Chapter 2
Prejudice, Discrimination, and Alienation in Educational Environments

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ABSTRACT

In today’s societies where cultural singularity is almost destroyed, diversity can be an important richness, thanks to individuals displaying peace-based approaches. Schools are affected by this diversity and will continue to be cultivated as small but highly effective stakeholders of the social structure. It can be said that it is important for educational organizations to gain human values before teaching theoretical lessons to their students and that the necessary studies should be carried out both for school administrators and teachers and for students. First of all, raising awareness on this issue is a great need during the construction of the peace society. Therefore, in addition to contributing to the literature with this study, it is aimed to present different and diverse perspectives of prejudice, discrimination, and alienation of students and teachers, giving examples of cause and effect relationships. It is also aimed to make suggestions to reduce negative impacts and thus to raise awareness on the subject.

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INTRODUCTION

Instead of looking for excuses to resent and offend, look for remedies to love and be loved. – Rumi

Today’s interaction-oriented chaotic world, where physical boundaries have lost their meaning, always makes people more exposed and obliged to each other. There are many people who are similar or unlike to one another in every human environment and an individual has to communicate and interact with these people in order to survive. While it is relatively easier to associate with those who are similar to oneself, it may be more difficult for individuals to establish healthy relationships with people different from them, because man, naturally, has prejudices and fears about the unknown. On the other hand, being a social entity requires adaptation to their environment due to their creation and needs and establishing healthy relationships while doing so.

Many elements such as civil wars, immigration, and technology, which marked the last century, have increased the mobility of people across borders, rendered their communication with other people necessary and brought out a multicultural perspective. A prosperous society can be defined as a society that lives in peace, and what is most needed on earth is the spread of the concept of peace to the whole world. Therefore it is necessary to transform the educational approaches of individuals and societies as a first step because the globalizing world necessitates restructuring in different fields such as political, social, and economic and education (Uydaş & Genç, 2015). In this context, in addition to contributing to the literature with this study, it is aimed to present different and diverse perspectives of prejudice, discrimination, and alienation of students and teachers; giving examples of cause and effect relationships; It is also aimed to make suggestions to reduce negative impacts and thus to raise awareness on the subject.

BACKGROUND

Prejudice

There is not a single universal truth in the social world; instead, there are imaginary roadmaps that people define as good or bad, colored by people’s experiences and perspectives (Whitley & Kite, 2010). Although these imaginary roadmaps (stereotypes) are referred to as individual perceptions, people learn these stereotypes from the media, peers, parents, and even literature, as well as the beliefs that a group agrees with (Whitley & Kite, 2010). Stereotypes are defined as beliefs and opinions
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