

An Examination of Multicultural Awareness and Sensitivity of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Educators

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Abstract

It is imperative that colleges and universities become increasingly responsive to cultural differences of students served and that diversity is valued by educators' efforts to meet the needs of culturally diverse students. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between demographic and educational profile variables on multicultural awareness and sensitivity levels of recreation, parks, and tourism (RPT) educators. A sample of 131 RPT educators from the United States and Canada participated in this study. Statistical relationships were found between multicultural courses taught and taken, seminars and workshops, years of teaching, age, ethnicity, and perceptions of cultural competence levels among RPT educators. Significant differences were found between the age, sex, levels of education, number of cultural competence workshops attended, self-perception of cultural competence of RPT educators with their multicultural awareness and sensitivity scores. These findings are discussed in terms of pre-service education and in-service training for RPT educators.

Keywords: cultural competency, multicultural awareness and sensitivity, educators

Introduction

The United States has and will continue to become more culturally diverse. For the purpose of this study, diversity referred to any group that has been disenfranchised, underrepresented, underserved, or discriminated against simply because the group possessed stereotypical characteristics. The U.S. Census Bureau (2000), reports there are over 284 million people in the U.S. population, of which approximately 20% are ethnic minorities. Almost one in every five Americans has a disability, and one in 10 has a severe disability (U.S. Census Brief, 1997). The Administration on Aging (2002) also reported in 2000 that people 65 years of age and older represented 12.4% of the population and is expected to increase to 20% by

2030. This study however, focused on racial/ethnic and gender diversity. This increase in these specific dimensions of diversity present a challenge to recreation, parks, and tourism (RPT) educators, who are educating future professionals to serve an increasingly culturally diverse population.

Cultural competence is becoming one of the most discussed concepts among scholars and practitioners interested in diversity issues. Cultural competence is defined as a "continuous, developmental process of pursuing cultural awareness, knowledge, skill, encounters, sensitivity, and linkages among services and people" (Smith, 1998, p. 8). Cultural competency requires that colleges and universities are responsive to the cultural differences of the students they serve and that diversity is valued and acknowledged by educators' efforts to meet the needs of culturally diverse students. Specifically, educators are experiencing a growing realization that they, as well as their faculty colleagues, must be culturally aware and sensitive in order to prepare the next generation of recreation, park, and tourism professionals to provide services to an increasingly diverse society.

Within the field of recreation, parks, and tourism (RPT), cultural competence has been encouraged in terms of education, training, and professional practice. For example, Henderson (1997) discussed the need for all recreation professionals, board members, staff, and volunteers to have diversity training. She indicated that much of that training should begin with higher education, but that it should be "an ongoing endeavor since each community is different" (p. 30). Similarly, Dieser and Wilson (2002) stated that educational institutions should make system-directed changes such as requiring cross-ethnic understanding in their curriculums in order to train students to provide meaningful services to people from minority groups.

Unfortunately, RPT educators have limited exposure and training in areas needed to provide them with the skills required to educate students to be culturally competent (Dieser & Peregoy, 1998; Peregoy & Dieser, 1997; Stone & Gladwell, 2004;). For example, Stone and Gladwell (2004) indicated that almost one-half of therapeutic recreation educators who responded to their survey had not completed any coursework related to cultural diversity and almost two-thirds had not taught such a course. Similarly, Dieser and Peregoy (1998) indicated more than one-half of all graduate-level park and recreation programs do not have cultural diversity program requirements.

Milner, Flowers, Moore, Moore, and Flowers (2003) reported that the low number of courses available to educators point to "obvious barriers and shortcomings among teacher education programs across the country" (p. 69). For example, Gantt-Wright (1999) argued that cultural, attitudinal or service system barriers may prevent minorities from utilizing park and recreation services. Historically, minorities have not received social and human services comparable to the majority population. Many researchers have addressed the disparities felt by minority groups in relationship to recreation participation, including people of color, people with disabilities, women,

gays and lesbians, and older adults (Auchincloss, VanNostrand, & Ronsaville, 2001; Henderson, 1995; Lecca, Quervalu, Nunes, & Gonzales, 1998; Williams, 2001). Examples of disparities experienced by minorities include stigmas associated with certain physical and mental disabilities (Husaini, Sherkat, Levine, Bragg, Holzer, Anderson, Cain, & Moten, 2002), differences in park usage by ethnic minorities (Gobster, 1998), and lack of recreation programming directed specifically toward gays and lesbians (Ohle, 1990). Williams (2001) indicated that clients may not use services if they do not perceive a need for those services or if the assistance offered runs counter to deeply-held cultural beliefs. Therefore, it would be beneficial for recreation, parks, and tourism educators to be knowledgeable of these cultural beliefs and needs in order to educate students how to effectively meet culturally diverse groups' leisure needs.

More than ever, a significant understanding and knowledge of individuals from different cultural backgrounds will be required as recreation, parks, and tourism educators are expected to teach a culturally diverse population of students. Unfortunately, little is known about the cultural competence levels of recreation, parks, and tourism educators and the level of training and education they have had in preparation for teaching students from different cultural backgrounds.

A theoretical model that is commonly used for cultural diversity training is Wheeler's (1994) Education and Training Model (See Figure 1). According to Wheeler, diversity training is approached with the assumption that people are often unaware of their behavior and personal biases, and they are not culturally aware or naturally sensitive to the differences of others. Wheeler's hierarchical model of cultural diversity suggests four sequential cognizance levels of diversity issues, ranging from being "unconsciously incompetent" to "unconsciously competent" about diversity issues.

The first level, "unconsciously incompetent", assumes that people do not know what they do not know about cultural diversity. Recreation, parks, and tourism educators who are "unconsciously incompetent" are unaware of their reactions toward minority groups and/or stereotypes and preconceived notions they hold toward culturally different students. They also have limited knowledge, if any, of their students' cultures, such as communication patterns, cultural heritage, and backgrounds. At the second level, individual awareness is enhanced to the point where the individual becomes "consciously incompetent", or he/she knows that he/she does not know. Recreation, parks, and tourism (RPT) educators who are "consciously incompetent" have a new awareness and understanding of their own cultural values and biases and are willing to improve their understanding of culturally diverse populations.

The third level assumes that a person becomes "consciously competent", or he/she has a new awareness and understanding of the cultural differences of others. The "consciously competent" RPT educator teaches with this new cultural awareness

and understanding. Finally, at the fourth level, the person is “unconsciously competent”, or he/she teaches at a culturally competent level but does so without thinking about it.

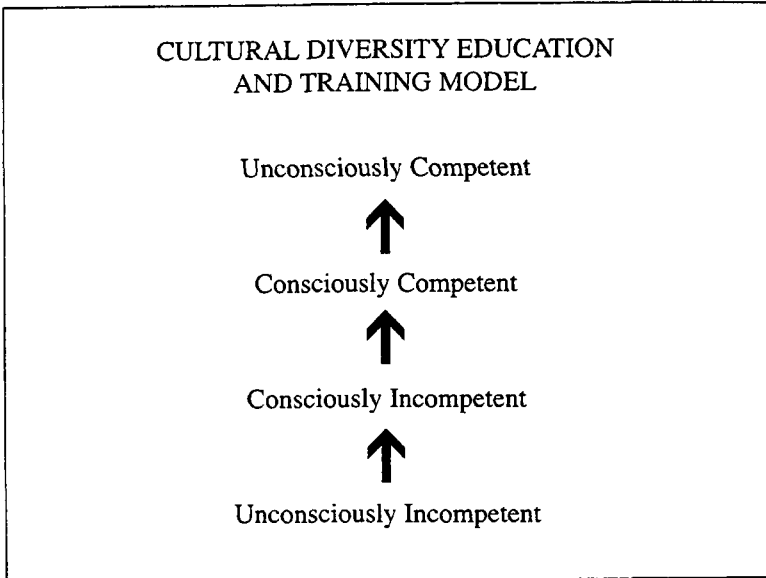


Figure 1 Wheeler, M.L. (1994). *Diversity Training*.

Limited research is available that has examined the cultural competencies of recreation, parks, and tourism educators, or the influence that various demographic and educational profile variables have on these competencies. With the increasing diversity of our society, it is important to examine the cultural competencies of recreation, parks, and tourism educators in more depth. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to address the following questions: (a) How culturally aware and sensitive do recreation, parks, and tourism educators perceive themselves to be? (b) What are the relationships between the demographic and educational profile variables? (c) What are the relationships between multicultural awareness and sensitivity scores of recreation, parks, and tourism educators and profile variables?, and (d) What are the differences between the self-perception of cultural competency and the cultural competency scores of recreation, parks, and tourism educators? The results of this study will provide a foundation for future investigations on the cultural competence of recreation, parks, and tourism educators. An additional benefit of the study is that cultural competence data will be produced that could influence how pre-service and in-service cultural diversity training programs are designed and implemented by recreation, parks, and tourism educators.

Methods

Participants

A systematic random sample of 400 recreation, parks, and tourism educators was sent the *Assessment of Multicultural Attitudes of Park and Recreation Educators* questionnaire. The researchers obtained names and addresses of the subjects from the *Society of Park and Recreation Educators (SPRE) Curriculum Catalog* (2002-2003). The *SPRE Curriculum Catalog* contains a complete list of full-time faculty members at 108 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada offering programs in parks, recreation resources and leisure services education.

Instruments

The *Assessment of Multicultural Attitudes of Park and Recreation Educators* questionnaire contained three parts: Part 1 was a slightly modified version of the *Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey* (Ponterotto, et al., 1998); Part 2 was a modified version of the *Quick Discrimination Index* (Ponterotto, et al., 1995); and Part 3 contained demographic and educational profile questions.

Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey. The *Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS)* is a unidimensional, self-reported inventory of teachers' multicultural awareness and sensitivity. The *TMAS* is a 20-item survey that uses a five-point Likert-type self-report measure that asks the respondent to indicate the degree to which the scale item describes their work as teachers. Responses range from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). Internal consistency measures, incorporating both coefficient alpha (.86) and theta (.89) procedures, indicated high levels of internal consistency for the *TMAS* scores. Sample items include "multicultural training for instructors is not necessary" and "in order to be an effective instructor, one needs to be aware of cultural differences present in the classroom."

Quick Discrimination Index. The *Quick Discrimination Index (QDI)* is a 30-item, 5-point Likert-type self-report measure that asks respondents to indicate the degree to which the scale item describes their work as educators. Responses range from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5) and measures the attitudes toward racial equality and gender equity among late adolescent and adult populations. The *QDI* consists of three factors: general (cognitive) attitudes about racial diversity and multiculturalism (Factor I), affective and personal attitudes as they relate to racial contact in one's personal life (Factor II), and general attitudes regarding women's equity issues (Factor III).

Factor I consists of 9 items that assess cognitive attitudes toward racial diversity (e.g., "I really think affirmative action programs on college campuses constitute reverse discrimination."). The score range is 9 to 45 with high scores indicating more awareness, sensitivity, and receptivity to racial diversity. Factor II consists of 7 items

and measures affective and personal attitudes as they relate to racial contact in one's personal life (e.g., "I feel I could develop an intimate relationship with someone from a different race."). The score range is 7 to 35 with high scores indicating more awareness, sensitivity, and receptivity to racial diversity. Factor III consists of 7 items and assesses cognitive attitudes toward gender equity and women's issues (e.g., "Generally speaking, men work harder than women."). The score range is 7 to 35 with high scores indicating more awareness, sensitivity, and receptivity to gender equity and women's issues. Ponterotto et al. (1995) found *QDI* scores to be fairly stable during a 15-week test-retest period with a reported stability coefficient mean for Factor 1 of .90, Factor II of .82, and Factor III of .81.

Demographic and Educational Profile Variables. The demographic and educational profile questions were developed by the researchers to elicit pertinent profile information about the respondents for analyses of multicultural attitude data such as: age; gender; ethnicity; number of years of full-time teaching in recreation, parks, and tourism; level of education; geographic location; and number of undergraduate or graduate cultural diversity courses taken and taught. Respondents were also asked the number of multicultural workshops or seminars attended within the last five years. Using a Likert type scale of "very culturally competent" to "not at all culturally competent," respondents were asked to indicate how culturally competent they perceived themselves to be, how culturally competent they believed other RPT educators to be, and how culturally competent they believed RPT students to be.

Data Collection

The instruments were mailed to a random sample of 400 recreation, parks, and tourism educators in the U.S. and Canada. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it when completed. Packets included a cover letter with specific directions for completing the instruments and a return date. Follow-up postcards were mailed once to increase the response rate.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize characteristics of data, including frequencies and measures of central tendencies. Pearson correlation analyses were used to determine whether a relationship existed between profile variables. Comparative analyses included independent t-tests, ANOVA, and MANOVA to determine whether significant differences existed between demographic and educational profile variables and the *TMAS* and *QDI* subscales.

Results

Of the 400 questionnaires mailed to the recreation, parks, and tourism educators, 131 usable questionnaires were received. This constituted a response rate of 32.75%.

Participant Profile

Table 1 indicates that the responding recreation, parks, and tourism (RPT) educators ranged in age from 29 to 62 years, with a mean age of 47.5 years. There were approximately an equal percentage of men and women (51.9% and 48.1%, respectively). The vast majority of the sample (87.5%) was European American/White, while only 12.5 % were either African-American/Black, Asian-American or Pacific Islander, Latin-American/Hispanic, or American Indian. Over 86% of the respondents held a doctoral degree. The vast majority (96 %) of the responding educators worked at state-supported colleges/universities and roughly two-thirds (62.9%) taught at doctoral/research universities. The respondents identified their primary area of specialization within the field as leisure service management (27.9%), therapeutic recreation (26.4%), natural resources (19.4%), travel/tourism/commercial recreation (18.6%), and generalist or other (7.7%). Approximately one fourth of the educators indicated that they had been teaching full-time for 5 years or less. In addition, 44.6% had been teaching for a minimum of 15 years. The respondents were evenly distributed geographically from the east coast to the midwest to the west coast (35.2%, 38.4%, and 26.4% respectively). Only 19.1% of the respondents' universities and colleges had non-white student populations greater than 30%. Similarly, 75.9% of the respondents' departments had less than 20% non-white student majors. In fact, almost one-half (48.1%) of the recreation, parks, and tourism departments had 0-5% non-white student majors.

TABLE 1

Profile characteristics of sample

Variables	Characteristics	Participants	Percentages
Ethnicity (n=129)	European American/White	113	87.6
	African American	4	3.1
	Latin American/Hispanic	2	1.5
	Asian or Pacific Islander	5	3.9
	Other	5	3.9
Sex (n=130)	Female	62	48.1
	Male	68	51.9
Age (n=130)	29 - 39	19	14.6
	40 - 49	46	35.4
	50 - 59	58	44.6
	60 - 62	7	5.4

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Area of specialization (n=129)	Travel tourism/commercial recreation	24	18.6
	Leisure services management	36	27.9
	Therapeutic Recreation/Recreation Therapy	34	26.4
	Natural Resources	25	19.4
	Other	8	6.2
	Generalists	2	1.5
Carnegie classification (n=116)	Doctoral/Research Universities - Extensive	42	36.2
	Doctoral/Research Universities - Intensive	31	26.7
	Master's Colleges and Universities I	15	12.9
	Master's Colleges and Universities II	11	9.5
	Baccalaureate Colleges - Liberal Arts	11	9.5
	Baccalaureate Colleges - General	5	4.3
	Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges	0	0
	Associate's Colleges	0	0
Specialized Institutions	1	0.9	
Type of college or university (n=129)	State supported	124	96.1
	Private	5	3.9
Geographic location (n=131)	Great Lakes Region	43	32.8
	Mid-Atlantic Region	10	8
	Mid-West Region	7	5.6
	New England Region	2	1.6
	Pacific Southwest Region	23	17.6
	Southern Region	34	25.6
Southwest Region	12	8.8	

Multicultural Education Received and Provided by RPT Educators

Approximately two-thirds (59.1%) of the respondents indicated they had never taken a multicultural course, 24.4% had completed one or two course(s), and 16.5% had taken 3 or more courses. Regarding multicultural courses taught, 65.6% had not taught a multicultural course in the past 5 years, 25.8% had taught one such course, and 15.6% had taught 2 or more multicultural courses. Slightly over one-tenth (11.5%) had not attended any multicultural seminars or workshops within the past five years, while 48.9% had attended three or more workshops or seminars. When asked who sponsored the cultural diversity workshops or seminars they had attended, the respondents indicated 212 workshops or seminars had been sponsored by universities/colleges, 91 by national professional organizations, and 48 by state professional organizations (see Table 2).

TABLE 2

Multicultural Education/Training Variables

Variables	Characteristics	Participants	Percentages
Multicultural courses taken	No multicultural coursework	76	59.4
	One multicultural course	14	10.9
	Two multicultural courses	17	13.3
	Three or more multicultural courses	21	16.4
Multicultural courses taught	No multicultural coursework	85	65.9
	One multicultural course	23	17.8
	Two multicultural courses	10	7.8
	Three or more multicultural courses	11	8.5
Multicultural seminars/workshops attended	No multicultural seminars/workshops	15	11.5
	One multicultural seminar/workshops	23	17.7
	Two multicultural seminars/workshops	29	22.3
	Three multicultural seminars/workshops	21	16.2
	Four or more multicultural seminars/workshops	42	32.3

Perceptions of Multicultural Competence

When asked to indicate their perception of their own level of cultural competence, over half (52.3%) of the respondents perceived themselves to be culturally competent or very culturally competent (12.5% and 39.8% respectively). Just under half of the educators perceived themselves to be either moderately culturally competent (32.0%) or somewhat culturally competent (14.1%). In contrast, the RPT educators perceived only 22.7% of their fellow RPT educators to be culturally competent or very culturally competent. The respondents indicated that 72.3% of their colleagues were moderately (47.1%) or somewhat (25.2%) culturally competent.

The RPT educators' perceptions of their students' cultural competence fared even worse. The educators perceived that 28.0% of their students were moderately culturally competent, while 45.6% were perceived as somewhat culturally competent. Interestingly, only 1.6% perceived themselves not to be culturally competent, yet they viewed 4.9% of their colleagues and 17.6% of their students as being not culturally competent (see Table 3).

TABLE 3
Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Educators'
Perception of Cultural Competence

Level of cultural competence	Self-Perception		Perception of Other		Perception of	
	#	%	#	%	RPT Educators	RPT Students
Very Culturally Competent	16	12.5	5	4.1	2	1.6
Culturally Competent	51	39.8	23	18.7	9	7.2
Moderately Culturally Competent	41	32.0	58	47.1	35	28.0
Somewhat Culturally Competent	18	14.1	31	25.2	57	45.6
Not Culturally Competent	2	1.6	6	4.9	22	17.6

Relationships Between Profile Variables

Pearson correlations were conducted to examine the relationships between demographic and educational profile variables. Table 4 indicates only the correlations that were moderately strong and were statistically significant ($p < .05$). The strongest correlations existed between the respondents' years of full-time teaching experience and age ($r = +.599, p < .001$), the number of cultural competence taken and the number of cultural competence courses taught ($r = +.575, p < .001$), the respondents' perception of their faculty colleagues' cultural competency and the educators' perception of their students' cultural competency ($r = +.467, p < .001$), and the percentage of non-white students in the RPT department/program and the percentage of non-white students in the college/university ($r = +.453, p < .001$).

In addition, moderate positive correlations were found between the self-perception of the respondents' cultural competency and their perception of the cultural competency of their faculty colleagues ($r = +.306, p < .001$), and the self-perception of the respondents' cultural competency and the number of multicultural workshops/seminars attended in the past 5 years ($r = +.301, p < .001$).

TABLE 4

Significant Pearson Correlations Between Profile Variables

<u>Profile Variables</u>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Years of full-time teaching experience with age	0.599	0.000
Number of cultural competency courses taken with number of cultural competence courses taught	0.575	0.000
Number of workshops attended with number of cultural competency courses taken	0.295	0.006
Number of workshops attended with number of cultural competence courses taught	0.260	0.003
Ethnicity with self-perception of cultural competence	0.262	0.003
Self-perception of cultural competence with perception of RPT students' cultural competence	0.306	0.001
Self-perception of cultural competence with number of workshops attended	0.301	0.001
Number of cultural competence courses taught and self-perception of cultural competence	0.231	0.009
Perception of other RPT educators' cultural competence with perception of RPT students' cultural competence	0.467	0.000

TMAS and QDI Scales

Mean item scores were computed in order to interpret how RPT educators scored on the *TMAS* and *QDI* scales based upon the original 5-point Likert scales. Higher mean scores indicated higher self-reported level of multicultural awareness and sensitivity on the *TMAS* and *QDI* subscales. The *TMAS* total score mean and standard deviations were: $M = 3.86$; $SD = .488$. The *QDI* subscale means were: *QDI* Factor 1 which assessed cognitive attitudes toward racial diversity ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .759$); *QDI* Factor 2 which measured affective and personal attitudes as they relate to racial contact in one's personal life ($M = 3.69$, $SD = .563$); and *QDI* Factor 3 which assessed general attitudes regarding women's equity issues ($M = 4.04$, $SD = .606$). Since the scales' midpoints were 2.5, it is apparent that the respondents self-reported fairly high levels of multicultural awareness and sensitivity (see Table 5).

TABLE 5

Item Mean Scores of TMAS and QDI Factor Scales

Scale	Mean	Standard deviation
TMAS Scale	3.86	0.488
QDI Factor I (cognitive attitudes toward racial diversity)	3.87	0.759
QDI Factor II (affective attitudes toward personal contact with racial diversity)	3.69	0.563
QDI Factor III (attitudes toward women)	4.04	0.606

1 = strongly disagree 5 = strongly agree

Independent t-tests showed no significant difference in *TMAS* and *QDI* factor scores based on ethnicity and years of full-time teaching experience. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests showed no significant difference in *TMAS* and *QDI* factor scores based on primary area of specialization within the field, geographic location, the number of undergraduate and/or graduate cultural diversity courses taken, and the number of undergraduate and/or graduate courses taught. However, significant difference was found on *TMAS* scores based on the educators' highest level of education ($t = 3.30, p < .001$). Educators whose highest level of education was a master's degree had a mean score of 4.01 ($SD = .429$) on the *TMAS* compared to a mean score of 3.72 ($SD = .508$) for respondents with a doctoral degree. In addition, significant differences were found between the sex of the RPT educators on the *TMAS* ($t = 3.30, p < .001$), *QDI* Factor 1 ($t = 3.19, p = .002$), and *QDI* Factor 3 ($t = 4.93, p < .001$). Women had higher mean scores on the *TMAS* and both of the *QDI* subscales. Significant differences were also found on *QDI* Factor 1 ($t = 2.75, p = .007$), *QDI* Factor 2 ($t = 3.14, p = .002$), and *QDI* Factor 3 ($t = 2.12, p = .036$) based on age. Educators who were younger than 50 years of age had higher mean scores on all three *QDI* subscales than educators who were 50 years of age or older.

Lastly, a MANOVA was conducted to determine if significant differences existed on *TMAS* and the *QDI* subscales based on the number of multicultural workshops/seminars attended by the respondents in the previous 5 years. Significant differences were found on the *TMAS* ($t = 2.69, p = .035$), *QDI* Factor 1 ($t = 3.26, p = .014$), and *QDI* Factor 2 ($t = 2.95, p = .023$) based on the number of multicultural workshops/seminars attended by the respondents in the previous 5 years. Post-hoc analyses revealed that the more multicultural workshops/seminars RPT educators attended, the higher the mean scores on each of these scales.

Relationship Between TMAS and QDI Scales

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the relationship between *TMAS* and *QDI* scores. Strong positive correlations existed between *TMAS* and *QDI* Factor 1 [r ($df = 115$) = .710, $p < .001$], *TMAS* and *QDI* Factor 3 [r ($df = 116$) = .622, $p < .001$], and *QDI* Factor 1 and *QDI* Factor 3 [r ($df = 122$) = .656, $p < .001$]. Moderate positive correlations were found between the *TMAS* and *QDI* Factor 2 [r ($df = 116$) = .523, $p < .001$], *QDI* Factor 1 and *QDI* Factor 2 [r ($df = 122$) = .583, $p < .001$], and *QDI* Factor 2 and *QDI* Factor 3 [r ($df = 125$) = .478, $p < .001$]. (See Table 6)

TABLE 6

Pearson Correlations Between TMAS and QDI Factor Scales

Scale	<i>TMAS</i>	<i>QDI 1</i>	<i>QDI 2</i>	<i>QDI 3</i>
<i>TMAS</i> Scale	1.0	0.710**	0.523**	0.622**
<i>QDI</i> Factor I		1.0	0.583**	0.656**
<i>QDI</i> Factor II			1.0	0.478**
<i>QDI</i> Factor III				1.0

** $p = .01$ two tail

Finally, an ANOVA was calculated to determine if there was a significant difference between the respondents' self-perception of their cultural competence and their scores on *TMAS* and *QDI* scales. A significant difference was found between self-perception of cultural competence and *TMAS* ($F = 3.42, p = .036$) and *QDI* Factor 2 ($F = 7.86, p = .001$) which measures affective and personal attitudes as they relate to racial contact in one's personal life. Post-hoc analyses revealed that the higher the self-perception of one's cultural competence, the higher the mean scores for *TMAS* and *QDI* Factor 2 scores. No significant differences were found between self-perception of cultural competence and *QDI* Factor 1 (cognitive attitudes about racial diversity and multiculturalism) and Factor 3 (general attitudes regarding women's equity issues).

Discussion

Little is known about the cultural competency of RPT educators or the amount of training and education they have had with regard to cultural competency. This project was conducted to enhance the body of knowledge in this important area of study. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to explore the multicultural sensitivity and awareness levels of RPT educators in the United States and Canada. Demographic and educational profile variables were also examined to determine their influence on RPT educators' self-reported multicultural sensitivity and awareness.

The findings indicated that RPT educators scored moderately high on the *TMAS* and *QDI* factor scales, which suggest the educators are aware of and sensitive to the multicultural needs of women and racial minorities. In addition, the vast majority of respondents perceived themselves to be 'moderately culturally competent' to 'very culturally competent'. Interestingly, RPT educators did not perceive their faculty colleagues or their students to be nearly as culturally competent as they perceived themselves to be. The findings of this research did not explain why this perception discrepancy exists. A possible explanation for the discrepancy is that the data was self-reported and therefore, the respondents may view themselves more culturally competent than their RPT colleagues and students.

Despite the importance of cultural diversity in society and academia, the results of this study indicate that few RPT educators have had formal academic coursework in this area. This may be partially explained by the fact that approximately half of the respondents have been teaching full-time for a minimum of 15 years and nearly half are at least 50 years of age or older. In other words, there was little, if any, coursework in cultural diversity offered at many colleges and universities when these individuals were pursuing their academic degrees. However, the vast majority of the respondents indicated that they had obtained some training in cultural diversity through participation in workshops or seminars. The results indicated that colleges/universities, national professional organization, and state professional organizations were the avenues through which RPT educators were most often offered opportunities to learn more about cultural competence and diversity. Even though such educational opportunities are not limited to the previously noted avenues, fewer of the respondents indicated they had participated in workshops or seminars on cultural diversity by regional professional organizations or local community organizations. Research conducted by Stone (2003) found that employers who expose and encourage in-service training participation for their staff through multicultural workshops or seminars "will probably increase their staff members' perception of themselves as multiculturally competent and subsequently will increase the likelihood of their ability to deliver effective services to minorities" (p. 171).

The results of this study indicated that female RPT educators possessed higher overall scores on cultural awareness and sensitivity, more positive cognitive attitudes towards racial diversity, and not surprisingly more positive attitudes towards women's equity issues than did their male counterparts. One possible explanation is that women may be more sensitive to racial and gender inequities because they often experience gender inequity within the workplace. For example, Anderson and Shinew (2001) found perceptions of inequity among women in public parks and recreation with regards to "promotion opportunities, salary, performance expectation, amount of respect from subordinates, co-workers, clients, and supervisors, as well as level of participation in management" (p. 487). Interestingly, younger educators self-reported higher scores with regards to women's equity issues and racial diversity than did their

older colleagues. Two possible explanations for this finding are 1) younger RPT faculty may have had more interaction and exposure to diverse groups as students; and 2) they may have had more opportunities for formal education and training on diversity issues due to increased societal emphasis on diversity over the last few decades. In addition, older educators may have had limited opportunities for diversity training and throughout their careers may have had less contact with diverse populations of students. It should be noted that there is limited representation of minority students and faculty in many academic recreation, parks, and tourism departments even today.

The data revealed the more cultural competency workshops or seminars RPT educators attended, the higher overall scores on cultural awareness and sensitivity, the more positive cognitive attitudes towards racial diversity, and the more positive their affective attitudes towards personal contact with racial diversity. In addition, RPT educators who perceived themselves as culturally competent had higher overall scores on cultural awareness and sensitivity, and more positive attitudes about racial contact in their personal lives than did respondents who did not perceive themselves to be as culturally competent. A possible explanation of this may be that personal contact or exposure to individuals from minority groups may potentially enhance one's cultural competence. Pope-Davis, Prieto, Whitaker, and Pope-Davis (1993) found personal contact with minority clients to be a strong contributor towards acquiring multicultural awareness for occupational therapists. This would an interesting area for further research, utilizing a qualitative approach such as focus groups, which would allow the researchers to ask probing questions to elicit more detailed information about these findings.

Finally, the findings of the study provided support for Wheeler's hierarchical model of cultural diversity that suggests four sequential levels of cognizance for diversity issues. The RPT educators self-reported high to moderate levels of multicultural awareness and sensitivity, lending support that they may be in the "consciously competent" to "unconsciously competent" level. The "consciously competent" educator teaches with an increased level of multicultural awareness, sensitivity, and understanding. They "know what they know and know what they do not know." A RPT educator who is "unconsciously competent" is aware of different groups' cultural expression, traditions, and/or leisure behaviors, and without even thinking about it, incorporate multicultural awareness and understanding in their teachings and interactions. It should be noted, however, that the self-reported measures of multicultural sensitivity and awareness are only possible reflections of the four dimensions within Wheeler's model.

Limitations

In interpreting these results, there are four limitations of the study that should be noted. First, the response rate for the study was 32.75% (131 recreation, parks, and tourism educators who were members of SPRE). These RPT educators may have

responded differently from educators who did not respond to the survey. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to all RPT educators. As a result of the low response rate, a second limitation was the potential for non-response bias. Another limitation was that the data from responding RPT educators was self-reported which could have influenced the reliability of the data. The respondents may have selected responses they believed to be socially acceptable, and they may have interpreted the items on the questionnaire differently than was intended. A last limitation of the study was that the instrument measured only multicultural awareness and sensitivity. Thus, the data does not reflect the level of knowledge or skill RPT educators possess to work with diverse minority groups.

Recommendations for Future Research and Professional Practice

The results of this study lend themselves to various future research opportunities. First, a replication of this study, which surveys all RPT educators in the United States and Canada, would permit greater generalizability of the findings. Secondly, the utilization of other methodologies to study the cultural competence of RPT educator is recommended. The use of qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews and/or focus groups would allow for richer data to provide insight on RPT educators' reasons for rating their cultural competence higher than their colleagues and students. An additional area of future research would be the examination of RPT educators' cultural competence from the perception of their students rather than the self-reported methods used in this study. If discrepancies were found between the two perceptions, this could also be further studied. A fourth potential research direction would be to conduct a follow-up study comparing RPT educators' level of cultural competency with educators in other disciplines. Lastly, studies expanded to include the examination of multicultural knowledge and skill, not just awareness and sensitivity could produce a more complete picture of RPT educators' overall cultural competence.

With regard to professional practice, in order to aid in the continuing education of recreation, parks, and tourism educators and practitioners, professional organizations such as the National Recreation and Park Association, the Travel and Tourism Research Association, the American Therapeutic Recreation Association, and state professional associations should sponsor more learning opportunities to increase members' cultural awareness, knowledge, sensitivity and skills. Another recommendation is to examine the extent to which cultural knowledge, awareness, and skills are components of the Certified Parks and Recreation Professional and the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist examinations. A last recommendation is that the recruitment of minority students and faculty into recreation, parks, and tourism departments should be an on-going effort of our universities and colleges. This effort will hopefully produce a greater number of culturally aware and sensitive recreation, parks, and tourism professionals to serve culturally diverse communities.

Conclusions

In order for RPT educators to transform learning activities into positive academic outcomes with regard to cultural competence, the educators themselves must continuously seek to enhance their own cultural attitudes, skills, and practices. In addition, increased efforts are needed to teach RPT educators strategies to enable them to better incorporate multiculturalism in their teaching. Measuring students' cultural attitudes, skills, and practices could demonstrate the impacts of such teaching strategies are indeed warranted. Developing a multicultural perspective in teaching may be one of the most effective methods for nurturing the next generation of RPT educators, students, and professionals. Given the fact that society and academia are becoming increasingly culturally diverse, a true appreciation of multicultural differences is imperative within recreation, parks, and tourism education.

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