and "UNESCO Cultural Diversity Agreement" are the most significant document to be taken into consideration with the aim of planning the cultural policy for Turkey who has taken EU membership issue in the forefront of political agenda.

Research

Due to "shaping cultural diversity" and "agent" impact of Public Relations Practitioner, we

have conducted a survey to the students of communication faculty, public relations and publicity department who were taken into account as the future public relations practitioners by us. We included students of Istanbul University which has one of the leading communication faculties of Turkey and Akdeniz University which was newly established but starting to successfully hold a place in the sector to our survey with the aim of determining the differences between the students.

We conducted our survey on 350 students. %61.1 of these students was from İstanbul University Communication Faculty and %38.9 of them was from Akdeniz University Communication Faculty. Return rates of surveys were %42 for Istanbul University and %78,6 for Akdeniz University. Both of the return rates of two universities were considered as sufficient for our research.

Demographic Particulars

%45.1 of the students was female and %52,9 of students was male. As we consider the age groups of the students, we can determine that %35,3 of them was in seventeen-twenty age group, %54,8 of them was twenty one-twenty four and %10,9 of them was in twenty five and over age group. As %40'9 of them lives with their families, %58 was separate from their family. As monthly incomes of most of the student families were 501-1000 YTL (%32,9), the income provided for most of the students was mainly below 500 YTL (%59,1). As we take into consideration the education backgrounds of student families, we see that guardians are generally graduated from primary school. (Mother %50,3 / Father %44,9). Reduction of birth rate of Turkish society in recent years puts forward the number of student siblings. %25,7 of students has two siblings and %23,4 of them has three siblings.

Cultural Particulars

Turkey is separated into seven regions in terms of geography. In terms of students' birth places

dispersion into these regions, Marmara Region (%38.6) takes place in the front rank. After that Blacksea Region (%14.3), Aegean Region (%12.9), Central Anatolia Region (%8), East Anatolia Region (%8) and Mediterranean Region (%7.4) take place respectively.

We asked some questions to the students of which %71.4 of them has never founded in abroad with the aim of confirming the cultural preferences of them. Accordingly, the preferred cultural activities as follows:

	Prefer	Not prefer	No answer
Cinema (domestic)	85,1	9,4	5,4
Cinema (foreign)	87,1	6,9	6,0
Opera-Ballet	12,9	55,4	31,7
Visit museums and exhibitions	44,6	29,4	26
Reading book (Turkish writter)	82,9	8,6	9,4
Reading book (foreign writter)	78,9	8,6	12,6
Theather	53,1	24,9	22,0

It has been determined that students mostly prefer to go cinema however beside this they also have a high rate of reading book habit.

As we search the participation situations of students to the above mentioned activities by assorting them according to their university, it has been understood that students of both Istanbul University and Akdeniz University have generally similar tendencies; however, students of Istanbul University participate more than the students of Akdeniz University to opera and ballet activities (I.U.: %18,7; A.U.: %3,7); and visit museums and exhibitions (I.U.: %54,7; A.U.: 28,7)It is possible to associate this to the fact that there are more opera and ballet watching opportunity and museum and exhibition facility in Istanbul.

The following table appears as we asked to students that how often they prefer the abovementioned cultural activities:

	Last week	Last month	Last six months	Last year	Never	No answer
Cinema (domestic)	47,1	30,3	8,9	3,7	2,3	7,7
Cinema (foreign)	52,3	25,7	7,4	3,4	3,7	7,4
Opera-Ballet	2,9	4,9	7,7	7,7	45,4	31,1
Visiting museums and exhibitions	10,9	23,1	18,3	19,1	8	20,3
Reading book (Turkish author)	40	30,1	8,6	5,4	2,9	12
Reading book (foreign author)	38	26,9	13,1	6,6	2,9	12,3
Theather	7,1	17,1	20,3	21,1	12,6	21,7

According to this, going to cinema (no big difference between foreign and domestic movies) and reading book activities are taking place among the most realized activities for the last week. The stability continues for the same activities for the last month. Opera and ballet are the activities which students never participate with a rate of %45,4. No answers of the students the museum and exhibition visitations with a rate of %20,3 shows that they are not interested in with these activities.

Approach to Unesco Cultural Diversity Universal Manifesto

We interrogated that if students know the meaning of "UNESCO". %58 of the students know correctly the meaning of UNESCO. But only %26,6 of them expressed that they have heard about Unesco Cultural Diversity Universal Manifesto. As a result it has been determined that study of Unesco is not well-known by the students of Communication Faculty.

As we interrogated which facts are included within the "cultural diversity" concept by the students, it has been determined that students include language with the rate of %13,2 religion with the rate of %11,2, ethnic origin with the rate of %17,2, values with the rate of %26,7 and written, visual and auditory cultural materials with the rate of %31,4 within the cultural diversity. (Students had the chance of choosing more than one option.)

We asked the opinions of our students with respect to each articles of Unesco Cultural Diversity Universal Agreement (UNCDUA).

According to this, the following result has appeared:

More than the half of the students defend the opinion of "Cultural diversity should be recognized and supported for current and next generations.". New generation Turkish youth has clearly put forward that coexistence of all cultures and fraternal and indulgent approach of all cultures to each other are necessary for a peaceful world.

They also underline the opinion of "Protection, secundation and handing on to the next generations of basic cultural values". This is an important indicator of young unification under the opinion of protection of cultural values.

As is seen on the table, as our students show their positive opinions about all articles, they disagreed with the article of "Individuals have right to express themselves in any language especially in their native language and to produce and disseminate their works." with the rate of %14,3, however it is not possible to consider this figure as a high rate.

We have determined that there is no meaningful difference as we searched that if students have any different approaches according to their universities. Opinions of both university students are mainly seem as same. And also no meaningful difference has been determined as we crossbreed the birth places of students and their approaches. In this regard, we observed that students from all over Turkey have a positive approach to these articles and there is no differentiation between regions.

State your opinions about in the following statements	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	No idea (3)	Not agree (2)	Not strongly Agree (1)	Mean
Cultural diversity: the common heritage of humanity Cultural diversity should be recognized and supported for current and next generations	62	26,6	4,6	1,1	3,1	4,35
From cultural diversity to cultural pluralism Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace.	45,7	37,1	7,4	4,9	1,4	4,11
Cultural diversity as a factor in development Cultural diversity to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.	40	42,3	8,3	4,3	0,3	4,05
Human rights as guarantees of cultural diversity Human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the rights of persons belonging to guaranteed by international law, nor to limit their scope.	49,7	34	5,7	4,6	1,4	4,12
Cultural rights as an enabling environment for cultural diversity Individuals have right to express themselves in any language especially in their native language and to produce and disseminate their works.	43,7	28,3	8,9	9,4	4,9	3,82
Towards access for all to cultural diversity It should be offered an opportunity to express themselves and disseminate to all cultures and it is necessary that the possibility for all cultures to have access to the means of expression and dissemination are the guarantees of cultural diversity.	45,4	30,3	8,3	6	3,7	3,89
Cultural heritage as the wellspring of creativity Protection, secundation and handing on to the next generations of basic cultural values	58,9	27,4	5,7	1,7	0,6	4,25
Cultural policies as catalysts of creativity Each state must create conditions and policies conducive to the production and dissemination of diversified cultural goods and services through cultural industries.	51,4	34,9	5,1	3,4	0,9	4,20
Strengthening capacities for creation and dissemination worldwide It is necessary to reinforce developing countries and countries in transition, to establish cultural industries that are viable and competitive at national and international level.	43,7	38,3	7,4	4,6	2,6	4,06
Building partnerships amongst the public sector, the private sector and civil society Preservation and promotion of cultural diversity is the key to sustainable human development. From this perspective, pre-eminence of public policy, in partnership with the private sector and civil society, must be reaffirmed.	43,1	36	10,3	3,7	3,7	4,02

CONCLUSION

It has been determined that our students have the "positive approach to cultural diversities" property which should be carried by an public relations specialist from these researches which we have conducted over the students of Public Relations and Publicity Departments of Communication Faculties of Istanbul and Akdeniz Universities. It has been observed that more than the half of our students knows about the meaning of UNESCO as most of them are not noticed about Unesco Cultural Diversity Universal Manifesto. As we interrogate students about the meanings of cultural diversity concept, we determined that written, visual and auditory cultural materials come into prominence and the fact of religion is preferred at the lowest rate.

The only deficiency of our students who are very open to cultural pluralism is the fact that they don't know very much about UNESCO's studies and their contexts. It possible to say that this situation is taken root from UNESCO has no public relations representative in Turkey. Actually UNESCO has a "communication specialization committee" in Turkey but this committee has no public relations activity for publicity of UNESCO.

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