The Relationship of Intercultural Sensitivity To Extension Agents' Cross-Cultural Experiences and Other Factors.

Master Thesis

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ABSTRACT

The relationship of intercultural sensitivity to Ohio’s Extension Agents’ cross-cultural life experiences were examined. A descriptive-correlational research design was used. The instrument used was the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale developed by Towers (1990). Extension agents (n=267) from all 88 counties participated. Findings revealed significant relationships between intercultural sensitivity and study/travel/work abroad and the number of foreign friends. Overall results of the ANOVA indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference between agents by program area. The average agent is in the ethnorelative state of intercultural sensitivity.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Extension Service, as the largest public educational organization, links research, science and technology to address the needs of people across the world. It is America's first and only national system of adult education (Boone, 1985).

Extension is a national resource to the American people. For nearly 80 years the Extension Service (globally known as Cooperative Extension System) has been an important influence in the development of rural America. The Cooperative Extension System is composed of the land-grant universities established by the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890. Extension was authorized by the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 as a third arm of the land grant system with cooperating legislation in each state.

The purpose of Extension is to disseminate research-based information from the United States Department of Agricultural (USDA) and the land-grant institutions to all American
citizens. Therefore, the land-grant institution in each state has off-campus educational resource offices to meet the grassroots needs of those communities.

Over the decades, the Extension Service has expanded its range of responsibilities beyond the traditional agricultural emphasis in rural communities to include urban needs of individuals and families. Recent trends include the 4-H youth development activities in urban settings, as well as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Educational Program (EFNEP) for urban and rural families.

Today Extension's clientele are more diversified and sophisticated than ever before because of the shifts in population and immigration to the United States. Henry (1990), in "Beyond the Melting Pot," predicts that by the year 2056, the average U.S. citizen will be able to trace their descendents to the Asian, Hispanic and African countries. Because we live in a social environment that is becoming even more diverse, the new terms are "Mosaic Society" and the "browning of America" according to McCray (1994).

**Statement of the Problem**

In this global society, an individual's ability to interact and work with diverse cultures is increasingly important. By the year 2000 over 80% of individuals entering the work force in the United States will be minorities, women and immigrants (Ohio’s Future at Work, 1990).
Extension's traditional white, middle-class audience is aging and also shrinking in population. With this consideration and the issue of diversity, educators in the Extension System will be encountering people who increasingly are not like themselves. Educators must learn to work effectively in a world of transition, of change, and of difference (Cushner, McClelland & Safford, 1992).

USDA must value the diversity of its work force and the public we serve. The national and international economic social and technological forces that will shape the department's mission demand that we understand and respect diversity. We must deliver our programs effectively to a culturally diverse population and become more heterogeneous in work force composition (United States Department of Agricultural, 1990, p. 6).

The mission of Extension is to enable people to improve their lives and the community in which they live, through learning partnerships that put research-based information and knowledge to work (Framing the Future, 1995).

The values that Extension holds provides a framework for the way it does business. According to the authors of Framing the Future, some of these values are: (1) the extension system values diversity and recognizes that all people should be treated with dignity and worth, (2) and extension personnel contribute expertise to create teamwork among their individuals and provide new and different approaches to issues and programming, (3) but also to empower learners to engage in life long education through extension programming, (4) and to encourage learners to be self-reliant and take responsibility
for their own decisions and actions. The values held by members of Cooperative Extension organizations play important roles in determining how Extension educators plan, conduct, and evaluate the programs they coordinate (Safrit, Jones, & Conklin, 1994).

The effect of cultural diversity within communities is a factor of heterogeneity. As communities become more interculturally complex and interdependent so does the task of developing and delivering programs tailored to diverse audiences. In spite of this increasingly complex context, few studies have examined Extension's educators attitudes toward their local culturally diverse communities, and the sensitivity to their cultural needs.

The questions raised by the Ohio State University Extension were: Are we valuing diversity? Are people in middle and upper level management culturally sensitive and able to manage a culturally diverse work force? Do we understand the impact of culture on communication and performance? A values audit of Ohio Extension personnel (Safrit, Conklin, & Jones, 1991) indicated that diversity was not highly valued by members of Ohio's Extension Organization (cited in Ludwig & Cano, 1993, p. 1).

Extension agents' values, attitudes and perceptions can have a strong influence on the clientele that they serve through local extension programming. According to a survey of extension administrators in Ohio, the data indicate that the
Extension System "has not yet reached its goal of becoming a multi-cultural organization" (Ludwig, & Cano, 1993, p. 6).

In the last two decades, theoretical models have been formulated to provide guidance to educators and other professionals in relations to promoting intercultural learning (Gerber, 1995). According to Towers (1990), the most complete model is Bennett's which describes the stages of development of intercultural sensitivity (described in the next chapter). A learner's progress from a less to more interculturally sensitivity development stage pertains to intercultural learning (Towers, 1990).

**Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to determine the intercultural sensitivity levels of Extension agents in Ohio as related to life experiences. In addition, the relationships between agents' intercultural sensitivity scores and selected independent variables will be explored.

The following objectives are relevant to this study:

1. Identify the intercultural sensitivity level of Ohio's Extension agents and to determine whether there are significant differences among the program areas.

2. Determine if relationships exist between intercultural sensitivity scores and selected international or cross cultural experiences, such as:
   a. extent of travel/study/work abroad;
   b. amount of participation in international or cross-cultural courses, sessions, or workshops;
   c. extent of foreign language study experiences;
   d. number of international (foreign) friends;
e. amount of time agent lived with a person reared in a foreign country;

f. extent of serving diverse culture in county programs

3. Determine if relationships exist between intercultural sensitivity scores and selected demographic factors: gender and ethnic-group membership.

4. Determine which of the independent variables are best in predicting agents' intercultural sensitivity scores.

**Significance of Study**

In the area of Extension, few studies were found that focused on agents' sensitivity toward other cultures and their perceptions of cultures different from their own. One study located in this area was a survey of Extension Administrators in Ohio concerning diversity issues (Ludwig, & Cano, 1993).

The results of the present study should enable Extension personnel to better understand diversity issues among Ohio's Extension agents in various program areas. In addition, the results of the study should contribute to the knowledge base of this area and perhaps in the professional development of agents.

**Assumptions**

For the purposes of this study, the researcher assumed that:

1. The Intercultural Sensitivity Survey is a reliable and valid measure of intercultural sensitivity.

2. Respondents will be truthful in responding to items and capable of self-assessment.
Limitations

Collection of the data studied is through self-reporting methods; therefore the study is subject to the limitations in such methodology.

Definition of Terms

The following terminology is determined from Bennett’s (1986) discussion of the intercultural sensitivity model.

Bicultural - refers to the existence of two complete cultural frames of reference for making meaning out of one’s experiences.

Cultural Pluralism - refers to the holistic, coherent sense of self that somehow integrates multiple cultural frames of reference for making meaning out of one’s experiences (Bennett 1986).

Cultural Relativity - is an assumption that cultures can be understood relative to one another.

Difference - is the main organizing concept utilized by Bennett (1986) to describe the different ways in which cultures create and maintain world views.

Ethnocentric - refers to state and stages in Bennett’s (1986) model which are characterized or based on the attitude that one’s world view of their culture is superior and central to all reality.

Ethnorelative - is defined by Bennett to describe developmental states and stages which are not ethnocentric. Cultural relativism is an underlying assumption in this state or stage.
Intercultural Sensitivity - refers to the degree to which an individual is sensitive to cultural differences (Towers, 1990; Bennett, 1986).

Intercultural Learning - is a learners' progress from a less interculturally sensitive level or developmental stage to a more interculturally sensitive level or developmental stage (Bennett, 1986).

Other Relevant Definition of Terms

Cross-cultural - is referred to processes such as interaction, communication or virtually anything that involves two or more cultures (Towers, 1990; Hoopes, 1980).

"Culture refers to common values, beliefs, language, patterns of thinking, behavioral norms, communication styles and other norms of a group of people" (Towers, 1990, p. 7).

Diversity - "differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, spiritual practices and other human differences" (Pathway to Diversity, 1991).

"Cultural awareness refers to one's awareness of behavior and values that are common in one's own country" (Towers, 1990, p. 7).

Global Education - is a holistic view of the world that demonstrates the interdependency of all nations and respects the diversity of all people worldwide.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

A critical need in Extension Education is training that will help extension agents to be sensitivity toward other cultures. The purpose of the researchers' study is to determine the intercultural sensitivity levels of Extension agents in Ohio as related to life experiences. Therefore, in reviewing the literature the following topics were identified as pertinent to this study: 1) a historical development of multicultural education and intercultural sensitivity (Bennett's model of Intercultural Sensitivity), 2) research related to intercultural sensitivity, 3) intercultural sensitivity and variables relationships (i.e. travel and study abroad, foreign language study, cross-cultural workshops and sessions, 4) variables as predictors of intercultural sensitivity, and 5) Cooperative Extension systems related research pertinent to diversity and intercultural sensitivity. A concluding summary of the review of literature will be presented.
Historical Development of Multicultural Education and Intercultural Sensitivity

Historically, the blending of cultural differences in "America" was called assimilation. In reality cultural and ethnic minorities were not allowed to melt with the majority society. Today, it is apparent that we are moving from the "melting pot" notion to a "mosaic" perspective, where each individual's culture is appreciated (Moore & Tull, 1983; McCray, 1994). The trend is moving toward a more globalized world social structure. The concept of multicultural and global education has emerged within this movement. The relationships between these educational concepts have been examined. Multicultural and global education "would address the basic concern of where the individual fits into the mosaic of humanity and where others fit in the same mosaic" (Cole, 1984, p. 153).

Theory of Intercultural Sensitivity

Intercultural learning refers to a learner's progress from a less to more intercultural sensitive level or developmental stage (Towers, 1990). Research in the past 20 years has provided educators with several theoretical models (Bennett, 1986; Hoopes, 1981; Hanvey, 1976) to guide the sequencing of concepts and techniques in intercultural learning and education as (cited in Gerber, 1995). Bennett's

Bennett's (1986) primary justification for a model of intercultural sensitivity is that in training others to become less ethnocentric, trainers and educators are attempting to change a basic human survival response. Moreover, he points out that this has traditionally been attempted without the guidance of clear, articulated model - one that not only describes how people behave in an intercultural setting but describes how people change as a consequence of intercultural training or education and which clearly identifies the goal of such effort (Towers, 1990, p. 27).

Consideration of Bennett's model concepts are that intercultural learning is learning about another culture to the point of integration into that culture. This model starts with ethnocentrism and continues with: awareness, understanding, acceptance/respect, appreciation/valuing, selective adaptation and advances to assimilation, which today is more commonly known as multiculturalism or biculturalism. An individual is expanded by experience and education, can distinguish culture differences, and therefore can accept and adjust to another culture. The ability to function more effectively is through human relations and communication skills, then applying those skills to new cultural experiences.

Bennett’s model of intercultural sensitivity is the most complete model in this area. The most distinguishing characteristic is its phenomenological nature. In other words, the meaning a person attaches to cultural differences
and the diverse experiences that accompany those meanings. The experiences referred to in the model are "intercultural sensitivity" and these experiences "will vary systematically with changes in a person's perceptual relationship to cultural difference" (Bennett, 1986, p.30).

Bennett's explanation for the model is that it is a developmental model that can direct progression of concepts and techniques to encourage students to become less ethnocentric. According to Bennett this model includes the element of "dynamic learning", increasing awareness and expanding understanding. The assumption is that progression between stages is not permanent, a person can move back and forth between stages.

There are six consecutive states each with two or three stages in Bennett's model. The following paradigm describes the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity and a description of the stages follow.

**DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL OF INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY**

Ethnocentric States and Stages

I. Denial
   A. Isolation
   B. Separation

II. Defense
   A. Denigration
   B. Superiority
   C. Reversal

III. Minimization
   A. Physical Universalism
   B. Transcendent Universalism
Ethnorelative States and Stages

IV. Acceptance
   A. Behavioral Relativism
   B. Value Relativism

V. Adaptation
   A. Empathy
   B. Pluralism

VI. Integration
   A. Contextual Evaluation
   B. Constructive Marginality

The assumption of the ethnocentric state and stages is "that the world-view of one's culture is central to all reality" (Bennett, 1986, p. 33).

I. Denial. The first state is the most extreme, people have little or no knowledge of difference because they believe all others share their view. According to Bennett (1990), this denial would be rare today accept, "this position can be maintained through either circumstantial physical isolation or by intentional erection of physical and social barriers" (p. 33).

A. Isolation. Cultural difference has no meaning because it has not been experienced; physically or socially. If confronted it is overlooked as a process of selective perception. Exposure and acknowledgement will progress people to the next state. "Development is indicated if the symptoms of isolation give way to the more overt manifestations of separation" (Bennett, 1986, p. 34).

B. Separation. This stage indicates a slight acknowledgement of some difference, but physical and social
barriers are created to distance people from those cultural differences. The stages of isolation and separation may be interactive (e.g., separation can bring about isolation and isolation can reinforce separating kinds of actions) (Towers, 1990, p. 31). Movement into the next state is dependent on cross-cultural contact.

II. Defense. Specific cultural differences are acknowledged or perceived as threatening to one's identity, reality and world view. Defenses are created by people to overcome this threat. According to Bennett, of the three strategies of defense, the first two are highly interactive and the last is "optional".

A. Denigration. This stage involves negative stereotyping, the most common type of negative evaluation. When people give a rationale for institutionalized denigration, further development is difficult or potentially dangerous. Movement beyond this stage may be repressed by "retreating" back to a lower stage. To build progression to the next stage Bennett states, "building cultural self-esteem in the face of difference" (p. 38) and to realize denigration is temporary.

B. Superiority. A person positively evaluates their own culture at this stage because this goes beyond denigration which is less negatively evaluated. People still see cultural differences as inferior, but the interactive nature between denigration and superiority is acceptable and normally valued.
Development upward accommodates expressions of cultural pride and the worthiness of other cultures (i.e., introducing the concept of cultural relativism).

C. Reversal. This stage is not implicit in development and movement through this stage is similar to Superiority. According to Bennett, denigration is directed toward one’s own culture accompanied by the perception that a different culture is superior (ethnocentrism has reversed). Bennett (1986) states "the meaning of difference is the same, although the culture that is "different" has changed" (p. 41).

III. Minimization. This state minimizes cultural differences by focusing on the similarities of the cultural. Cultural differences are acknowledged, but people are basically still the same. "These assumed universal characteristics are almost always derived from one’s native culture and may be categorized generally into those assumed by 'physical universalism' and those implied by 'transcendent universalism'" (Bennett, 1986, p. 42).

A. Physical Universalism. This stage focuses on characteristics universal to all human beings and states difference to "elaborations of fundamental biology" (Bennett, 1986, p. 42). Even though these physical characteristics are universal, they are irrelevant to social context in intercultural communication. This illustrates the necessity of social context to facilitate development.
B. Transcendent Universalism. This is parallel with "physical universalism", this stage suggests that humans "are products of some single transcendent principle, law, or imperative" (Bennett, 1886, p. 43). Cultural differences may not be trivialized as that in previous stage but viewed as a manifestation of a universal principle. However, the transcendent principle is still viewed from one's own world view.

Retreat to an earlier state is acknowledged of both forms of universalism by assuming commonalities and not to question one's assumption of universalism, instead one feels that the person from the other culture is slow in comprehension. According to Bennett (1986) movement to the next stage "represents a major conceptual shift from reliance on absolute principles of some sort to an acknowledgement of non-absolute relativity" (p. 45).

The Ethnorelative States

Cultural relativity is considered common to the ethnorelative states. "Cultural difference is neither good nor bad, it is just different. One's own culture is not any more central to reality than any other culture, although it may be preferable to a particular individual or group" (Bennett, 1986, p. 46). An ethical concern was raised by Bennett (1986) that questioning the acceptance of all cultures behavior and values even if they are personally "repugnant". He also cautions against interpreting ethnorelativism as an ethical
position which agrees with all cultural difference and does not allow assertion of a preference over one's view of the world over another.

In the ethnocentric state the development of intercultural sensitivity, cultural difference was experienced as threatening, whereas in the ethnorelativism state it is non-threatening and most likely to be agreeable and inevitable.

IV. Acceptance. This state represents the transition between ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism. Cultural difference is no longer being evaluated, but is acknowledge and respected.

A. Behavioral Relativism. At this stage the verbal and non-verbal behavior across cultures is acknowledged and respected at a more relativistic level. Language is the most common accepted behavior. Movement to the next stage is developed by discussions of behavioral relativity.

B. Value Relativism. This stage is important to intercultural sensitivity because individuals understand their world view as a relative cultural construct, or view the world as an emergent of cultural self-awareness. Also, different world views are accepted that emphasize the different cultural behavior. Movement toward the next state requires practical application.

V. Adaptation. In this state individuals have the ability to use cultural-awareness in an intercultural setting.
Adaptation includes respect for cultural differences without compromising one's own culture. The ability to shift to a different "cultural frame of reference" while communicating across cultures and then return to their own culture is acceptable to individuals. Culture is acknowledged as a process at this state.

A. Empathy. This stage refers to the ability to experience another's cultural world-view. A high level of intercultural development and communication is experienced at this state. Desire to experience empathy over a long period of time promotes development to move to the next stage.

B. Pluralism. Bennett (1986) states that pluralism has two components. The first is a philosophical commitment to understanding "that cultures are not only different, but that such difference must always be understood totally within the context to the relevant culture" (pp. 54-55). The second refers to characterizing cultural pluralism by an individual who internalize two or more cultural frames of references.

Bennett (1986) states pluralism

...is a development in the sense that cultural difference is respected as highly as one's self, since it is intrinsic to that self. As such, difference may be experienced more sensitively than it is in the empathy stage, where a different world view is still "outside" self before and after the act of empathy (p. 55).

Personally and professionally this state may be sufficient enough for most individuals, but there are more stages of intercultural sensitivity. Movement toward the next
stage is a desire for "a holistic, coherent sense of self that somehow integrates multiple frames of reference" (Bennett, 1986, p. 58).

VI. Integration. At this state, integration is considered an ongoing process of defining cultural context as a sense of one's self. A new world is viewed by this type of individual and the ability to integrate differing cultural contexts as a sense of self is proven.

A. Contextual Evaluation. The previous states are characterized by a non-evaluation of differences. This stage is distinguished by commitment to action and good judgement, and the ability to evaluate situations from a given context or culture by using one or more chosen cultural perspectives. This is the final stage for most individuals. There is one more stage to consider, which requires great commitment to internationalism and significant overseas living experience.

B. Constructive marginality. Bennett (1986) states that an individual at this stage lacks a cultural identity. "There are no unquestioned assumptions, no intrinsically absolute right behaviors, nor any necessary reference groups" (p. 62). Total conceptual frameworks are references rather than different contexts are constantly being constructed. Marginality can become constructive only if it is preceded by other ethnorelative stages. Stress and tension could become destructive to individuals if it does not precede another stage.
Research Related to Intercultural Sensitivity

The study by Towers (1990) of graduate professionals (n=80) indicated that the average adult in this study was in an ethnocentric state (Mean = 237; S.D. = 21.91). It is important to note, Bennett (1986) has stated in his Model of Intercultural Sensitivity that in order to progress to the upper states of intercultural sensitivity a persons needs at least two years of overseas experience. According to Towers (1990), individuals that have extensive overseas experience will score significantly higher than those who have not had overseas experiences. Results supported this with a small rate increase of mean scores and this difference is significant at p<.10. This illustrates that the fundamental factor of exposure to cultural difference is needed for development of ethnorelativism.

Several researchers (Davis, 1993; Sia & Mosher, 1994) have investigated the cultural sensitivity levels of preservice or practicing teachers using a cultural diversity awareness inventory. Davis found that elementary preservice teachers (n=471) were culturally sensitive in their overall mean score, which included these five areas: the culturally diverse family, cross-culturally communication, assessment, and creating of a multicultural environment using multicultural methods and materials.

Another survey of preservice teachers conducted by Sia and Mosher (1994), studied the students’ beliefs about their
cultural sensitivity, biases/prejudices, and multicultural education. A pre and post survey was administered. These researchers reported that the respondents had a high degree of cultural sensitivity before and after the surveys were given.

A scale was developed to measure multicultural sensitivity to teachers toward their students by Jibaja-Rusth, Kingery, Holcomb, Buckner, and Pruitt (1994). The scale was administered to secondary school health teachers (n=31). The results indicated that the teachers' average total score was toward the low end of the possible range of scores. However, the whole group of teachers were found to be multiculturally sensitive.

**Intercultural Sensitivity and Variable Relationships**

Few researchers have investigated relationships between intercultural sensitivity and various independent variables (e.g., race/ethnicity and multicultural or cross-cultural experience).

A Pearson correlation was conducted by Burdette to determine the relationship between teachers' intercultural sensitivity scores and 10 personal/professional independent variables. A significant positive correlation at the .05 probability level resulted between intercultural sensitivity and age, educational level, years of teaching experience, teaching with a global or nonglobal focus and comfort of teaching students (Burdette, 1996, in review).
Burdette identified other positive correlations (r = .19 to .31) with independent variables: extent of travel/study/work abroad; foreign language study experience, number of international (foreign) friends; living arrangement with a person reared in a foreign country; amount of time lived with a person reared in a foreign country; participation in international and/or cross-cultural courses, sessions, or workshops; and the number of international and/or cross-cultural courses, sessions, or workshops attended (Burdette, 1996, in review).

Independent Variables Best as Predictors of Intercultural Sensitivity

In Burdette's (1995) study a stepwise multiple regression procedure was used to determine correlated independent variables, such as: personal/professional characteristics, international or cross-cultural experiences, and background variables that could best predict teachers' intercultural sensitivity scores. Of the 25 variables, seven were statistically significant and accounted for 60% of the variance in the dependent variable, intercultural sensitivity. The single best predictor of intercultural sensitivity was the item, "I go out of my way to meet people from other cultures," which accounted for 39% of the variance, Burdette, 1995, in progress). The sample mean was 2.72 and the standard
deviation was .96. Individuals with a low score would be considered less sensitive to and aware of cultural differences.

**Cooperative Extension System Research Related to Diversity and Intercultural Sensitivity**

There have been very few studies on Extension Agents' awareness of or sensitivity to cultural differences. In reviewing literature, the Ludwig and Cano (1993) diversity study of Ohio Extension Administrators (N = 108) results indicated reliability for the Diversity Awareness Assessment test-retest procedure (r = .78). The instrument (Simmons, 1991) had an overall reliability Cronbach alpha of .62. Results indicated that people in extension were actively acknowledging diversity but there was no general agreement among administrators about how Ohio State University Extension was responding to diversity issues. "Sixteen percent indicated changes had to be made to deal with diversity and 15% indicated that the organization had created an open forum for discussion" (Ludwig 1995, p. 2). However, 13% indicated that diversity was not being discussed publicly. Issues related to diversity identified as critical were: 1) confusion about how to communicate and serve clientele from other backgrounds, and 2) lack of a clear vision of what a multi-cultural organization could achieve (Ludwig, 1995). Conclusions initially drawn by Ludwig (1995), was that
"Extension had not yet reached its goal of becoming a multicultural organization" (p. 4) were confirmed.

In another related study by Ewert, Yaccino, and Yaccino (1994) the researchers examined the personal qualities and skills of effective intercultural community development workers (n=74); a Delphi study was used. Two surveys and a two stage process, using open-ended questions regarding the qualities and skills needed by workers in an intercultural context was used. For instance during stage one the respondents were asked: "What are the personal qualities needed by a successful facilitator?" Where as, in stage two respondents were asked: "What are the barriers to participation?" Results indicated that 56.4% believed that there was a need for intercultural sensitivity to other cultures and a need to work within other cultural values system. "The ability to understand his/her own values, beliefs, and world view relative to development and to find bridges of communication with those of another culture", (Ewert, Yaccino, & Yaccino, 1994, p. 26) was noted. Communication skills enable people to cross cultural boundaries; these are the challenges facing educators.

Summary

The United States is becoming more culturally diverse than ever. Thus, how Extension educators interact with others who are different from themselves will have and continues to
have a profound affect on local and global experiences through Extension education. Overall, education is moving toward a "holistic" view that encompasses how individuals are a part of their environment and how others are interrelated; extension also shares this viewpoint.

The concern for more sensitivity to cultural diversity has incited developments in cross-cultural training and education in the area of cross-cultural competencies such as intercultural sensitivity.

Several theoretical models (Bennett, 1986; Hanvey, 1976; Hoopes, 1981) have provided strategies and guides to address the concern of intercultural sensitivity. Bennett's Model of Intercultural Sensitivity is the most complete model to date. The development model can guide sequencing of concepts and techniques to move learners to become less ethnocentric by increasing awareness and expanding understanding of cultural differences.

During stage one in the ethnocentrism state, a person lacks contact and experience to other cultures, which is characterized by a lack of experience with differences. A person in stage two begins to recognize cultural differences, but believes that his/her culture is still superior. At stage three a person beings to ignore profound cultural differences and to emphasize similarities.

The next state is ethnorelativism, during which a person sees cultural differences and accepts them. Moving into stage
five a person begins to learn from and communicates in another culture. Thus, he/she is able to "walk in another persons shoes". During the final stage in ethnorelativism, a individual begins to integrate cultural differences, and therefore holds multiple world views.

According to Bennett, to be able to progress to the upper state of intercultural sensitivity a person needs significant overseas experience. Results of Towers (1990) study illustrates that individuals with extensive overseas experiences have higher intercultural sensitivity scores, thus illustrating a movement toward ethnorelativism.

Several researchers have investigated the cultural sensitivity of adults using a variety of measures. The majority of research findings (Burdette, 1995; Davis, 1993; Sia & Mosher, 1994) indicate that adults are sensitive to cultural differences. Therefore, they would be characterized as recognizing and having an understanding of cultural differences. Whereas, the finding from Towers' (1990) study revealed that the average adult is not sensitive to cultural differences. Thus the adult respondent was ethnocentric. This research area does warrant further investigation.

Research findings from (Burdette, 1995; Towers 1990) several studies indicate variables such as: travel/study/work abroad, foreign language experience, foreign friends, time lived with a person from another country or culture, and amount of participation in international or cross-cultural
courses, sessions, or workshops all contribute to a person developing more favorable attitudes toward other cultures.

Relationships between personal and professional characteristics, and background variables according to Burdette’s study were statistically significant. Towers (1990) found that educational level was not significantly related to intercultural sensitivity scores. In addition, the variable of ethnic-group membership warrants further study in relation to intercultural sensitivity.

Few studies have been done in the area of Extension agents’ intercultural sensitivity from their cultural experiences and backgrounds, or the relationships toward the diverse clientele that they serve as extension educators. Ludwig and Cano (1993) study does suggests that several areas were identified as critical to diversity: 1) confusion about how to communicate and serve clientele from other backgrounds, and 2) a lack of clear vision of what a multi-cultural organization could achieve.

In another related study by Ewert, Yaccino, and Yaccino (1994) results indicated that over 50% believed there was a need for intercultural sensitivity to other cultures when working in community development.
CHAPTER III

Methodology

A descriptive-correlational research design was used in this study. The purpose of this study was to determine the intercultural sensitivity levels of Extension agents in Ohio as related to life experiences. In addition, the relationships between agents' intercultural sensitivity scores were explored.

The following objectives are relevant to this study.

1. Identify the intercultural sensitivity level of Ohio's Extension agents and to determine whether there are significant differences among the program areas.

2. Determine if relationships exist between intercultural sensitivity scores and selected international or cross cultural experiences, such as:
   a. extent of travel/study/work abroad;
   b. amount of participation in international or cross cultural courses/sessions/workshops;
   c. extent of foreign language study experiences;
   d. number of international (foreign) friends;
   e. amount of time agent lived with a person reared in a foreign country;
   f. extent of serving diverse culture in county programs.

3. Determine if relationships exist between intercultural sensitivity scores and selected demographic factors: gender and ethnic-group membership.

4. Determine which of the independent variables are best in predicting agents' intercultural sensitivity scores.
Description of the Population/Sample

The target population for this study was Extension agents who are involved in extension programming at the county level in Ohio. A population of 267 county extension agents were included in the study; this consists of all 88 counties in the State. A list of agent names, addresses and position titles prepared by the OSU Extension Administration was used to identify the population of county agents. This list included agents from the various program areas: Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth and Development, Agricultural and Natural Resources, and Community Development.

Instrumentation for Data Collection

The instrument for this study was compiled using questions from three sources, the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale, a portion of the (ISS) instrument developed in 1990 by Dr. Karen Towers. This survey included questions 1 – 83 from Towers (1990) Intercultural Sensitivity Survey (see Appendix A). Permission was given by Towers to use this instrument (see Appendix E). Other questions were taken from Burdette’s (background section, 1 – 10) and Ludwig’s (background section 11 – 15) questionnaire (see Appendix A).

Because reliability co-efficients have been established for each of the scales used in this study, this researcher did not do further tests for reliability.

The specific reliability co-efficients are as follows: Towers reliability (Cronbach alpha) co-efficient was .95;
Ludwig and Cano reliability (Cronbach alpha) co-efficient was .62. Burdette's study was not appropriate for Cronbach alpha.

As stated by Towers (1990), the instrument was piloted and amended with groups of students and professionals. Eighty-two items were selected in the validation study for the ISS. This instrument used a 5-point Likert response format. The scale yields a total score which represents the position on a continuum of low to high scores for intercultural sensitivity. Higher levels of intercultural sensitivity are represented by higher numbers. The scoring range is between 82 and 410 with a midpoint of 251. "The scale allows for a broad range of scores enabling measurement at both extreme ends of the continuum" (Towers, 1990, p. 93).

Towers (1990) developed this instrument when she discovered the lack of an objective and valid instrument with which to measure intercultural sensitivity, and it "contributes to a more sophisticated empirically-based understanding of the developmental processes involved in increasing intercultural sensitivity" (p. 4). Towers (1990) found the (ISS) to be a valid measure of intercultural sensitivity. Construct-related (convergent) validity was measured by a correlating the ISS scale with the Worldmindedness Scale. The resulting correlation was .59 which is significant but also suggests that they are not measuring the same construct. In addition, content validity
was established by an independent judge proficiently knowledgeable about Bennett’s model of state/stage rating.

The conceptual framework for Towers Intercultural Sensitivity Survey (ISS) was derived from Bennett’s (1986) model of intercultural sensitivity analyzing learner’s developmental stages.

It is important to note that Towers’ (1990) Intercultural Sensitivity Survey can be useful for cross-cultural trainers and other educators. This survey helped in diagnosing individual characteristics in order to identify appropriate training and teaching strategies for people with different levels of intercultural sensitivity.

**Demographic and Professional Characteristics**

The questionnaire for this study contained items related to agents’ personal and professional characteristics and their international or cross-cultural experiences. Eight questions addressed agents’ personal and professional characteristics, including age, ethnic-group membership, diverse cultures served within the county, comfort with teaching clientele from another culture than one’s own, direct supervision of a person from another culture, level of experience in direct supervision of a person "different" from yourself, comfort level in supervising someone "different" from yourself and comfort level with working with diverse co-workers. Also, seven items were included in the study questionnaire to collect data on agents’ international or cross-cultural
experiences: (1) foreign language study experiences; (2) number of international (foreign) friends; (3) living arrangement with a person reared in a foreign country; (4) amount of time lived with a person reared in a foreign country; (5) extent of travel/study/work abroad; (6) participation in international and/or cross-cultural courses, sessions, or workshops; and (7) the amount of participation in international and/or cross-cultural course, sessions, or workshops.

The items were reviewed for clarity and content validity was established by two University professors in Burdette’s (1995) study. Validity was established by a panel of experts on diversity in organizations for Ludwig and Cano (1993) study from the Ohio State University (OSU) and ES-USDA

Data Collection

The data were collected by a mail questionnaire sent to all the county agents in the State of Ohio (N=267). A questionnaire was mailed on August 5, 1995 to each agent. A cover letter signed by Dr. Keith Smith, Extension Director from Ohio State University Extension, explained the study. Each participant packet included a stamped self-addressed envelope to return the completed survey. A tentative deadline of August 18, 1995 was established as the termination date for the return of all questionnaires. Ten days after the original mailing 85 out of the 267 agents had responded with useable questionnaires. Two weeks after the original mailing date, a
reminder was sent to all agents by the AGVAX Electronic Mail Network. An estimated deadline date of August 31, 1995 was set. By that date, a total of 152 agents had responded, representing a 56.6% rate of return. An additional 24 surveys were returned after the estimated deadline and were included in the data analysis. The reason being is that during the month of August many extension agents are on vacation or participating in their local county fairs, therefore the additional surveys were counted in this study and not considered late. Five surveys were returned with notes that the agents had left the county office prior to the study. One hundred seventy-five surveys were considered valid responses, representing 66% of the surveys mailed.

Permission to collect data from Extension Agents was obtained from two sources. The Ohio State University Extension Director and the Associate Director reserve the right to review any proposed research involving Extension personnel; in addition members of the administrative Cabinet reviewed a proposal of the study. Secondly, approval from the Human Subjects Review Committee was required and approved as exempt status on June 16, 1995.

Data Analysis

Data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Packing for the Social Sciences (SPSS) at the Academic Computing Services at The Ohio State University. Total scores from this researchers instrument were used for analysis. The
overall scores for this study ranged from 141 to 376 representing the agents intercultural sensitivity level. In the following table (Table 1) are the list of questions and data analysis included in this study.
Table 1

**Questionnaire Items and Data Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Scale/Item</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question: 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the intercultural sensitivitly levels of Ohio’s Extension agents and to determine whether there are significant difference among program areas.</td>
<td>1 - 82 (ISS)</td>
<td>Means, Range, Standard Deviation, and ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question: 2</strong></td>
<td>C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J</td>
<td>Correlations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine if relationships exist between intercultural sensitivity scores and selected intercultural or cross-cultural experiences, such as:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.extent of travel/study/work abroad;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.extent of foreign language study experiences;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.number of international (foreign) friends;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.amount of time agent lived with a person reared in a foreign country;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>through programs;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.amount of participation in international or cross-cultural courses, sessions, or workshops.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.extent of serving diverse cultures in county programs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question: 3</strong></td>
<td>A and B</td>
<td>T-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine if relationships exist between intercultural sensitivity scores and selected demographic and factors such as gender and ethnic-group membership.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question: 4</strong></td>
<td>K,L,M,O,P</td>
<td>Stepwise Multiple Regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine which of the independent variables are best in predicting agents' intercultural sensitivity scores.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IV

Findings and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the intercultural sensitivity level of extension agents as related to life experiences. This chapter presents the findings of the study. Each section begins with a restatement of the objective.

The research design used in this study is descriptive-correlational. The dependent variable is intercultural sensitivity and the independent variables are: travel/study/work abroad, participation in cross-cultural session/workshops or courses, the number of cross-cultural sessions/workshops or courses attended, foreign language study, number of international (foreign) friends, amount of time lived with a person reared in a foreign country, whether agents are serving the diverse culture within county programs, comfort with teaching a culturally diverse clientele, direct supervision with a person of another culture or race, level of experience in directly supervising a person "different" from self, comfort in supervising someone "different" from self, comfort level working with diverse co-workers, and gender and ethnic group-membership.
The target population for this study was Extension agents who are involved in extension programming at the county level in Ohio. A population of 267 county extension agents were included in the study; this consists of all 88 counties in the state.

For the purpose of this study the researcher used a portion of the Intercultural Sensitivity Survey instrument (Towers, 1990), specifically the intercultural sensitivity scale. The scale yields a total score that is placed on a continuum of low to high scores of intercultural sensitivity. Higher levels are represented by higher numbers. Background questions were taken from Burdette's (1995) and Ludwig and Cano (1993) survey.

The instrument was administered to 267 extension agents from all 88 counties in Ohio. Cooperation was voluntary. After data were collected, analysis was conducted using the SPSS at The Ohio State University. The findings presented in this chapter are the result of the analysis of 175 instruments, 66% response rate.

Findings

Objective 1: Identify the intercultural sensitivity levels of the Ohio's Extension agents and to determine whether there are significant differences among the program areas.

To determine the intercultural sensitivity level of agents by each of the program areas, the sum of the mean was calculated. The range of the 4-H and Youth Development agents scores was 122 points, with a low of 254 and a high of 376.
(see Table 2). The mean score for the 4-H and Youth Development agents was 301.36. The range of the Family and Consumer Sciences agents scores was 233 points, with a low of 141 and a high of 374. The mean score for the Family and Consumer Science agents was 296.98. The range of the Agricultural and Natural Resources, and Community Development agents scores was 142 points, with a low of 234 and a high of 376. The mean score for the Agricultural, Natural Resources and Community Development agents was 296.55.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agent</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-H</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>301.36</td>
<td>254-376</td>
<td>28.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F&amp;CS</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>296.98</td>
<td>141-374</td>
<td>37.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag/NRCD</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>296.55</td>
<td>234-376</td>
<td>30.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=175

An ANOVA was used to determine if a significant difference exists between the extension agents’ intercultural sensitivity scores by the different program areas. There was not statistically significant difference between the 4-H and Youth Development agents, Family and Consumer Sciences agents, or the Agricultural and Natural Resources, and Community Development agents.
The Intercultural Sensitivity Survey (Towers, 1990) was used to measure intercultural sensitivity. The total score is the sum of the mean. The range of the total sample mean scores was 235 points, with a low of 141 and a high of 376. The mean score for the total sample was 298.51, with a standard deviation of 31.94. On the scoring continuum, the sample mean is 47 points more than the midpoint of 251. Please note that a mean score of 251 indicates that an individual is in transition from an intercultural sensitivity level of ethnocentrism to one of ethnorelativism.

The average Extension agent in this study; given the scoring range, the midpoint of the scale, and the sample mean is in the ethnorelative state of acceptance. Within this state are two stages, behavioral relativism and value relativism; therefore the average agent is at one of these positions. Bennett (1986) posits that an individual in the acceptance state acknowledges and accepts cultural differences; the individual will also evaluate the cultural difference neither as negative or positive.

Burdette (1995) found that Family and Consumer Sciences teachers (n=210) had an intercultural sensitivity mean score of 299.79, with a standard deviation of 26.84. Thus, the average adult in Burdette’s (1995) study was in the ethnorelativism state, which indicates that the developmental level of intercultural sensitivity is similar to the average extension agent in the present study.
Several researchers (Davis, 1993; Sia & Mosher, 1994) investigated the cultural sensitivity level of preservice teachers and found that they were culturally sensitive in their overall mean scores also.

In Towers' (1990) study of graduate and professional (n=80) respondents, their intercultural sensitivity mean score was 237.32, with a standard deviation of 21.91. Thus, the average individual in Towers’ study was in an ethnocentric state, which is a lower developmental level of intercultural sensitivity than the average extension agent in the present study.

**Objective 2:** Determine if relationships exist between intercultural sensitivity scores and selected international or cross-cultural experiences, such as: extent of travel/study/work abroad; amount of participation in international or cross-cultural courses, sessions, or workshops; extent of foreign language study experiences; amount of time agent lived with a person reared in a foreign country; extent of serving diverse culture within county programs.

Pearson correlations were computed to determine the relationship between extension agents’ intercultural sensitivity scores and 8 independent variables related to extension agents’ international/cross-cultural experiences (see Table 3). At the .05 probability level, significant positive correlations (r = -.63 to .61) resulted between
intercultural sensitivity and 6 of the independent variables. The 6 variables are: extent of travel/study/abroad; living arrangement with a person reared in a foreign country; number of (foreign) friends; amount of time lived with a person reared in a foreign country; participation in international and/or cross-cultural courses, sessions, or workshops; and the number of international and/or cross-cultural courses, sessions, or workshops attended. Low to moderate relationships between extension agents' intercultural sensitivity scores and each of the independent variables were noted.

Table 3  

**Pearson Correlations Between Intercultural Sensitivity and Selected International/Cross-cultural Experiences**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of travel/study/work abroad</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in cross-cultural sessions, workshops or courses</td>
<td>-.135</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cross-cultural sessions, workshops or courses attended</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of international (foreign) friends</td>
<td>.416</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time agent lived with a person reared in a foreign country</td>
<td>.247</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living arrangement with a person reared in a foreign country</td>
<td>-.176</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=175
The significant correlations (moderate) resulted between the dependent variable and study/travel/work abroad and the number of foreign friends. Low significant correlations resulted between amount of time lived with a person reared in a foreign country and the number of cross-cultural sessions, courses and workshops attended.

A significant negative correlation was found between the dependent variable and living arrangement with a person from a foreign country. If a coefficient is -1.00 for example, the variables are considered inversely related, which means a person who scores high on one variable will probably score low on the other variable when compared. For this study the interpretation is as being very culturally sensitive. A person could score low on the intercultural sensitivity variable and high on the living arrangement or it could be reversed and the person score high on the intercultural sensitivity variable and low on the living arrangement.

Burdette (1995) reported significant positive correlations (r=.19 to .46) between intercultural sensitivity and six of the nine independent variables related to teachers international/cross-cultural experiences, such as: extent of travel/study/work abroad; number of international (foreign) friends; living arrangement with a person reared in a foreign country; amount of time lived with a person reared in a foreign country; participation in international and/or cross-
cultural courses, sessions, or workshops; and the number of international and/or cross-cultural courses, sessions, or workshops attended.

Similarly, Towers (1995) found that intercultural sensitivity mean scores increased over time as a consequence of overseas living experience, a significant difference. In contrast, Davis (1993) stated that the preservice teachers' cultural sensitivity had no statistical significance to their overall cultural sensitivity score and participation in a multicultural education course.

Objective 3: Determine if relationships exist between intercultural sensitivity scores and selected demographic factors: gender and ethnic-group membership.

A T-test was performed to determine whether the mean scores differed by gender and ethnic-group membership. This researcher found that no significant difference existed between the intercultural sensitivity mean scores and gender, groups that are male and female agents (see Table 4). The ethnic-group membership was collapsed into two categories; African-American/Black (n=3); European-American/white and other (n=168), due to the lack of sufficient numbers within the African-American/Black group, no analysis could be conducted to test the objective.
Table 4

T-test of Pretest Means on the Intercultural Sensitivity

Survey by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>299.23</td>
<td>34.34</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>297.60</td>
<td>28.78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=175

Objective 4: Determine which of the independent variables are best in predicting agents' intercultural sensitivity scores.

A stepwise multiple regression procedure was used to determine if extension agents' intercultural sensitivity scores were significantly correlated with the independent variables, which included: personal/professional characteristics, international or cross-cultural experiences, and background variables. Of the 15 variables, five were statistically significant (see Table 5). The five variables accounted for 45% of the variance in the dependent variable, intercultural sensitivity.
Table 5

**Stepwise Multiple Regression of Significant Independent Variables on Intercultural Sensitivity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable (step entered)</th>
<th>Beta on final step</th>
<th>R change</th>
<th>T on step entered</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Comfort in supervising someone else (race or culture)</td>
<td>.334</td>
<td>.173</td>
<td>4.113</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Amount of time lived with person reared in another country</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>3.700</td>
<td>.0004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Number of friends from another country</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>2.752</td>
<td>.0073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Participation in cross cultural sessions, workshops and courses</td>
<td>-.252</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>-2.618</td>
<td>.0106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ever had a foreign language</td>
<td>-.209</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>-2.365</td>
<td>.0206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p<.05

Intercultural sensitivity was best predicted by the item, "Rate the comfort level in supervising someone different than yourself of another race or culture", which accounted for 17% of the variance. The sample mean was 7.50 (S.D. = 1.83) from a possible score of 10.00. If an individual had a low response to this item it would be expected to have a lower intercultural sensitivity mean score, (less sensitive to and aware of cultural difference) than those with a high response to this specific item.
The second best predictor of intercultural sensitivity was the item, "amount of time lived with a person reared in another country". It accounted for 12% of the variance.

Other items helped to explain the variability in the dependent variable, intercultural sensitivity. The item "how many foreign friends do you have" was the third best predictor (Mean=3.37, S.D.=1.50). It accounted for 8.5% of the variance. "Your participation in cross-cultural sessions/workshops and/or courses" was the fourth best predictor, which accounted for 5% of the variance. The last significant predictor was "extent of study/travel/work abroad", and it accounted for only 4% of the variance.
CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusion, Implications and recommendations

Summary

Extension educators have the ability to develop awareness and acceptance of cultural differences which is important in our global society. Our world is becoming interdependent and it is important to understand how a person develops sensitivity toward cultural differences. Also, as communities become more diverse it will be important for extension agents to extend their knowledge and acceptance of these differences as educators.

The purpose of this study was to determine the intercultural sensitivity levels of Extension agents in Ohio as related to life experiences. The objectives of the study were:

1. Identify the intercultural sensitivity level of Ohio’s Extension agents and to determine whether there are significant differences among the program areas.

2. Determine if relationships exist between intercultural sensitivity scores and selected international or cross-cultural experiences, such as:
   a. extent of travel/study/work abroad;
   b. amount of participation in international or cross-cultural courses, sessions, or workshops;
   c. extent of foreign language study experiences;
   d. number of international (foreign) friends;
   e. amount of time agent lived with a person reared in a foreign country;
   f. extent of serving diverse culture in county programs.
3. Determine if relationships exist between intercultural sensitivity scores and selected demographic factors: gender and ethnic-group membership.

4. Determine which of the independent variables are best in predicating agents’ intercultural sensitivity scores.

The research design used in this study was a descriptive and a correlational design. The dependent variable is intercultural sensitivity and the independent variables are related to personal/professional, background and international cross-cultural experiences.

The researcher used an portion of the Intercultural Sensitivity Survey, (Towers, 1990) as part of the questionnaire in this study to collect data from Extension Agents. Other questions were taken from Burdette’s background section and Ludwig’s background section. Towers’ scale yields a total score that is placed on a continuum of low to high scores of intercultural sensitivity. The higher scores represented higher levels of intercultural sensitivity.

The instrument was administered to 276 extension agents in the state of Ohio, representing all 88 counties. Cooperation was voluntary. After the survey was returned, analysis was conducted using the SPSS at The Ohio State University. Total scores for the Intercultural Sensitivity Survey are used for analysis. The findings presented in this chapter were the result of the analysis of 175 instruments (66%) returned an extension agents.
Summary of Findings

Objective 1: The result of the ANOVA indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference between the 4-H and Youth Development agents, Family and Consumer Sciences agents, or the Agricultural and Natural Resources, and Community Development agents.

Objective 2: Significant positive correlations resulted between intercultural sensitivity and 6 of the 8 independent background variables ($r=-.63$ to $.61$), at the .05 probability level.

Objective 3: A T-test was performed to determine if the mean scores of gender, groups that are male and female and ethnic-group membership were equivalent in their intercultural sensitivity. No significant difference existed between the intercultural sensitivity scores and the gender groups. No analysis could be conducted on the ethnic-group because of insufficient numbers within the categories.

Objective 4: A stepwise multiple regression procedure was used to determine if extension agents' intercultural sensitivity scores were significantly correlated with the independent variables (personal/professional characteristics, international or cross-cultural experiences, background). Of the 15 variables, five were statistically significant; they accounted for 45% of the variance in the dependent variable, intercultural sensitivity.
Conclusions

As a result of analyzing the findings from this study, the researcher has drawn these conclusions:

1. Agents who have acquired friends that are culturally different from their own are more culturally sensitive. This type of relationship increases an individual’s awareness and understanding of differences in values, beliefs and behaviors.

2. Based on the mean scores of intercultural sensitivity and Pearson Correlation, extent of travel/study/work abroad has an impact on intercultural sensitivity. The amount of time lived with a person from a foreign country and also attending cross-cultural sessions/workshops and courses had a low impact on intercultural sensitivity.

3. As a group, gender does not appear to make a difference as to how sensitive a person is to cultural differences.

4. Agents that supervise individuals that are different than themselves, were comfortable with the position of supervision.

5. Living with a person from another country affects how culturally sensitive that individual would be.
Implications

The concept of intercultural sensitivity is an important issue for extension agents to consider when implementing programs within their communities. The findings and conclusions in this study lead to several implications for extension personnel, extension agents, future researchers and the Extension system.

Developing relevant workshops/sessions and courses that will use strategies and methods that will move agents from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism is important. The research findings by Ludwig and Cano (1993) indicate that the top-down approach is crucial in implementing change within extension on the issue of diversity. In other words, a key to establishing a multicultural work force that is sensitivity to cultural differences is having competent leaders at all levels of the organization. In addition, key people at the state level would give support to the local agents on issues of domestic cultural diversity. At the local level extension agents who form community coalitions groups will have a better understanding of the cultural diversity within the local communities. Direct contact is most beneficial because it moves a person from ethnocentric to ethnorelative state.

Travel/study/work abroad has been found by previous researchers (Burdette, 1995; Gerber, 1995) to be a positive influence on intercultural attitudes and perceptions. Although short-term exposure to another culture has limited
impact, substantive knowledge and personal growth as well as an connection with others are formed. Knowledge and exposure to other cultures is the beginning of intercultural sensitivity development. Examples could be exchange programs and/or study tours to other countries. In the past extension has offered exchange programs for 4-H youth and Agriculture. Expanding and reorganizing this program could give incentive to extension agents.

In addition, the findings from this study indicate that individuals who have acquired friends that are culturally different from their own are more sensitive toward cultural differences. Burdette (1995) and Gerber (1995) agreed that having contact and acquiring friends from a culture had more positive attitudes and their intercultural sensitivity was increased. Thus, extension agents should be encouraged by the Extension system to participate in activities that have a cross-cultural focus or international perspective.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations for further research have surfaced:

1. More in depth studies on Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, focusing on evaluating the stages within the model. By evaluating these stages educators would better understand the progression toward ethnorelativism.
2. To further study the variable of age and its relationship to the intercultural sensitivity by including this variable in the research survey.

3. Focus a research study on the Extension Service clerical staff's intercultural sensitivity and their life experiences.

4. Conduct a longitudinal study on an extension work team and track the teams' intercultural sensitivity between and among the group over time.

5. Conduct a longitudinal study to assess the cultural sensitivity of agents over several years, after participation in cross cultural activities such as workshops/sessions and/or courses on cultural diversity, exchange programs or international/cross-cultural study tour experiences.
LIST OF REFERENCES


Strategic Planning Task Force on Diversity. (June, 1991). *Pathway to diversit-strategic plan for the cooperative extension system's emphasis on diversity*. Unpublished draft manuscript.


APPENDIX A

EXTENSION AGENT QUESTIONNAIRE
PARENT

PART I

Please answer the following questions by placing a check mark (☑) beside the appropriate response. The answers will be kept confidential. Feel free to leave any item blank that you do not feel comfortable answering. Please return only this section, i.e., part I and the computer answer sheet.

A. Gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male

B. Ethnic Background:
   ☐ African-American/Black
   ☐ Asian-American/Pacific Islander
   ☐ European-American/White
   ☐ Hispanic-American/Latino
   ☐ Native-American/Eskimo
   ☐ Not listed (please specify)________________________

C. Have you ever had a foreign language course? ☐ Yes ☐ No

D. With how many persons from a country other than the United States are you friends?
   1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ None ☐ Not Applicable

E. Have you ever had a living arrangement with a person (e.g., roommate, exchange student, spouse) reared in a country other than the United States? ☐ Yes ☐ No

F. Indicate the amount of time you lived with the person from a country other than the United States.
   ☐ Less than six months
   ☐ Six months to about one year
   ☐ One year to about two years
   ☐ Two years or more
   ☐ Not applicable

G. Indicate your Study/Travel/Work Abroad:
   ☐ Yes, I have, for less than six months.
   ☐ Yes, I have, for six months to about one year.
   ☐ Yes, I have, for one to about two years.
   ☐ Yes, I have, for two years or more.
   ☐ None, but I intend to go abroad.
   ☐ None, and I do not intend to go abroad.

H. Indicate your participation in Cross-Cultural Sessions/Workshops and/or Courses:
   ☐ I am currently enrolled in a session/workshop or course.
   ☐ Yes I have participated, within less than six months.
   ☐ Yes I have participated, within the past six months to about one year.
   ☐ Yes I have participated, within the past one to about two years.
   ☐ Yes I have participated, within the past two or more years.
   ☐ None, but I intend to participate.
   ☐ None, I do not intend to participate.

PLEASE TURN PAGE OVER TO CONTINUE
I. Indicate the number of Cross-Cultural Sessions, Workshops and or Courses you have attended:

   ___ 1   ___ 2   ___ 3   ___ 4 or more   ___ None

J. Are you serving the diverse culture within your county?

   ___ Yes   ___ No   ___ Not applicable If yes, answer K and L

K. On a scale of 1 to 5 please indicate how comfortable you feel with teaching a diverse clientele from cultures other than your own by placing an X above the number that best represents your response (1=uncomfortable, 5=comfortable)

   uncomfortable       ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ comfortable
   1  2  3  4  5

L. Have you directly supervised a person(s) of another race or culture while working for OSUE?

   ___ Yes (continue to M)
   ___ No (continue to O)

M. How would you describe your level of experience in directly supervising a person(s) *different* from yourself?

   ___ Very limited experience
   ___ Considerable experience
   ___ Somewhere in-between

O. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 representing the lowest rating and 10 representing the highest rating, please rate how comfortable you feel in supervising someone *different* from yourself (of another race or culture)? Please circle the most appropriate rating.

   VERY UNCOMFORTABLE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 COMFORTABLE

P. On a scale of 1 to 5 please indicate how comfortable you feel working with diverse co-workers by placing an X above the number that best represents your response (1=uncomfortable, 5=comfortable)

   ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___
   1  2  3  4  5

PLEASE CONTINUE TO PART II
PART II

PLEASE RESPOND TO STATEMENTS IN THIS SECTION ON THE SEPARATE ANSWER SHEET PROVIDED ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING SCALE:

1 = Never True  
2 = Seldom True  
3 = Sometimes True  
4 = Often True  
5 = Always True

1. I am not well-versed in world affairs.
2. Usually, I understand why people from other cultures behave and think as they do.
3. I try to understand the attitudes of those from other cultures.
4. I avoid people who behave differently than I do.
5. I can really understand the difficulties experienced by people visiting my country for the first time.
6. I try to understand the cultural context of values expressed by people from other cultures.
7. I understand the behavior, values and perceptions of persons from a variety of culture.
8. I am not concerned about international affairs.
9. I am interested only in learning more about my own religion; not others.
10. I sometimes deliberately choose to view and evaluate a situation from a different cultural perspective.
11. My actions are dictated by the cultural context of the situations.
12. I am very at ease in facilitating communication between people who differ in regard to their languages and culture.
13. I understand why my attitudes towards authority and power differ from those held by people from other cultures.
14. The ability to cope with cultural differences has become second nature to me.
15. I admire individuals who are willing to live in a foreign culture.
16. I do not alter my behavior to accommodate the cultural differences of others.
17. When I am working with people from different cultural backgrounds, I take that into account in determining my actions.
18. If a situation demands that I think or behave from a particular cultural perspective, I can readily accommodate myself.
19. I find myself thinking like a native of another country.
20. I feel comfortable in a culture other than my own.
21. I am very accepting of people from other countries.
22. I can understand why some non-technological societies may not consider themselves "underdeveloped."
1 = Never True  4 = Often True  2 = Seldom True  5 = Always True  3 = Sometimes True

23. I make deliberate attempts to understand the points of view of people from other cultures.
24. I readily identify with a multiplicity of cultures.
25. I make deliberate attempts to experience the perceptions of people from another culture.
26. I respect the religious practices of people from other cultures.
27. After having lived in a different culture, I often find myself unconsciously behaving in a way similar to the natives.
28. People from other cultures seem to be all alike.
29. In coping with a situation, I find myself evaluating the circumstances from two or more cultural perspectives.
30. I am keenly aware of why and how certain behaviors are inappropriate in other cultures.
31. I consider myself a mediator of cross-cultural communication.
32. I understand why the roles of men and women from other cultures vary from those in my own culture.
33. When a person from another culture speaks my language, I respect that person’s linguistic ability.
34. I am truly interested in the customs of people from other cultures.
35. I deal with cultural differences quite easily.
36. In any encounter involving people of diverse cultural backgrounds, I am very comfortable interacting with them.
37. I applaud people from other cultures who use idioms comfortably in my native language.
38. I am disillusioned with people from other cultures.
39. I think it is important to speak another language in order to truly appreciate another culture.
40. I recognize that people from other cultures do not necessarily have the same interests and goals as people from my own culture.
41. Relating and communicating with people from one or more cultures comes naturally to me.
42. People from different cultures are often judged to be strange by people who are culturally insensitive.
43. I try to understand the differing perceptions of people from other cultures.
PLEASE RESPOND TO STATEMENTS IN THIS SECTION ON THE SEPARATE COMPUTER ANSWER SHEET PROVIDED ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING SCALE:

1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE  
2 = DISAGREE  
3 = NEUTRAL  
4 = AGREE  
5 = STRONGLY AGREE

44. Cultural differences are unimportant in attempting to understand human behavior.
45. The role of men and women in a society are essentially biology determined.
46. It is best that technologically superior nations be in control of world affairs.
47. People who do not share my religious beliefs are misguided.
48. Superior cultures possess sophisticated technology.
49. The fact that people eat, procreate, and die is more important than the cultural differences between them.
50. It does not make sense to suppose that all individuals have equal rights.
51. Who I am and what I believe are influenced by my culture.
52. My country is less civilized than other countries.
53. Foreigners are generally lazy.
54. Any one culture is not inherently inferior or superior to any other: just different.
55. People from my country appear to be more backward than people from other countries.
56. The people of my country are more sophisticated than people from other countries.
57. Much of the world population does not take enough initiative to develop themselves.
58. People from my country are generally more intelligent than those from other cultures.
59. My duty and loyalty is to my country no matter what the circumstances.
60. Cultural differences are merely elaborations of fundamental biology.
61. A nation is superior if its citizens have a high standard of living.
62. I am not comfortable with people from my own culture.
63. Since humans have basically the same biological needs, cultural differences are unimportant.
64. Laziness is a cultural trait of people from underdeveloped countries.
65. Segregation between people from different cultures is a good thing.
66. People from other countries are generally more intelligent than people from my country.
67. In general, people from other cultures have many irritating habits and manners.
1 = Strongly Disagree  4 = Agree
2 = Disagree         5 = Strongly Agree
3 = Neutral

68. Because human nature is essentially the same, cultural differences are not important.

69. Cultural differences dictate that I relate differently to people from other cultures.

70. Regardless of what others think, I believe my culture is superior.

71. Many cultures from my perspective are uncivilized.

72. Nations which hold political ideologies different from mine are misinformed.

73. It is little consequence whether or not people fully understand the history of other cultures.

74. My country is closer to being perfect than not other countries in the world.

75. I believe it is inappropriate to describe cultures as either superior or inferior.

76. Peace among the peoples of the world would come about if all people spoke the same language.

77. No one culture is better or worse than another; they are simply different.

78. Political strife between governments would cease if all governments embraced the same political ideology.

79. People from other cultures are inferior.

80. Foreigners tend to have closed minds.

81. The worst danger to my country comes from foreign ideas and agitators.

82. It is important to understand cultural differences between people.

83. People from other cultures have very little to teach me.

********THANKS FOR YOUR HELP********

PLEASE RETURN ONLY PAGE ONE AND THE COMPUTER ANSWER SHEET IN THE ENVELOPE
APPENDIX B

LETTER TO EXTENSION AGENTS
August 5, 1995

Dear Extension Agent:

The intent of this study is to collect basic information related to the opinions, interest, and experiences in a multicultural setting of Ohio’s Extension Agents.

There is an instrument enclosed which includes two parts. Part I should be completed on the form and returned. The answers to Part II should be placed on the computer sheet that is included.

This questionnaire will be used only by the researchers. Names will not be used in this study; however, the instruments are coded for handling and follow-up purposes.

Would you please complete the instrument and return it to me by Friday, August 18, 1995. A self-addressed enveloped is enclosed.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Cora French

Cora French, B.A.
Graduate Student
Home Economics Education

Pamela Burdette-Williamson

Pamela Burdette-Williamson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Home Economics Education
APPENDIX C

LETTER FROM DR. KEITH SMITH
August 5, 1995

Dear Extension Agent,

You are being asked to participate in a study being conducted by Cora French, a graduate student in Family and Consumer Sciences, at The Ohio State University. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of extension agent’s opinions, interests, and experiences in a multicultural setting. This information will be useful in determining how our organization is responding to the issues of diversity.

Cora has prepared the survey questionnaire and the packet will be enclosed in the weekly county mail packet. We would appreciate your prompt attention to this survey. Please respond to it by the due date of August 18, 1995.

Please allocate approximately 45 minutes to answer the questions. Note that there are two sections of the questionnaire. Part I is the interests/multicultural experiences section and includes several demographic items needed to describe Extension Agents in Ohio. Part II is composed of a number of items intended to measure agents’ opinions about various diversity issues. Return part I section and computer sheet in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you for your prompt reply.

Sincerely,

Keith L. Smith
APPENDIX D

APPROVAL LETTER FROM DR. KAREN TOWERS
REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO USE MATERIAL
FOR SCHOLARLY PURPOSE

TO: Dr. Karen Towers
    St. Mary college of MN
    700 Terrace Heights
    Winona, MN  55987-1399

FROM: Cora French

In partial fulfillment of my Master's degree thesis I would like to use your Intercultural Sensitivity Interest Survey to study Ohio Extension agents' experiences with other cultures. I plan to use only the intercultural sensitivity scale.

Therefore I am requesting your permission to use the following material.

Title: Intercultural Sensitivity Survey
Author: Karen R. Towers
Copyright date: 1990
Survey: Intercultural Sensitivity scale

Will you agree to the use of the intercultural scale
___yes___no.

If you agree to the request, please return the signed original copy to Cora French in the enclosed return envelope as soon as possible.

I grant permission for the use of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale.

______________________________        ________________________
signature                        date
APPENDIX E

APPROVAL LETTER FROM HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW COMMITTEE
APPLIICATION FOR EXEMPTION FROM HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE REVIEW

RETURN TWO (2) COPIES OF THE TYPEWRITTEN APPLICATION (including original signatures) TO: Office of Research Risks, Room 300, Research Foundation Building, 1960 Kenny Road, Columbus. (ATTACH A BRIEF ABSTRACT DESCRIBING THE RESEARCH ACTIVITY IN LAY TERMS; ALSO, ANY QUESTIONNAIRES OR SURVEY INSTRUMENTS.)

Principal Investigator: Burdette Pamela A.
(Must be OSU Faculty) (Typed Name)
(Signature)

Academic Title: Assistant Professor
(Typed Name)

Department: Home Economics Education
(Typed Name)

Department No. 1502

Campus Address: 347 Campbell Hall
Room Number - Building 1767 Neil Avenue
Street Address

Co-Investigator(s): French Cora L. (Typed Name)
(Signature)

Protocol Title: Intercultural Sensitivity Levels of Family and Consumer Sciences

Extension Agents and 4-H Agents in Ohio

Yes No (Please respond to each item - A through F)

XX By A. The ONLY involvement of human subjects in the proposed research activity will be in one or more of the exemption categories as described in the appendix of "Human Subjects Program Guidelines."

* Category(ies) 6 2 3

XX By B. The proposed research activity will involve minors (under the age of 18.)

XX C. The proposed research activity will involve pregnant women, mentally retarded, mentally disabled, and/or prisoners.

XX D. The proposed research activity will involve human in vitro fertilization.

XX E. The proposed research activity will involve an element of deception.

XX F. The proposed research activity will expose subjects to discomfort or harassment beyond levels encountered in daily life.

Source of Funding for Proposed Research: (Check A or B.)
A. OSURF: Sponsor RF Proposal/Project No.
B. Other (Identify) To Be Determined

Office Use: EXEMPTION STATUS:

APPROVED DISAPPROVED**

Date 6/16/95

Chairperson

** Principal Investigator must submit a protocol to the appropriate Human Subjects Review Committee.