

A STUDY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' AND COLLEGE SOPHOMORES'
KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS ISLAM AND MUSLIMS

A Dissertation

By

ABDENABI SENBEL

Submitted to the Graduate School

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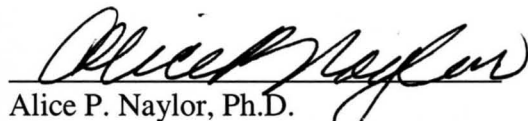
Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership
Reich College of Education

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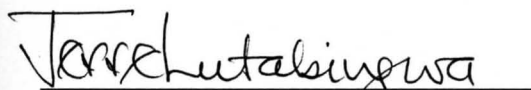
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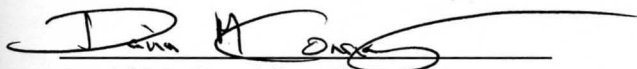
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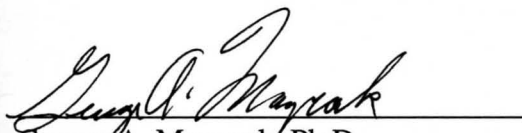
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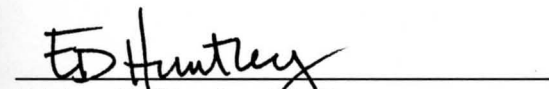
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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' AND COLLEGE SOPHOMORES' KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS ISLAM AND MUSLIMS.

(DECEMBER 2007)

Abdenabi Senbel, B.S. Lenoir Rhyne College

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This study investigated knowledge and attitudes of middle school and college sophomore students toward Islam and Muslims. The study was conducted in two middle schools in a midwestern state. Participants in the study consisted of 538 students; 255 sixth grade students, 55 seventh grade, 40 eighth grade students, and 183 college sophomore students. The criteria for selecting these two groups were age and grade level. Middle school students were 6th, 7th, and 8th graders from two different middle schools in the Midwest; and college sophomore students were from two colleges; one in the Midwest and one in the Southeast.

Subjects responded to a questionnaire consisting of three main parts; knowledge, source of information, and attitudes toward Islam and Muslims. *Part A:* Depth of Knowledge consisted of 15 items and addressed the knowledge of respondents about Islam and Muslims. *Part B:* Sources of Knowledge about Islam and Muslims consisted of 20 items that addressed and identified respondents' sources of knowledge.

Respondents' answers indicated the amount of information received from each of the four sources; family and friends, mass media, school/college, and Islamic sources. *Part C:* Attitudes toward Islam and Muslims consisted of 10 items that addressed respondents' attitudes toward Islam and Muslims. Respondents' responses indicated their level of agreement or disagreement on attitude statements concerning Islam and Muslims.

It was found that while college sophomore students' knowledge about Islam and Muslims was higher than that of middle school students, it was not very high overall. This indicated that both middle school and college sophomore students lacked basic knowledge about Islam and Muslims. School and Islamic sources showed to be the primary sources of information about Islam and Muslims. The results showed that there was a significant relationship between knowledge and attitudes for middle school, but not for college students. Finally, the study found a significant difference regarding attitudes towards Muslims but not Islam despite the fact that college sophomores had more knowledge in this area than middle school students.