

Introduction to sociology

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Effect of Racial Discrimination on Academic Performance Problem ment

Globalization and immigration have greatly transformed the modern education environment. With the flow of information, people and capital as a result of this globalization, the contemporary society gets enriched, challenged and complicated. Indeed, the education sector, as noted by Muller et al. (2010), experiences such challenges. School communities have become more racially and ethnically diverse thus causing disparities based on race and ethnicity leading to potential inequalities. These inequalities have perpetrated racial discrimination in educational institutions which academically disadvantage the minorities, hence the aim of this paper in seeking to determine whether racial discrimination affects academic performance. Literature Review/Discussion Social scientists postulate that races are social constructions loosely related to the comprehended phenotypical variations in humans (Browne, 2011). Closely related would be the aspect of ethnicity which concerns national ancestry, signifying the historical, cultural and linguistic differences in the involved groups. The way an individual would construct a racial identity in reaction to the behavior of others amounts to racial identity. To understand how structure, human agency and culture affect outcomes, it would be crucial to understand the social positioning of people. Education has been noted to propagate secondary socialization after primary socialization from families. Positive academic achievements provide social mobility opportunities allowing for secure jobs, good health and housing. This means that everyone should have the opportunity to access education and be motivated to excel. In the education sector, racial discrimination has been noted to be a key determinant of outcome. This outcome would be determined through

graduation rates, grade point averages, GPA and test scores, according to Hodge et al. (2008). In institutions having learners from different races, the researchers observe that achievement gap between races would be brought about through racial discrimination. From their study, which samples were two high schools with racially diverse students, as Muller et al. (2010) noted, it is clearly seen that this discrimination would present the minority with limited learning opportunities. In a study that seems to further determine the academic impact of this discrimination of the minority, Rowley and Wright (2007) appreciate that a racially discriminative environment deters the minority from attaining the desired academic achievement. A similar observation was made by Hodge et al. (2008) who explored the difference in academic achievement between the Blacks and the Whites, noting that majority of the Blacks would underachieve academically consequently leaving school before graduating. The strength of the quantitative research quantifies the findings noting that 60% of Blacks between the years 2001 and 2002 failed to graduate with their peers. The research by Muller et al. (2010) supports this with the qualitative research on integrated schools noting that Whites performed better than African Americans and the Latinos. In fact, some Black students perceived that if they suppressed their racial identity, then they could better their academic performance. And if they excelled, they would be regarded as sell-outs among their peers or as trying to act White, conflicting with their cultural identities. This acting White label perpetuates the stereotypic belief connoting that naturally Whites would be more intelligent than the Blacks. Even so, Rowley and Wright (2007) acknowledge that if the minority, disadvantaged by racial discrimination would execute socially acceptable behaviors as students, and teachers and

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parents exhibit higher expectations in them, such students would be bound to post positive academic performance. In fact, Hodge et al. (2008) oppose the postulate that racial discrimination would solely negatively impact on academic achievement. According to these researchers, one's deterrent background and poor preparation interact together with racial discrimination to propagate negative academic achievement. Of importance therefore would be to offer students, irrespective of their races, equal opportunities and access to resources that would make them attain academic success (Muller et al., 2010). Furthermore, integrated schools having students from various racial backgrounds could be internally segregated so as to achieve racial homogeneity in their classrooms.

Conclusion Despite the challenge caused by class in determining the effect of racial discrimination on academic performance, the research study articles analyzed in this paper reveal a correlation between the two aspects. Racial discrimination negatively impacts on academic performance. African Americans and Latinos have been noted to be the disadvantaged lot in the American context. These minorities have been branded as non-performers as opposed to the Whites noted to be naturally bright academically. This form of racial discrimination has caused the minorities to post poor academic outcomes hence miss opportunities in life. An equal access to education resources would curb such social misgivings.

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