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DO WE REALLY SEE THE WORLD IN BLACK AND WHITE?

by
Christine DeRiso

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
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Approved by _____
Professor

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ABSTRACT

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DO WE REALLY SEE THE WORLD IN BLACK AND WHITE?

2004/2005

Dr. John Klanderman and Dr. Roberta Dihoff

Master of Arts in School Psychology

The purpose of this study was to examine whether or not there is a double standard of punishment between Black and White Americans and to evaluate the social perceptions of Black Americans in our society. Seventy-two teachers were given surveys concerning an eleven- year old boy with aggression. On half of the surveys, the boy's name was Tommy and on the other half of the surveys, the boy's name was Tyrone to allude to differences in race. The teachers were asked to determine the punishment for the boy's latest outburst and to answer questions concerning how they perceived the story. This allowed the researcher to evaluate a possible double standard of punishment in the severity of consequences given to the Black child in comparison to the White child. Also, by including separate questions, the researcher was able to look at the difference in social perceptions of these two groups. Results showed that there was no difference in the severity of punishment, nor were there any significant correlations in social perception with the exception of one. There was a significant relationship found between the Tyrone surveys and the perception that the father was 'in and out' due to serving jail time.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Need

“Your perception is your reality.” This statement means that everyone has their own basic understanding of the world based on the way he or she perceives certain things. This can have major societal implications when a substantial portion of society perceives one group of people negatively.

To research this we must delve into the minds of those around us. We extract minimal information from individuals, combine the data to represent society, and end up with a measure of ‘social perception’. This allows us to examine how society as a whole perceives an issue.

One controversial issue in particular is racial bias of Black Americans in the United States. By studying social perceptions society has of Black and White Americans, we can see the magnitude of racial biases in today’s society. Some people say that racism is a thing of the past, while others say racism is still as strong as ever but has taken on a subtler form. Through combined results of research projects scattered across the United States, we can get an idea of the prevalence of racial bias.

Purpose

The researcher in this study was most interested in seeing if social perception is correlated with a double standard of punishment. The study was done to see if people would chose different consequences for a boy perceived to be Black than a boy perceived to be White. If society has a double standard of punishment, think of the implications it

has for students, for convicts, for workers, and for humanity as a whole. If two people commit the same crime, how can it be fair to give them different consequences based on their race?

In order to see if there is a double standard of punishment, the researcher wrote up a case study about an eleven- year old boy having trouble controlling his anger and physical aggression. On one copy, the researcher made the boy's name 'Tommy' to allude to the perception that the boy was White and on the other, made the boy's name 'Tyrone' to allude to the perception that the boy was Black. After reading the case, the participants were to answer questions concerning their perceptions and the course of action that should be taken to deal with the child's misbehavior. Other questions targeted at perception of circumstance were included for a more thorough examination of social perceptions. After distributing the surveys to two representative samples, the data was analyzed to see if there was any significant disparity between the two.

Hypothesis

The main hypothesis was that people would give harsher consequences for the case study of 'Tyrone', than they would give for the case study of 'Tommy'. The independent variable was 'the perception of race' and the dependent variable was 'the severity of consequences'.

In order to validate the idea that perception is correlated with race, the researcher included separate questions to see if the participants made certain judgments based on the name prompt. For instance, the case study stated 'the boy was out playing ball' and one of the questions was "what sport do you think he was playing?" It was hypothesized that people would assume the boy was playing basketball if prompted with the name

'Tyrone'. Also there were two questions asking about circumstances concerning the boy's mother and father. The hypotheses are that those given the Tyrone surveys are more likely to associate the mother and fathers' circumstances as negative. These questions were integrated so that the researcher could examine commonly held stereotypes and misconceptions of the Black race.

Theory

There are theories that provide a base for this research to build upon. One such theory is known as the illusory correlation effect (the illusion of a connection). For instance, a person meets a boring accountant and from then on says that all accountants are boring. Then, with every boring accountant he meets, his belief becomes more concrete, and every encounter that disconfirms his belief is thought of as the exception. He then overestimates how many boring accountants he has met and underestimates how many 'exceptions' there were so that his schema does not change. Therefore, he has an illusory correlation between accountants and boring personalities. In relation to this research, if a person's schema about black children is that they are aggressive and enjoy basketball, he or she would be more likely to read the case study as such to confirm his or her schema.

A related theory is called self-fulfilling prophecy. Basically it means that a person starts to believe and conform to the expectations put upon him or her. For instance, if a Black student is always being told he is troublesome, he will start to become troublesome. In a sense, the person takes on the role and begins to believe he is what everyone says he is.

There is an evolutionary theory called in-group bias that was used as a base for

this study as well. It is believed that humans separate people into in-group and out-group categories as an adaptive function passed down from our ancestors. Members of the person's in-group are seen more positively and the out-group is seen more negatively. As a result of this, ethnocentrism arises. Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own culture or ethnicity is superior. It could help explain if and why White Americans perceive 'Tommy' more favorably than 'Tyrone'.

Another theory is called aversive racism. Aversive racism is the idea that negative beliefs exist even in well-intentioned people. Their beliefs come out in indirect and subtle ways, but can have devastating effects for the victims (Gaertner and Dovidio, 1986). In regard to this study, the researcher was testing one component of aversive racism. By using the concept of perception, the attempt was made to draw out individuals' hidden racist beliefs and expose the negative effects people have collectively.

Definitions

By *race*, the researcher is only referring to Black and White Americans for the purpose of the study. It was limited to those two groups based on the controversial history and personal interest.

In regard to the term *perception*, it should be assumed that the definition is "the selection, organization and interpretation of sensory input" (Weiten, 2001, pg. 168). The researcher then uses the term *social perception* to mean how the majority of individuals in society perceive some form of sensory input alike.

When using the term *double standard*, the researcher means that there is one set of rules for Black Americans and another set of rules for White Americans in this country.

Lastly, by the terms *consequences* and *punishment*, used interchangeably, the researcher is referring to the case study questionnaire (refer to Appendices).

Assumptions

First, the researcher had to assume that the name Tommy would prompt the reader to think of a White American and the name Tyrone would prompt the reader to think of a Black American. Some participants may have just read the case without noticing the racial name prompt or read the case and thought of a different ethnicity. Also, the researcher had to assume that the case study and multiple-choice answers would evoke different perceptions for the same story. In order to test this, the researcher included a question asking ‘of what race do you think Tommy/ Tyrone is?’ to verify that assumption.

Second, the researcher had to assume that the scale for punishment was accurate and valid. It was tested in a small subject pool to verify its validity.

Third, the researcher had to assume that the two groups were representative of one another. The research would not be as valid if, for instance, one group was all liberals and the other all conservative.

Fourth, it was assumed that the social perception findings could be generalized to Black Americans as a whole regardless of the fact that it was only testing the social perception society has of a Black male eleven-year old. Keep in mind that more research must be generated to test the social perceptions of Black women and Black men of all ages.

Limitations

First, most of the participants filling out the surveys live somewhere in the north-

east making it difficult to generalize the results to the rest of the United States population.

Second, the study did not have a truly random sample in which numbers are chosen by computer. Therefore, the researcher used a larger sample to help lessen this limitation.

Third, the researcher opted to exclude minors as survey participants. Therefore, this research in no way reflects the mindset of the younger generations and how they view race.

Overview

By choosing to study the double standard of punishment based on race, the researcher attempted to show the latent inequality existing in the world around us. In the following chapters, we will explore related research, methodology, results, and the concluded implication it has for our society. The goal is that we may make generalizations about social perceptions and apply them to our schools, our courts, and our everyday living.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Up until recently society was promoting the idea that race does not matter, a theory called “colorblindness”. This cosmology led to a lot of racial attitude bias because the truth is, race does matter (Richeson and Nussbaum, 2004). Presently, we are moving toward a multicultural understanding of society where each culture is taught and differences are appreciated (Boutte, 1999). Until that goal is met, it is important to examine the problems that need to be addressed; such as race in the school system, the social perception of Black Americans, racial bias in crime and punishment, racial bias in other institutions, and the effect racial bias has on the victims.

Race in the School System

There has been a great deal of research surrounding the issue of racial bias in the school setting over the years. There are gaps in performance, test scores, retention, suspension, graduation rates, tracking, special education, discipline rates, and punishment. Racial barriers inhibit equal opportunity and it is important for us to fully understand how and why this is happening.

Racial Bias and Discipline

In 2002, there was a study done called the Color of Discipline researched by Skiba *et al.* They gathered 11,001 students from nineteen middle schools encompassing the sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Whenever a student was referred for a discipline problem, the administrator would code the referral. The research team collected all of the

referrals and examined the results. They found that 66.1% of the referrals were for Black students; 68.5% of those suspended were Black students; and an alarming 80.9% of those expelled were Black students. Another disturbing finding was that the reasons for referrals were different due to race. White students were more likely to be referred for smoking, leaving without permission, vandalism, and obscene language whereas Black students were referred for disrespect, excessive noise, threat, and loitering. This study shows that more than half of the referrals and severe consequences were targeted at Black students and that they were referred for more subjective reasons.

A similar study was done by McFadden *et al.*. The research team used 4,391 discipline files of nine schools in one district. After reviewing the files, they found that Black students account for the majority of the cases of corporal punishment and school suspension; they found that Black handicapped students were given more severe sanctions than other students, and they found that White students were more likely to receive internal suspension over external suspension, which is less severe. According to Irvine (1990), "African-American students are more likely to be suspended at an earlier age, to receive longer, repeated suspensions, and to receive corporal punishment than are White students."

Coincidentally, the racial disparity in suspension rates was also noted in an article in The New York Amsterdam News in the year 2000. It talked about the findings of The Applied Research Center and discussed that due to the zero tolerance policy, children of color were suspended more frequently. At that time, Reverend Jesse Jackson was in support of the study and had been fighting the zero tolerance policy for quite a while. He stated a statistic that even though only 16.9% of the United States school population is

Black, they make up 32% of all suspensions.

Racial Bias and Educators

There have been many findings leading to the idea that teachers' may be racially biased. In one study, teachers were asked to nominate their most-difficult-to-teach student. The teachers nominated more Black students for referral than White students. This disparity can help explain the overrepresentation of Black students in special education (Bahr and Fuchs, 1991).

Research by Marylee Taylor examined the perceptions of 105 White, female undergraduate students majoring in education and found that Black male students were given the least favorable treatment out of all the race/gender combinations. Due to the biases in punishment and teacher expectations, these students begin to conform to what is expected of them. This concept is called 'self-fulfilling prophecy'.

Integration

Integrating schools is part of the solution to eliminating racial bias. By opening the minds of younger generations to diversity, our society can grow. While it does take a lot of time and effort to integrate a school and have a harmonious setting of positive racial attitudes, it is very beneficial to the students. According to Allport's contact theory, in order for groups to get along, each group must have equal status, be interdependent of one another, and both receive positive support from those in authority. When a school finally reaches this point, progress can be made in teaching students how to appreciate each other's culture. A study done by Bowman- Damico *et al*, found that children with "some" Black friends rated Black Americans more positively than children with "almost no" Black friends. This research shows that through integration, social perception of

Black Americans can begin to change.

From a legal perspective, it has been argued that it is easier to block integration of schools than it is to block racially bias practices. This occurs as a result of people who attempt to be politically correct and take race out of the equation. They focus their attention on race neutral policies, which in fact, disadvantage minority students. Even with social science research, the laws are still set in place (Ryan, 2003). These laws block improvement strategies and cripple society.

Having racial bias in the school system teaches children early on about the inequalities they will face later in life. Research in this section showed the double standard of punishment in the school setting and educators' racial bias. It also explored the idea of integration as part of the solution to closing the racial gap in the United States and identified the impediment of laws preventing equality in the school system.

Social Perceptions of Black Americans

A study done back in 1974 suggested that the equality attitudes toward Black Americans were based more on social pressure than reality. They found that participants put on a façade of not being prejudice while their inner convictions came out when asked certain questions. The participants' attitudes changed when asked about living in an integrated neighborhood, rooming with someone of a different race, interracial dating, friendship, and/or marriage (Porter, 1974). When asked questions regarding those topics, the façade faded and the truth came out; it showed that they were against close, interpersonal contact with members of the Black race.

Part of the façade is that people act more prejudiced after they have established themselves as not being prejudiced (Monin and Miller, 2001). For instance, if someone

says 'I'm not prejudice but....', that is a good indicator of this theory in action. Also, people are more likely to act prejudice when they have anonymity or ambiguity in the situation (Pfeifer and Bernstein, 2003) mainly because it is hard for most people to see themselves as racist (Kornblum, J.).

Facilitating Racial Bias

One reason that racism occurs is due to in-group bias or ethnocentrism (Wittenbrink et al. 2001). Research with kindergarteners showed that even children attribute more positive characteristics to their in-group than to the out-group. It is believed that they do this, not because of out-group hostility, but because of in-group familiarity. People do not actually start to form prejudices until around seven or eight years of age (Hoover and Fishbein, 1999) and they tend to grow from there in one direction or the other. By the time a White male or female reaches adulthood, regardless of their racial attitudes, the automatic preference for White Americans is still present (Dasgupta et al, 2000).

The question is what other factors attribute to people perceiving Black Americans in this negative way? For one the link of race and socioeconomic status. Because of historical setbacks, Black Americans do not have the same advantages as White Americans. Some people fail to see this as a problem of society and instead, blame Black Americans for not trying hard enough (Brezina and Winder, 2003).

Two: political ideologies. Conservatives are more likely to think of minority groups as being hostile, unintelligent, lazy, and uncaring than are liberals (Domke, 2001). Problem being that many conservatives have a lot of power and do not use their power to help the minorities they think so negatively of.

Three: racialized issues. Instead of seeing police presence and youth programs as beneficial to the whole, people see the programs as needed for minority groups only, especially when given racial cues (Domke, 2001). The policy of welfare especially is highly racialized even though there is no explicit connection between welfare and race (Federico, 2004). And, one would think that those who are college-educated would be less biased, but that is not the case. In fact, research has shown that although college-educated people have higher racial tolerance, they have stronger associations between certain policies and race (Federico, 2004). When issues are racialized, they lose support from society.

And, four: gender. According to Hoover and Fishbein, males score higher for all types of prejudice than do females. This is problematic because men yield more power than women.

Therefore, since conservative, highly- educated males are the people in primary control of society, racialize the issues, and help to perpetuate the socioeconomic disadvantage, it is hard to believe that any progress is being made at all.

Racial Bias in Crime and Punishment

Racial bias comes out in all facets of daily living, but it is severely damaging when it affects the way society views crime and punishment. Crime and punishment are affected by race right from the start when law enforcement uses racial profiling.

Racial Profiling

Racial profiling goes against the idea of a democratic society and is part of a larger cyclical chain of events. If law enforcement prejudices someone using racial profiling, the percentage of criminals will be higher for that race because they are being

targeted. This in turn, confirms the idea that Black Americans are more likely to commit crimes; blinding law enforcers into believing that they were right all along to use this policy. The offender then goes to court where he or she cannot afford good legal representation, is usually found guilty, and sent to prison. Later, the data of crimes per race is presented to society influencing social perceptions of Black Americans as delinquents. Then, individuals who now have internalized the negative social perceptions are sent to sit on the jury stands of crimes committed by Black Americans and allowed to choose their punishment. How is this system fair?

Racial profiling occurs so much these days that it is now referred to as 'driving while Black' (Harris, 1997). Black males are pulled over more frequently than White males (Lundman *et al*, 2003); and they are more likely to be ticketed and searched (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001).

There was a study done with the police department in Wichita, Kansas back in 2001. The researchers there collected information on 37,454 stops made by officers. The results showed that even though Black Americans only made up 11.4% of the population in that area at that time, 20.7% of all vehicle stops were for Black Americans. Not only were Black Americans over-represented in the whole area but even in predominantly White neighborhoods (Withrow, 2004).

In other studies, researchers again found racial disparity of police behavior. Schafer *et al.*, found that even though White drivers are pulled over 62% of the time and Black Americans 26% of the time, the number of searches was about the same; 44% of searches were of White Americans and 42% were of Black Americans. In 2000, Holmes wrote an article in the New York Times stating that even though studies show there are

five times more White Americans using drugs, Black Americans are imprisoned twice as many times. He noted that in 1996, there were 62.7 Black drug offenders and only 36.7 White drug offenders in prison, even though, according to the Census Bureau, Black Americans make up only 12% of the population.

White Juror Bias

When the case makes it to the courtroom, it must undergo White juror bias. White juror bias has been widely discussed in regard to such cases as with Rodney King and O.J. Simpson. The perspective of the jurors is dependent on if they attribute the crime to internal factors such as deviant behavior or if they attribute it to external factors such as societal injustices (Sims, 2003). In order to study the empathy a jury has toward a defendant, researchers had college students read a passage about a White or Black defendant in a criminal case. They found that participants made external attributions for the defendant's behavior when he or she was White and internal attributions when he or she was Black. This, in turn, caused the participants to give less severe consequences and have more empathy toward the White defendant (Johnson *et al.*, 2002).

There has been a large amount of research done examining White juror bias. In one case using mock juries, results showed that participants had less compassion for a Black defendant than a White defendant if the only knowledge the jury had was the individual's race (Pfeifer and Bernstein, 2003). Also research has shown that White Americans are more likely to convict Black defendants than White defendants (Foley and Chamblin, 1982) and are more likely to give Black Americans longer sentences and more severe punishments (Sweeney and Haney, 1992).

Black Americans are very familiar with racial profiling and White juror bias;

many have experienced it. Therefore, they perceive the justice system very differently than White Americans perceive it. A study done by Jones examining the infamous O.J. Simpson case showed that the case was less about his innocence or guilt as it was about the racial divide in America. Jones stated that the case showed Americans just how wide the racial divide is. During the trial, it was all anyone could discuss and it represented a power-struggle between the races; it became much larger than the courtroom. One woman even said she would no longer vote for Colin Powell because she did not want to give 'them' any more power. The researcher also explained findings by Fazio *et al* to explain why Black Americans were rooting for innocence and why White Americans were rooting for guilt. Fazio *et al* found that White Americans have in-group bias for their own experiences, morals and ideals and because Black Americans have been victimized, they see those same experiences, morals and ideals in a negative, distrustful way.

The Effect of Racial Bias in Crime and Punishment

The crime rates ultimately affect the way in which society perceives Black Americans as a group. Stewart, Weeks, and Lupfer examined previously studied stereotypes of African Americans: athletic, funny, musical, lazy, unintelligent, promiscuous, and criminal (Stewart *et al.*, 1998); and asked students if a particular behavior is more likely to come from the Black male in one photo or the White male in another photo. The participants estimated the Black males likely of skipping town to avoid arrest 57% of the time and the White males only 35%. The participants also estimated the Black males likely to get caught shoplifting at a department store 56% of the time and White males only 38%.

Crime and punishment are major parts of society. When there are inequities in the criminal justice system, it shows that there really is a double standard of punishment for Black and White Americans. Racial profiling, white juror bias, and the maintenance of the social perception of Black Americans do not reflect a system of justice at all.

Racial Bias Exists Everywhere

The school system and the criminal justice system are not the only arenas where racial bias occurs. Some people are blinded into believing that racism is over; 75% of White Americans believe Black Americans are treated fairly, while only 38% of Black Americans agree (Kornblum, 2004). Racial bias is everywhere and can be found in interracial conversation, the psychiatric world, the workforce, etc.

Interracial Conversation

Interracial conversation can bring about feelings of tension, apprehension, and uneasiness concerning acceptable speech and body language. Most people in an interracial conversation attempt to be sensitive to the other's culture regardless of their racial attitude. Occasionally some fail to achieve this and instead, end up insulting the other person. One type of insulting behavior is called stereotyping explanatory bias. Stereotyping explanatory bias occurs when a person's behavior does not match the expected stereotype. The counter conversationalist attempts to understand why that is by asking probing questions. This is done to explain why the stereotype does not match and to keep the already set schema.

In two experiments performed by Sekaquaptewa *et al.*, stereotyping explanatory bias was studied. In their research, it was shown that White males are more likely to ask stereotypic questions while interviewing a Black candidate than when interviewing a

White candidate. Their results also showed that interracial interaction is dependant on whether the White person uses stereotypic explanatory bias. The research showed that if the Black person in the conversation feels like the White person is asking probing questions, he or she views their social interaction negatively.

Psychiatric World

Racial bias also exists in the psychiatric world. Even though there is evidence that there is no difference in the severity of Black and White patients (Flaherty & Meagher, 1980), the staff believes that the Black patients are more aggressive than the White patients (Lawson *et al.*, 1984). In some hospitals, the use of restraint and the use of major tranquilizer injections are four times more likely when the patient is Black (Bond *et al.*, 1988) and the use of seclusion is used more often with Black patients (Soloff & Turner, 1981). Racial bias in the perceived dangerousness of the patient comes out in ambiguous situations (Spector, 2001) such as if the patient is considered 'uncooperative' or 'disturbed' (Kuhlman *et al.*, 1982). Even in the juvenile justice system, the mental health needs of minority youth are overlooked and underserved. This is heartbreaking considering that it there are findings indicating that the Black minors going through this system need it the most (Rawal *et al.*, 2004).

Workforce

Part of the cycle that keeps Black Americans in low socioeconomic status is racial bias in the workforce. If a Black American cannot get hired anywhere, how is it fair to say that poverty is because of a lack of trying? Research done by Neckerman and Kirschenman examined the hiring strategies of 185 Chicago firms. They found that open positions for job opportunities are highly advertised in White neighborhoods and do very

little to attract individuals from Black inner-city areas. If and when Black Americans find out about the job openings, they tend to do poorly in the interview process because of the lack in work experience. During the interview, the deficit shows and there is not much to discuss. Again, the Black American is caught in a cycle. They cannot find work without work experience but they cannot get work experience without work.

Due to the cycle, Black Americans are underrepresented in the higher ranks and over-represented in the low paying, service jobs. They are employed at 40% the rate of European Americans in managerial, professional and sales occupations but are employed at almost twice the rate of European Americans in private household, service, and laborer occupations. Those who do make it to the high status careers face the glass ceiling effect (Farley and Allen, 1987). According to the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission Report of 1995, of all the Fortune 1000 and Fortune 500 companies, Black Americans held senior level positions only 6% of the time.

This section explores the racial disparity in interpersonal interaction, the psychiatric world, and the workforce as an issue of racial bias. It was examined that stereotypic explanatory bias has a major effect on interpersonal communication. In regard to the section on the psychiatric world, the double standard of punishment and the staff perceptions of seeing Black patients more aggressively were explored. Lastly, in the section concerning the workforce, racial bias in recruitment, glass ceiling effects, and the cycle of work and work experience were discussed. In regard to the study, this information can help to understand the unfairness in our country and the double standards existing everywhere.

Racial Identity and Success

Living in a society that has prejudged people based on the color of their skin for over four centuries has effected the Black personality and the way in which Black Americans perceive our country. They are taught very early on 'how, when, and where to exercise talents, opinions, desires, and beliefs without it becoming a political issue (Jones, 1991)'.

According to Arroyo and Zigler, racial identity depends on how the individual sees him/herself in relation to the racial group and how he or she views the social perception of Black Americans. If the individual believes Black Americans are perceived negatively by society, they usually do not identify with the Black race. Also, racial identity effects how the individual feels about issues such as race, identity, and racial discrimination as global issues (Jefferson & Caldwell, 2002).

Development of Racial Identity

First children become aware of the racial gaps in society. In a study done by Bigler *et al.*, results showed that Black American children in the first and sixth grades, associate different jobs with different races. They also found that in regard to novel occupations, the children associate higher status to jobs depicted with White Americans and associate lower status to jobs depicted with Black Americans. Also, the children said that were more interested in working in careers that depicted White Americans.

From their awareness of racial gaps in society, they learn that in order to get by, they may have to identify with the dominant culture and distance themselves from their own racial group. It appears as though Black children who conform to this concept of 'racelessness' have better academic success but worse psychological well-being; such as

depression, anxiety, and identity confusion (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986). It also appears that racial identity is multidimensional and is correlated to the individual's self-esteem (Rowley *et al.*, 1998).

Racial Identity and Achievement

This research implies that, those who chose to identify with their race have lower academic achievement. The correlation is interesting because Black American families tend to hold education in high regard and believe in the benefits it has (Steinberg *et al.* 1992). It appears that the derailment of academic achievement is more due to the child's interaction with the school system (Arroyo and Zigler, 1995).

Growing up the main contact children have with society is through the school system meaning that educators play a major role in the development of children's perception of society. If the child sees that the Black race is treated unfairly or disrespectfully, he or she may view larger society in the same manner and become angry. With the anger, they distance themselves from education, and in turn, close the gate to finding a career. Examining all the factors combined, it becomes apparent as to why Black Americans are over-represented in the rates of unemployment.

By using a longitudinal study, Kokko and Pulkkinen examined the correlation of childhood aggression and unemployment (race was not a variable). The researchers examined the participants at ages eight, fourteen, twenty-seven, and thirty-six and found that those with aggression at age eight engage in the most maladaptive behaviors throughout life. Those participants had difficulty in school, alcohol problems, lack of occupational options, and high rates of unemployment.

For the small portion of Black Americans who do have academic success and find

lucrative careers, there are still double standards present. They are taught that the rules and standards they must meet are different than those of White Americans. For instance, Henderson did a study in 1975 and found that if a Black police officer acts aggressive and assertive, he or she is evaluated negatively and a White officer is not. Evaluations can be very damaging if they lead to job termination.

This section shows that children learn through their observations of the world confirming the idea that progress must occur over a long period of time because every generation teaches the next what to expect. Over time, society must eventually make those expectations positive. In regard to racial identity, someone with low expectations of their race seems to have better academic success but lower psychological well-being and vice versa for the child with high expectations of their race. Until racial identity can be positively correlated with both academic success and psychological well-being, it is hard to say which is better.

Conclusion

This chapter has given a comprehensive overview of the structural and functional insufficiencies we maintain in society. It has reviewed major findings of racial bias in the school system, the workforce, the psychiatric world, the criminal justice system, interpersonal communication, and politics. It has shown that all of these issues stem from, and result in, the social perceptions of Black Americans. The argument can be made that the development of social perceptions depends on children's interaction with the school system and therefore, is dependent on the racial attitudes of educators. It is apparent that drastic changes need to be made and that the issues Black Americans face are of no fault of their own, but instead lie on the shoulders of greater society.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF RESEARCH

Sample

The researcher surveyed seventy- two teachers employed at a suburban middle school in Central New Jersey. The teachers who participated taught in sixth grade, seventh grade, eighth grade, or special education classrooms. Data was collected over a one-week period. Permission was granted from the principal and informed consent was obtained from all teachers who participated. No extrinsic rewards were given for participation.

There were thirty-eight participants who received the Tommy surveys and thirty-four participants who received the Tyrone surveys. All of the participants were White Americans in order to exclude the possibility of participant race as a variable. The total sample consisted of fifteen males, forty-six females and ten people who did not specify their gender. The participants ranged in age from anywhere between early twenties to mid-sixties.

Measures

There were two separate surveys administered with the same five questions on each: one where the boy in the case study's name was Tommy and the other where the boy's name was Tyrone (please refer to Appendices). Every question was used as a separate measure in conjunction with the name prompt.

The first question asked the participants 'what consequence/s would you give Tommy/Tyrone for his behavior? (circle as many as you feel necessary.)'. The answers

escalated in severity from 1 being the least consequence of 'nothing' and 10 being the harshest consequence of 'he should be sent to live in a juvenile detention home'. This question was designed to examine if the consequences for the Tyrone group were harsher than those for the Tommy group. The researcher examined the responses using a Likert Scale. If the respondent circled numbers one or two, they were scored as a one. If he/she circled numbers three or four, they were scored as a two. If he/she circled numbers five or six, they were scored as a three. If he/she circled numbers seven or eight, they were scored as a four. If he/she circled numbers nine or ten, they were scored as a five. If the respondent circled more than one answer, they were scored using the highest number they circled. For example, if someone circled a two and a five, the researcher scored it as a three based on the circling of number five. If someone wrote in an answer as 'other', it was scored in terms of severity level by the researcher and agreed upon by the Statistics Assistant. For scoring method, please refer to Appendices.

Questions two, three and four were implemented to examine the social perception of Black Americans. Question two asked 'what game of 'ball' do you think Tommy/Tyrone was playing?' The researcher was expecting to find that the surveys of Tyrone were more likely to choose basketball over the other options. Question three asked 'where do you think his father is?' and question four asked 'what do you think the mother's 'problems' are? (circle as many as you think necessary)'. For both questions, the researcher was examining if the participants were more likely to select the negative circumstances over the neutral circumstances for the Tyrone group than for the Tommy group. For scoring method, please refer to Appendices.

Lastly, question five allowed the researcher to find correlates between the name

prompt and the answers in the previous questions. For example, if the majority of participants answered that they perceived the father on drugs or in jail or the mother's 'problems' as welfare, drugs, or an abusive husband/boyfriend significantly more times for the Tyrone group than they had perceived those circumstances for the Tommy group, this would be indicative of negative social perceptions of Black Americans. By having both White and Black represented, it can be ruled out that the answers were based on the perception of the story but rather due to the perception of race.

Design

In order to examine the data, two t-tests, and a correlational design were used. The first t-test explored the relationship between name prompt (Tommy/ Tyrone) and severity of consequences (Question #1). The second t-test looked at the variables name prompt (Tommy/ Tyrone) and perceived sport (Question #2). The correlational design allowed the researcher to examine the relationships between all of the variables; specifically name prompt (Tommy/ Tyrone) in relation to the father's circumstances and the mother's 'problems'.

Hypotheses

The first t-test used name prompt as the independent variable and severity of consequences as the dependent variable. The researcher hypothesized that when the name prompt was Tyrone, there would be a correlation with higher numbers on the severity scale indicating more severe consequences than when the name prompt was Tommy. The null hypothesis was that there was no significant relationship between name prompt and the severity of consequences.

The second t-test used name prompt as the independent variable and perceived

sport as the dependent variable. The researcher hypothesized that when the name prompt was Tyrone there would be a correlation with 'basketball'. The null hypothesis was that there was no significant relationship between name prompt and perceived sport.

The third test done was the correlational design to find all relationships between variables. The researcher hypothesized that there would be significant correlations between negatively perceived circumstances and the Tyrone surveys. The null hypothesis was that there was no significant correlation between name prompt and perceived circumstances.

Analysis

Once the data was collected the three tests were run. A t-test was chosen to examine name prompt with severity of consequences because there was one independent variable (name prompt) with two levels (Tommy and Tyrone) and one dependent variable (severity of consequences). This allowed the researcher to find out if the severity of consequences were different for the two groups and in which direction.

The second t-test was chosen because the researcher wanted to see if there was a relationship between the sports selected and the name prompt. Perceived race was the independent variable, using the two levels (Tommy and Tyrone) and the perceived sport was the dependent variable. This question allowed the researcher to look at participants' perception of a story based on the character's perceived race.

The correlational design was chosen for questions three and four because it gave a more comprehensive look at race and perception. It allowed the researcher the ability to look at how society perceives Black Americans as compared to how society perceives White Americans. It allowed the researcher to examine whether they perceive negative

circumstances or positive circumstances based on race.

Summary

The researcher gave out two surveys to the seventy-two teachers working in the middle school. The surveys differed only by the name prompt, Tommy or Tyrone. This was done to allude to the perception of either White American or Black American. After the data was collected, the researcher ran three tests: two t-tests and a correlational design. The next chapter is a detailed explanation of the research findings.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS SECTION

Introduction

In January 2005, a researcher asked seventy-two middle school teachers to fill out surveys. Roughly half of the participants were given surveys where the boy's name was Tommy and the other half was given surveys where the boy's name was Tyrone. All surveys were the same besides the name prompt allowing the researcher to examine the impact race might have on perception and the impact it can have on the severity of consequences given for misbehavior.

Results

The researcher ran the proposed tests and analyzed the data. The first t-test examined name prompt (Tommy/Tyrone) and the severity of consequences (Question #1) as variables. The hypothesis was that those given the Tyrone surveys would be more likely to select higher numbers on the severity scale indicating more severe consequences than those given the Tommy surveys. It was found that, according to this data; the severity of consequences is not significantly different based on race. This means that the teachers surveyed are more likely to give the same types of punishments for an incident regardless of the student's race.

The second t-test examined the name prompt variable (Tommy/Tyrone) in relation to the perceived sport (Question #2). The hypothesis was that those given the Tyrone surveys would choose basketball as the perceived sport significantly more times than the Tommy surveys. It was found that there was not a significant relationship

between race and perceived sport. Thirty of the seventy-one participants assumed the boy, regardless of name prompt, was playing basketball when given the information the boy was 'playing ball'. This data shows that basketball is not a social perception of Black Americans but an assumption for boys his age 'playing ball', regardless of race.

The last test was a correlational design examining all relationships between variables. The researcher was then allowed to decipher whether the name prompt (Tommy/Tyrone) was correlated with negative perceptions of the father being 'in and out' and also, whether race was correlated with negative perceptions of the mother's 'problems'. Most of the data showed no significant correlations between variables. However, the results showed that there was a direct correlation between the name prompt variable Tyrone and the participants' perception that the father was 'in and out' due to serving time in jail, $r = 0.256$, $p < .03$. Refer to Table 4.1 below. This means that those under the assumption that the boy being discussed was Black more readily assumed that the father was in jail when given the information that he is 'in and out'. It shows that a person's perception of something can be altered by race. This data, along with other research discussed, shows that people in society have a social perception that Black men are more likely to be in jail than White men.

Table 4.1

Relationship between the name prompt and the assumption that the father is in jail

		NAME PROMPT	FATHER IN JAIL
NAME PROMPT	Pearson Correlation	1	.256(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.030
	N	72	72
FATHER IN JAIL	Pearson Correlation	.256(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.030	.
	N	72	72

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Summary

Based on the data, it appears that there was no direct connection between race and the severity of consequences. Nor were there many relationships found between race and perception. Interestingly, there was a significant finding between Tyrone and the perception that the father's circumstance was jail time. This data shows that people's perception can be altered by their assumption of race and that there is a social perception that links Black men and jail time.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to research social perceptions of Black Americans in our society and to evaluate whether or not there is a double standard of punishment. The focus was centered on whether or not and to what degree teachers' perceive Black and White students differently. In order to study this, the researcher wrote up a case study about an eleven- year old boy having angry outbursts. Half of the surveys distributed had the boy's name as Tommy to allude to the perception that the boy was a White American and half of the surveys distributed had the boy's name as Tyrone to allude to the perception that the boy was a Black American. The main question on the survey asked the respondents what type of punishment the boy should receive. This question was implemented to allow the researcher to examine whether the teachers' would choose a more severe punishment for the surveys labeled Tyrone than they would for the surveys labeled Tommy. This would exemplify a double standard of punishment. In order to study the component on social perception, the researcher asked three questions: what type of ball was the boy playing, where do you think the father is, and what do you think the mother's problems are. This allowed the researcher to decipher whether the respondents would choose basketball over other sports and also, whether the respondents would assume the parents were involved in one of the negative circumstances.

The researcher then obtained approval and went out to a Central New Jersey middle school to conduct the study. Seventy-two teachers were surveyed, the data was

collected, and the appropriate tests were run. Post-test results showed that there was not a significant relationship between the name prompt and the severity of punishment chosen. They showed there were no significant relationships between the name prompt and the perceived sport. They showed there was no correlation between the name prompt and either the mother or father's circumstances with the exception of one. The one significant relationship was between Tyrone and the assumption that the father was away due to serving jail time. This can have major implications for society.

Conclusions

From this study, it can be concluded that race did not play a major role in changing the respondents' perception of the case study. The teachers' gave approximately the same answers regardless of race for most of the questions. For the question concerning the severity of consequences, there was consistency across the board showing that the subject pool of teachers questioned operates on a fair and just system. To apply these results to larger society, we could say that the experiment showed there is not a double standard of punishment between Black and White Americans specifically in the student-teacher relationship.

This study also shows that some commonly held stereotypes of Black Americans might be dying down these days. The results showed that the social perceptions of Black and White Americans were not significantly different. The respondents did not associate Tyrone with basketball any more than they associated Tommy with basketball. In fact, on the whole, basketball was the most popular response to this question topping out over soccer, baseball, and football.

After reviewing the data, it also became apparent that the respondents did not

necessarily associate the name prompt with negative circumstances. From this it can be concluded that the social perceptions of Black Americans do not include things such as drugs, welfare, and abuse any more readily than the social perceptions of White Americans do. However, the significant relationship found was between the name prompt and jail time meaning that the social perception of Black males who are said to be away from the home, are more likely to be serving time in jail than are White males who are said to be away from the home.

Discussion

Fortunately for society the study did not follow most of the proposed hypotheses. It appears that children are not facing a double standard of punishment in the school systems and teachers are indeed evaluating students on their behavior rather than their race. Although this research goes against the literature reviewed, it does much to show the progress society has made in regard to social perceptions of Black Americans.

Unfortunately, this data shows that major strides still need to be made due to the fact that there was a significant correlation between Black males and jail time. After reviewing the research and analyzing the results, it appears that society looks at Black males as aggressive in nature. This social perception has led to racial bias, hesitation to integrate, racial profiling, white juror bias, poor interracial conversation, differential treatment, and unbalance in the workforce. As a result of all of these issues combined, the development of individuals' racial identity and the motivation for achievement have been compromised.

Implications for Future Research

After careful evaluation of the whole study, some major drawbacks were found.

One, the name prompt did not always produce the desired perception. For instance, some of the respondents given Tommy surveys answered that they had perceived the boy's race to be Hispanic. The responses given when the perception of the boy is Hispanic would presumably resemble the responses given for the Tyrone surveys thus interfering with the results. In the future, it would be better to avoid relying on a name prompt and instead include the race of the child being discussed. Two, many of the respondents did not answer all of the questions. To avoid this, the subject pool should have been increased. Third, the survey was not perfectly sound due to the fact that it was not properly tested for validity. For a proper validity test, a large-scale study should have been completed rather than solely relying on a twenty-person subject pool to test the instrument. Lastly, the respondents' true beliefs may have been hidden so as to not sound racist and therefore, caused them to answer the questions to coincide with the impression they were trying to give off.

More research needs to be completed concerning the double standard of punishment between Black and White Americans. Through statistics, society may be able to see the unbalance of power and unjust nature it preserves. By informing the public, changes can be made toward equality and one day, Black Americans may be able to maintain a racial identity that coincides with achievement.

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APPENDIX A

Tommy Survey

Thank you for agreeing to fill out this survey. By doing so, you are giving your consent and acknowledging that participation is voluntary. Please be advised that you may skip any question you feel uncomfortable answering and you may refuse to finish the survey at any time. Your answers will be kept anonymous and confidential. Also, know that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions; just try to answer the questions honestly. As you are working on the survey, please feel free to ask me any questions you may have. The purpose of this research is to look at teachers' view of consequences for my master's thesis. Please read the details of the following case study carefully as though you are the one in charge of Tommy's consequences. It will take approximately five to ten minutes.

Case Study of an 11 Year Old Boy

Tommy is an aggressive boy who, at times, uses physical aggression. He fights with his younger siblings giving them bruises and making them cry on a regular basis. He has received detention five times in the past two months for some form of fighting. His mother sees his behavior as troublesome and fears he may get worse as he gets older; but she has problems in her own life to deal with. The father is not a permanent fixture in the boy's life; coming in and out of the house. The 18 year- old brother's attitude is that Tommy is just like every other boy his age and remembers doing the same thing when he was eleven years old.

Tommy's most recent incident occurred just this past week. He was out playing ball at free play during gym when another boy came over to join in. Tommy did not like the idea and began exchanging words with the other child. Things got pretty heated and Tommy punched the boy in the face.

What consequence/s would you give Tommy for his behavior? (circle as many as you feel necessary.)

1. Nothing, he is acting like a typical 11- year old boy
2. He should try out for a sport to release the anger
3. He should be grounded by his mother
4. He should receive detention for a week
5. He should be suspended for a week
6. He should be taught anger management techniques by the school psychologist
7. He should be seeing the school psychologist regularly
8. He should be receiving therapy from a licensed psychologist regularly
9. He should get out of his home environment and be sent to live with a family member
10. He should be sent to live in a juvenile detention home.
11. Other _____

What game of 'ball' do you think Tommy was playing?

1. Soccer
2. Baseball
3. Football
4. Basketball
5. Other _____

Where do you think his father is?

1. Away on business
2. Serving time in jail
3. Working late hours
4. On drugs
5. Divorced from the mother
6. Having an affair
7. Other _____

What do you think the mother's 'problems' are? (circle as many as you think necessary)

1. Work
2. Single mother
3. Welfare
4. Health problems
5. Drugs
6. Abusive husband/boyfriend
7. Other _____

Of what race do you think Tommy is?

1. Latino/a American
2. African American
3. Asian/ Pacific American
4. European American
5. Native Alaskan/ American Indian
6. Other _____

Questions about you:

Gender: Male or Female Age Range: 20s 30s 40s 50s 60s 70s 80s

Race/ Ethnicity: _____

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact the Principal Investigator,
Christine DeRiso, at 732-581-4443 or contact the Faculty Sponsors at 856-256-4500 Dr.
Klanderma, ext. 3797, or Dr. Dihoff, ext. 3783.

APPENDIX B

Tyrone Survey

Thank you for agreeing to fill out this survey. By doing so, you are giving your consent and acknowledging that participation is voluntary. Please be advised that you may skip any question you feel uncomfortable answering and you may refuse to finish the survey at any time. Your answers will be kept anonymous and confidential. Also, know that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions; just try to answer the questions honestly. As you are working on the survey, please feel free to ask me any questions you may have. The purpose of this research is to look at teachers' view of consequences for my master's thesis. Please read the details of the following case study carefully as though you are the one in charge of Tyrone's consequences. It will take approximately five to ten minutes.

Case Study of an 11 Year Old Boy

Tyrone is an aggressive boy who, at times, uses physical aggression. He fights with his younger siblings giving them bruises and making them cry on a regular basis. He has received detention five times in the past two months for some form of fighting. His mother sees his behavior as troublesome and fears he may get worse as he gets older; but she has problems in her own life to deal with. The father is not a permanent fixture in the boy's life; coming in and out of the house. The 18 year- old brother's attitude is that Tyrone is just like every other boy his age and remembers doing the same thing when he was eleven years old.

Tyrone's most recent incident occurred just this past week. He was out playing ball at free play during gym when another boy came over to join in. Tyrone did not like the idea and began exchanging words with the other child. Things got pretty heated and Tyrone punched the boy in the face.

What consequence/s would you give Tyrone for his behavior? (circle as many as you feel necessary.)

1. Nothing, he is acting like a typical 11- year old boy
2. He should try out for a sport to release the anger
3. He should be grounded by his mother
4. He should receive detention for a week
5. He should be suspended for a week
6. He should be taught anger management techniques by the school psychologist
7. He should be seeing the school psychologist regularly
8. He should be receiving therapy from a licensed psychologist regularly
9. He should get out of his home environment and be sent to live with a family member
10. He should be sent to live in a juvenile detention home.
11. Other _____

What game of 'ball' do you think Tyrone was playing?

1. Soccer
2. Baseball
3. Football
4. Basketball
5. Other _____

Where do you think his father is?

1. Away on business
2. Serving time in jail
3. Working late hours
4. On drugs
5. Divorced from the mother
6. Having an affair
7. Other _____

What do you think the mother's 'problems' are? (circle as many as you think necessary)

1. Work
2. Single mother
3. Welfare
4. Health problems
5. Drugs
6. Abusive husband/boyfriend
7. Other _____

Of what race do you think Tyrone is?

1. Latino/a American
2. African American
3. Asian/ Pacific American
4. European American
5. Native Alaskan/ American Indian
6. Other _____

Questions about you:

Gender: Male or Female

Age Range: 20s 30s 40s 50s 60s 70s 80s

Race/ Ethnicity: _____

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact the Principal Investigator, Christine DeRiso, at 732-581-4443 or contact the Faculty Sponsors at 856-256-4500 Dr. Klanderma, ext. 3797, or Dr. Dihoff, ext. 3783.

APPENDIX C

Scoring Sheet

Thank you for agreeing to fill out this survey. By doing so, you are giving your consent and acknowledging that participation is voluntary. Please be advised that you may skip any question you feel uncomfortable answering and you may refuse to finish the survey at any time. Your answers will be kept anonymous and confidential. Also, know that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions; just try to answer the questions honestly. As you are working on the survey, please feel free to ask me any questions you may have. The purpose of this research is to look at teachers' view of consequences for my master's thesis. Please read the details of the following case study carefully as though you are the one in charge of Tyrone's consequences. It will take approximately five to ten minutes.

Case Study of an 11 Year Old Boy

Tyrone is an aggressive boy who, at times, uses physical aggression. He fights with his younger siblings giving them bruises and making them cry on a regular basis. He has received detention five times in the past two months for some form of fighting. His mother sees his behavior as troublesome and fears he may get worse as he gets older; but she has problems in her own life to deal with. The father is not a permanent fixture in the boy's life; coming in and out of the house. The 18 year- old brother's attitude is that Tyrone is just like every other boy his age and remembers doing the same thing when he was eleven years old.

Tyrone's most recent incident occurred just this past week. He was out playing ball at free play during gym when another boy came over to join in. Tyrone did not like the idea and began exchanging words with the other child. Things got pretty heated and Tyrone punched the boy in the face.

What consequence/s would you give Tyrone for his behavior? (circle as many as you feel necessary.)

- Likert Scale*
1. Nothing, he is acting like a typical 11- year old boy > 1
 2. He should try out for a sport to release the anger > 1
 3. He should be grounded by his mother > 2
 4. He should receive detention for a week > 2
 5. He should be suspended for a week > 3
 6. He should be taught anger management techniques by the school psychologist > 3
 7. He should be seeing the school psychologist regularly > 4
 8. He should be receiving therapy from a licensed psychologist regularly > 4
 9. He should get out of his home environment and be sent to live with a family member > 5
 10. He should be sent to live in a juvenile detention home. > 5
 11. Other Subjective Designation from 1-5 > 5

What game of 'ball' do you think Tyrone was playing?

1. Soccer
2. Baseball
3. Football
4. Basketball
5. Other _____

Where do you think his father is?

1. Away on business 0
2. Serving time in jail 1
3. Working late hours 0
4. On drugs 1
5. Divorced from the mother 0
6. Having an affair 0
7. Other _____

*0 = Race Neutral
1 = Race Negative*

What do you think the mother's 'problems' are? (circle as many as you think necessary)

1. Work 0
2. Single mother 0
3. Welfare 1
4. Health problems 0
5. Drugs 1
6. Abusive husband/boyfriend 1
7. Other _____

Of what race do you think Tyrone is?

1. Latino/a American
2. African American
3. Asian/ Pacific American
4. European American
5. Native Alaskan/ American Indian
6. Other _____

Questions about you:

Gender: Male or Female Age Range: 20s 30s 40s 50s 60s 70s 80s
Race/ Ethnicity: _____

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact the Principal Investigator, Christine DeRiso, at 732-581-4443 or contact the Faculty Sponsors at 856-256-4500 Dr. Klanderman, ext. 3797, or Dr. Dihoff, ext. 3783.