

The development and effects of race and ethnicity research papers examples

[Sociology](#), [Community](#)



Diversity and differences among the groups of people is one reality in this earth. The world is composed of people with distinctive traits, culture, tradition and physique. How these differences will be respected in the sense of providing equal rights and privileges despite the differences remains a challenge for many nations and even for many institutions.

M. A. MacConaill defined the difference between ethnicity and race.

According to him, race refers to the physical characteristic of the group of people. A good example is the comparison of the characteristics of Caucasians and Asians. Caucasians have white skin, usually round eyes, thin lips, and narrow nose while the Asians have yellow or brown skin, almond shaped eyes, moderate thickness of lips, and shorter nose. Ethnicity, on the other hand, is the presumed common ancestry of the human beings or a group of people. Concrete examples of ethnicity are the Japanese and the Chinese ethnics in the Asian race (MacConaill, 2014).

An online Encyclopaedia, Wikipedia, has identified numerous theories about the development of the race. One of the notable and the most rational theories, I believe, is the theory of Hippocrates who mentioned that the race is a product of environment, climate and geography which affects the physical appearance of people. A similar theory was raised by an anthropologist, Franz Boaz, who believe that cultural and environment factors affect the development of people into adulthood. There are other theories mentioned and they mainly suggest that the development of the race is due to theological or biological factors (Wikipedia, 2014).

Recent studies suggest that the physical attributes of the group of people are meant to survive the environment they live. The theory is called the

environmental determinism (Briney, 2014). For example, the Eskimos' eye shape is meant to protect themselves from the coldness of their place while the narrow noses of the Caucasians are meant to warm the air that passes through their nostrils. Thus, the shape of their nose helps them survive the cold weather in their places. Africans have black skin as it is strong in melanin that will protect them from skin cancer that can result from the hot sun rays in the African region.

Kevin Mac Donald in his research, *An Integrative Evolutionary Perspective on Ethnicity*, stated that the Genetic Similarity Theory explains the development of ethnicity. According to him, the heritability of traits has a direct correlation in the positive interaction between the spouses, friends, families and the people around them in an ethnic group. Such theory has an impact on the ethnocentrism. The genetic similarity and dissimilarity has an impact on the liking, friendship, marriage, attitudes, religion and alliances of a certain group of people. Mac Donald mentioned another ethnicity theory that is the Social Identity Theory. The said theory explains that the similarity in the condition and situation of a group of a people can develop either hatred or harmonious relationship to the people outside the group. For example, the hostility being experienced by the Syrians develops the warlike attitude of the said ethnic group (Mac Donald, 2014).

The differences in the race and ethnicity have political, social, economic, and psychological impact. Nations are struggling for political power to have the most economic gains. In the process of achieving dominion, ethnic and racial clash is becoming evident. Today, the Caucasian race specifically the American, European, and Australian ethnicity have the political and

economic power while the African race and ethnic groups such as Kenyan, Nigerian and Tanzanian remains to have low representation in the global political and economic affairs. The Asian race is modestly represented. However, there are still large differences in its ethnic groups which impact the economic condition of the said race. East Asians ethnic group has more forward looking and progressive professional traits than many of the Southeast Asian ethnic groups while the Middle East Asians and South Asian may have similarity in appearance and food preferences, but they differ in religion. The beliefs and religion affect their attitude that also impacts their international relationships.

The disparity in the political and economic power among the races and ethnics leads to the sociological impact and among them is the discrimination. The discrimination is quite evident in the unequal job opportunities and immigration privileges among the races and ethnics. For example, a Nigerian citizen will have a harder time obtaining a tourist or working visa to states like Japan, New Zealand as compared to a Filipino citizen. In the same way, a Filipino will have more difficulty obtaining any visa for most countries than an American.

In the United States, a form of racial and ethnic discrimination is very evident in their political preferences. The huge majority of the African Americans voted Barrack Obama's presidency in 2008 and 2012 while large majority of the South Carolina considered Hilary Clinton as the more qualified to run for US President than Barrack Obama in 2008. Chinese are also banned from entering the United States while Mexican-Americans is also excluded in US's public school systems. Middle Eastern-Americans in the US

military are being bullied and are called as " Zachari bin Laden", " raghead" and " sand monkey" (Wikipedia, 2014).

Anup Shah in her article in the Global Issue states that that racial and ethnical discrimination occurs in all parts of the world. She noted some examples of discrimination that occurred in Europe, Australia, Africa, Middle East, North America and discrimination against Gypsies. According to her, there are sentiments against Arabs and Jews in the Western Europe, in line with the increasing hostilities in the Middle East. Similarly, in the Middle East, people maltreat the foreign works that are low earners. They also treat foreign workers as second class citizens (Shah, 1998).

The racial and ethnic differences that lead to discrimination have a psychological impact. DeAnna Byrd in her research entitled Race/Ethnicity, and Self-Reported Levels of Discrimination and Psychological Distress, California 2005 said that racial discrimination leads to poor mental health. She mentioned that Blacks/Africans have higher levels of discrimination than Caucasian/Whites, Hispanics, and Asians in California, United States. In her findings, though, she said that the Africans have lower psychological distress than the Caucasians. She explained that it is because Africans were used to discrimination. Hence, Africans learned to have flexibility in their emotions. Africans also involved themselves to the religious organizations which reduce the distress caused by discrimination (Byrd, 2005).

The American Psychological Association published a study stating that the race related stress are riskier in health impact as compared to the stress caused by everyday life events. The psychological and social resources such as involvement in the religious community, familial and friends support help

significantly suppress the race related stress (Utsey et. al, 2008).

In the said organization's other study, it clearly expressed its condemnation to the lack of understanding and respect for people's race and ethnic differences as it disrupts the mental health and psychological functioning of both victims and perpetrators. " We strongly believe that respect for the inherent dignity and well-being of each member of the human family is the psychological foundation of freedom, human justice and peace in the world. This important principle is recognized in the United Nations Charter (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and every subsequent human rights declaration and convention. That includes the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)"

The American Psychological Association urged to include the positive mental health concerns in the World Conference Against Racism's framework for remedies and strategic prevention of racial and ethnic discrimination (American Psychological Association, 2014).

The research conducted by the Harvard University entitled Racial and Ethnic Identity Development said that races and ethnics should have a healthy concept of themselves to help cope with the psychological distress of racism. People are also encouraged to understand the minorities as they try to cope with the culture and different standards of the vast majority in a certain nation. The educators are also urged to create a multicultural learning communities and ways to develop a non-judgemental perspective on different ethnic groups and races (Chavez et. al, 1999).

Race and ethnicity is a given characteristic of life in the world. It is something that we cannot change but it is a reality that we can enjoy as

creatures. Respecting the rights and privileges of each individual and refraining from having hasty generalizations about a certain group are the key ways to prevent racism, ethnocentrism, and discrimination. Having regard to other cultures and appreciating them while learning more about it and other groups of people can lead to a harmonious relationship between races and ethnics despite differences.

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