



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

Developmental Review

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/dr



Interventions to reduce prejudice and enhance inclusion and respect for ethnic differences in early childhood: A systematic review

Frances E. Aboud^{a,*}, Colin Tredoux^b, Linda R. Tropp^c, Christia Spears Brown^d, Ulrike Niens^e, Noraini M. Noor^f, the Una Global Evaluation Group

^aMcGill University, Canada

^bUniversity of Cape Town, South Africa

^cUniversity of Massachusetts Amherst, USA

^dUniversity of Kentucky, USA

^eQueens University Belfast, Northern Ireland

^fInternational Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 29 September 2011

Revised 14 May 2012

Available online 10 September 2012

Keywords:

Prejudice reduction

Attitude change

Ethnic bias

Multicultural education

Intergroup relations

Children

Intervention

Program evaluation

ABSTRACT

A systematic review was conducted of studies evaluating the effects of interventions aimed at reducing ethnic prejudice and discrimination in young children. Articles published between 1980 and 2010 and including children of 8 years and under were identified, harvested, and assessed for quality, both for the exposure/program as well as for the evaluation. In total, 32 studies (14 contact and 18 media or instruction) yielded 62 effects on attitudes and 59 effects on peer relations. An overall count of the positive (40%), non-significant (50%), and negative effects (10%) indicate a mixed picture. Overall, more attitude effects (55%) than peer relations effects (25%) were positive, and media/instruction (47%) was more successful than contact (36%). Most of the effects were observed with children from a majority ethnicity: 67% of the attitude effects were positive, and media/instruction and contact were equally effective at delivering these. Few differences were found as a function of the quality of the exposure and evaluation, but differences were found depending on the context of exposure (naturally occurring or experimental manipulation) and research design (random assignment or self-selection). In conclusion, the findings were more mixed than expected, though sufficiently strong studies exist to provide lessons for future research.

© 2012 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: frances.aboud@mcgill.ca (F.E. Aboud).

Introduction

Once it was realized that prejudice developed at a very young age in children, psychologists and educators increased their efforts to examine its development and possible reduction. Descriptive and experimental research has by now mapped out the changes that occur with age and the factors such as majority/minority status that influence changes (see reviews, e.g. Raabe & Beelmann, 2011). It is clear that in many parts of the world, with populations of multi-ethnic background, prejudice begins around 4- to 5-years of age. Prejudice, in most scholarly work, is defined essentially as negative evaluations, beliefs, or feelings directed at people because of their ethnicity (Brown, 1995). The behavioral component, called discrimination, entails treating others differently because of their ethnicity, such as name-calling and social exclusion. There may be different age trajectories for prejudice and discrimination, but both are considered detrimental to social harmony and productivity, and so worthy of attention. Moving beyond the descriptive research, we reviewed studies that evaluated interventions to reduce prejudice and discrimination. To avoid assuming that young children are prejudiced or that the goal is narrowly to reduce prejudice, we took a broader view of our objective, namely to examine interventions that enhance respect and inclusion. We viewed *respect* as the positive attitudinal goal and *inclusion* as the positive behavioral goal of interventions.

The focus on children has emerged as a result of our understanding that youth sets the stage for future attitudes and behavior. Prejudice, particularly toward visible minorities, is now known to begin in early childhood between 3 and 6 years of age (Raabe & Beelmann, 2011). There is still debate as to whether programs should be targeted at an early age when prejudice is quickly developing or in middle childhood when prejudice diverges due to environmental input (Raabe & Beelmann, 2011). The case for early intervention rests on the finding that prejudice is self-perpetuating because prejudiced children avoid disconfirming experiences and information. For example, children with cross-ethnic friends in the early grades are more likely than those without such friends to have an integrated social network as adolescents and adults (Ellison & Powers, 1994; Patchen, 1982). Contact with other ethnic groups has increased as a result of migration and the reduction of other constraints such as apartheid and economic inequality. This has brought changes to once homogeneous neighborhoods. As communities and schools become more socially inclusive, children are being provided increased opportunities to befriend those from different ethnic backgrounds. Educators and policy makers are learning from past experience as they devise programs to prevent or reduce prejudice and discrimination (see Banks, 2009 edited book on multicultural education). Increasingly, these programs are focused on the early childhood years (3–8 years) to provide children with the social and cognitive skills needed to work and play with peers (Nadeau, Kataoka, Valerio, Neuman, & Elder, 2011).

Current theories of prejudice development tend to include both sociocontextual and sociocognitive constructs (e.g., Bigler & Liben, 2006). Although theories underlying programs to *change* prejudice build on these same constructs, they tend to focus more on changes to the context, such as contact and instruction, that may in turn influence cognitive and emotional processes. However, they rarely address age-related cognitive structures such as egocentrism. It is reasonable to expect that theories of change will differ from theories of natural development, but the neglect of age-related processes is an oversight that might jeopardize success.

At one end of the sociocontextual continuum is the theory of contact developed by Allport (1954) that outlines specific conditions under which intergroup contact reduces prejudice, such as equal status and authority support. Kenworthy, Turner, Hewstone, and Voci (2005) proposed a number of psychological processes that mediate contact and respect, such as reduced stereotyping due to attention to individual rather than racial differences, reduced anxiety, feelings of closeness to the other such as empathy and perspective-taking, and recognizing social norms of contact. Meta-analyses of the relation between contact and attitudes demonstrate that all conditions may not be necessary for contact to be effective (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), but that friendship, the gold standard of contact, is strongly associated with respectful attitudes (Davies, Tropp, Aron, Pettigrew, & Wright, 2011). Programs that allow for and intentionally generate opportunities for close contact are informed by this theoretical framework.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/10313368>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/10313368>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)