A Study to Examine Patterns and Performance Trends among Black and White School Students on a National Level from the 1970s to the 1990s

Otis L. Miller
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A Study To Examine Patterns and Performance

Trends Among Black and White

School Students on a National Level from

the 1970's to the 1990's
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Trends Among Black and White
School Students on a National Level from
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A Research Project
Presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies
at Old Dominion University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
the Masters of Science in Education Degree

by
Otis L. Miller
August 1997
This research paper was prepared by Otis L. Miller under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Education. It was submitted to the Graduates Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Science of Education.

APPROVAL BY:  

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Otis L. Miller, Jr.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Every year, the topic of educational reform has been an important issue among political officials who have promised to devote special attention and consideration towards this issue. Just as promises are made, promises are broken and education continues to be motionless towards any reform. With the constant media reports of increasing dropout rates and the increase of drugs and violence on US school playgrounds, especially in our inner city urban areas (where Blacks make up majority of the population), it is safe to assume that the educational system has been failing our Black school children. As the result of the ineffectiveness of our county’s educational system, it seems that the attitudes and academic achievement levels of Black school children have deteriorated. In order to legitimately tackle the problems in the educational system in the United States, a clear understanding behind some of the causes of deteriorating attitudes and motivation among Black school children must be accomplished. When searching for answers, many government and community leaders have neglected the task of reevaluating some of the previous laws and policies implemented to reform education. For instance, during the proceedings of the Brown vs. Board of Education hearing, many reports were drafted indicating the difference between the self-esteem or image among Black and White students. After the 1954 Supreme Court decision to declare that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional, the gap between the self-esteem or image of Black and White school children was expected to be removed.

More than forty years after 1954 Brown vs. the Board of Education case, the educational paths of Black school children continue to be divergent of that of White school children. The initial purpose of desegregation was to provide equality for Black students, especially in the South. Many arguments were made that racial segregation was not harmful to the educational development of the Black student body. But after the psychological assessments of Black students, previous arguments against school segregation received support with reports that Black school children suffered emotionally as a result of public school segregation.

Today education of black students is expected to have improved greatly since the desegregation movement. However, there are no recent reports or studies evaluating the progress
of black students in desegregated schools since the Supreme Court ruling in 1954. Based on the concerns and issues mentioned earlier, this research study will attempt to give emphasis to the need to re-evaluate the current education system of the United States.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to examine the patterns and performance trends among Black and White high school students on a national level from the 1970's to the 1990's. To answer this problem this research document will include a comparison of the dropout rates and the academic performance levels in the areas of science, mathematics, and reading among of White and Black school children.

RESEARCH GOALS

In respect of this particular problem, this study will attempt to accomplish the following research goals:

1. Explore some of the characteristics of low self-esteem or image and motivation among Black school children.

2. Examine the academic performance trends between Black and White school children, by making a comparison between dropout rates, science scores, mathematics scores, and reading scores.

3. Analyze the overall effectiveness of public school desegregation.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Black Americans have followed two major strategies to try to improve the educational opportunities made available to their children. At times, they have pursued high-quality schooling by insisting that segregated schools be provided with equal educational resources. At other times, convinced that equal-quality education and segregated schools were incompatible, they have fought to integrate schools. At all times, Blacks have sought educational excellence and equal educational opportunity. Currently, it has been documented that in some instances more money is
available in areas where whites make up more than 80% of the population than in other areas where blacks make up more than 80% of the population (Weingber, 1983, p. 113). Because of this unbalance, the equality of education between blacks and whites should be once again questioned, as it was in 1954. It is very important for school administrations to ensure that the Jim Crow's system of segregation does not continue to exist, resulting in a negative affect on blacks students at this day and age. Parents of students, especially in the urban community should be aware of the ratio of black student dropouts rates to those of white students. If the United States is to continue its query for true equality in education, then its leaders should closely analyze the educational systems which are responsible for the development of our future leaders and citizens.

LIMITATIONS

The following information included in this section specifies the limitations in which this particular study was restricted:

1. It would be more applicable to this research to have statistical data dating before the 1954 Supreme Court ruling, but because the National Assessment of Education Progress Organization (NAEP) was not assembled, statistics before 1969 were not available.

2. When attempting to make a correlation of the scholastic achievements of both groups of students, this study relied heavily on the reports generated by the National Assessment of Education Progress Organization (NAEP), therefore this research is subject to any estimate of standard errors from statistical data found in their studies.

ASSUMPTIONS

This study was based on the assumption that desegregation of the public schools in the United States did not prove to be 100% beneficial to Black students. Despite the efforts to provide equality in education through desegregation, black students are continuing not to measure up to the academic achievement levels of other students from different ethnic groups.
PROCEDURES

The study identified and selected the academic achievement and performance levels of Black students during a period from the 1970's to the 1990's. The academic performance trends of white students will be used to display any dramatic differences between both students populations. All statistical data gathered for both sample groups were based on national scores and statistics publish by the Department of Education.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Throughout this study, there will be terms used that may be unfamiliar to the reader. Key terms have been defined for the context of this study and provide clarity to the reader.

**Desegregate** - to eliminate racial segregation.

**Desegregation Movement** - a process started by the Supreme Court ruling in the case of Brown vs. Board of Education (1954) to eliminate laws, customs, or practices under which different races, groups, etc., are restricted to specific or separate public facilities, neighborhoods, schools, organizations, or the like.

**DISSL** - (Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties) organization formed in 1958 by James G. Martin which views expressed deep concerns for the preservation of segregation.

**Dropouts** - are persons who are not enrolled in school and who are not high school graduates. People who have received GED credentials are counted as graduates. Data are based upon sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutional population.

**Equality** - the state of quality of being equal.

**Jim Crows System of Segregation** - a system of laws adopted by the Southern States that was passed by the U.S Supreme Court to create separate societies—one black, the other white.
SUMMARY

Chapter I has been a general introduction to the needed awareness of the unbalance in academic attainment levels between Black and White students. In order for educational reform to be strategically effective, the problems within the educational paths of black students must be publicized. Providing the best education for all children is the primary goal of our school systems, but any deterrence from the goal within the boundaries of equality can result in numerous social problems.

Chapter I includes a statement of the problem to be studied. Also the content of Chapter I includes the research goals of the study and the background and significance of the research. An overview of the procedures used for the execution of the study was included, as well as a definition of terms which were very important to potential readers of this study.

The remainder of the study discusses the literature reviewed as background to help reach the goals of this study. Also, the methods and procedures used to gather data for this study, as well as the conclusions based upon the findings, are found in the remaining chapters.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents the review of literature pertinent to the study. Chapter II will first examine the United States government’s initial attempt to reform its educational system, which took place in 1954 with the Supreme Court ruling in the Brown vs. The Board of Education. Also in this chapter, a discussion of psychological issues of Black students such as motivation and self-image will be included. Finally, another relevant area covered in Chapter II will be some of the perceived causes of the academic achievement gaps between Black and White students.

Brown vs. The Board of Education

A preeminent concern in the area of race and education has been black and white differences in academic achievement. Examination of trends of school achievement of Blacks, specially in terms of performance on standardized tests covering reading, math, and science, should not be the sole element used to measure the performance of students. Since there are several issues that can have an influence on test results, there are other areas that should be analyzed. First, student motivation towards education and self-image can be proven to provide a direct correlation between the academic success of a student. An examination of the dropout rate patterns throughout the past years can also be used to determine the effectiveness of an educational system. As we attempt to evaluate the future of the education of America’s youth, a look at the pivotal changes in our system must be taken into account.

Economic conditions in the South were deteriorating during the second decade of the twentieth century. The cotton industry was basically abolished by widespread flooding which resulted in an increase of unemployment (Stephan, 1980). Due to the start of World War I, many employment opportunities opened in the North, and this caused a vast migration of Blacks from the South. From 1915 to 1930, an estimated 1.5 million Blacks moved out of the South (Stephan, 1980). As a resident in the North, Blacks were exposed to the same racial segregation in regards to housing and education that had plagued the South (Kluger, 1976).

Under the “Jim Crow System”, Black and White school children participated in separate educational institutions. For a long period time, it was accepted that even though the school children attended facilities according to race, the entire educational process such as books,
curriculum, government funding, and environment for both the White and Black student population were uniform. The discrepancies that existed were even larger in southern states with large Black populations. For example, in Georgia, the average expenditure for White school children was $35 per child versus $6 available for each Black school children; and in Mississippi the differences were $45 versus $5 (Thompson, 1974). It was obvious that the dual school system of the South was definitely separate and clearly unequal. Nathan Margold formulated a plan in 1930 with the NAACP that outlined a legal strategy designed to eliminate the dissimilar educational systems among the Black and White school children. The NAACP and its members slowly began their attack on segregation with law suits for equal schools.

This historical challenge for educational equality, consisting of five separate cases which were ultimately joined together, was known as Brown vs. Board of Education (1954). Each of the five cases was different, but all posed the same basic issue. In all the cases, it was argued that segregation itself violated the “equal protection under the laws” guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. During the separate trials, the NAACP relied heavily on the testimony of social scientists to buttress its claim that schools were unequal.

Chronologically, the first case involved the testimony of three psychologists, Kenneth Clark, David Krech, and Helen Trager, in which testimony was based on tests they had been administering to Blacks and Whites for over a decade. In one report of this case, Clark presented the responses of 253 black children to a series of questions concerning their reactions to white and black dolls. The results indicated that 67% of the children preferred to play with the white doll, 59% regarded the white doll as the “nice” one, 60% said the white doll was a nice color, and 59% said the black doll “looks bad” (Stephan, 1980). The results appear to suggest that the self-esteem of blacks was low in segregated schools and that segregation leads black children to be prejudiced toward whites. In his testimony, Clark stated: “I have reached the conclusion from the examination of the entire field that discrimination, prejudice and segregation had definite detrimental effects on the personality development of the Negro child. The essence of this detrimental effect is a confusion in the child’s concept of his own self-esteem, basic feelings of inferiority, conflict, confusion in his self-image, resentment, hostility toward himself, and hostility toward whites” (Kluger, 1976, p. 353). Krech testified that, “legal segregation of education is
probably the single most important factor to work harmful effects on the emotional, physical, and financial status of the Negro child...Legal segregation, because it is obvious to everyone, gives...environmental support for the belief that Negroes are in some way different from and inferior to white people, and that in turn, supports and strengthens beliefs of racial differences, or racial inferiority" (Kluger, 1976, p. 361).

The second case to ignite the issue of segregation was Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka. In Topeka, issues addressed that many black children had to travel long distances, often by bus, to attend school. Meanwhile in Delaware, the NAACP brought its case against two small school districts in which the physical facilities provided for Blacks and Whites were clearly unequal. In this case, psychologists Otto Klineberg, George Kelly, Jerome Burner, and Kenneth Clark, and psychiatrist Frederic Wertham appeared and provided expert testimony. Klineberg testified that the learning abilities of Blacks and Whites were equal. Kelly testified that, "segregated education for Blacks placed a burden on them physically, in terms of the long distances involved in transporting them to school". Bruner stated that, "segregation was psychologically damaging for Black school children." Clark again presented the results of the doll tests and Wertham said that "most of the Black children we have examined interpret segregation in one way and one way only and that is, they interpret it as punishment" (Stephan, 1980).

The fourth case in which social scientists served as expert witnesses for the NAACP was in Davis vs. County School Board of Prince Edward County, Virginia. In this trial, psychologist M. Brewster Smith presented information from a thesis that stated: The effects of segregation...help perpetuate the pattern of segregation and prejudice out of which these effects arise...Segregation has widely ramifying consequences on the individual’s motivation to learn (Kluger, 1976, p. 491). Psychologist Isidor Chein presented the results of the Deutscher and Chein survey of social scientists (1948). Kenneth Clark traced the relationship between segregation and prejudice: Segregation is prejudice concretized in the society, and in my work with Negro youth and in my interviewing them, I find this is the way they interpret it:

“Segregation is a mist, like a wall, which society erects, of stone and stell-psychological stone and steel-constantly telling them that they are
inferior and constantly telling them that they cannot escape prejudice.  

Prejudice is something inside people. Segregation is the objective expression of what these people have inside” (Kluger, 1976, p. 495).

On cross-examination Clark testified:

“O think it is the desire of the Negro to be a human being and to be treated as a human being without regard to skin color. He can only have pride in race and a healthy and mature pride in race when his own government does not constantly and continuously tell him, “Have pride in race,” by constantly segregating him” (Kluger, 1976, p. 498).

The fifth of the Brown suits originated from Washington, D.C., with Howard Law School Dean, James Nabrit, arguing the case solely on constitutional grounds.

When all of the NAACP cases went before the Supreme Court, the lawyers stated three basic reasons why the court should eliminate racial segregation. The first reason argued that segregation deprived black students equal protection of the law. Secondly, the classifying of students by race was not justifiable. In order for a distinction between two groups to be justified it must be shown “(1) that there is a difference between the two, (2)...that the difference has a significance with the subject matter being legislated (Friedman, 1969, p. 38). With the brawny testimony of the NAACP, the Supreme Court struck down the “separate but equal” concept in public education.

Even though the Brown decision sparked the gradual process of desegregation, the actual enforcement of the ruling was in the hands of the defendants of school integration. Many school boards faced law suits as a threat to integrate public schools. Still, opposition stemmed from various school systems, years after the 1954 Supreme Court ruling. Even though the black student population had won the war against racial separation in education, what about the psychological differences that obviously could not have be corrected with one court ruling. Even though the educational system of the United States under went major reform, there were no attempts to address the issues of self-image, motivation, and performance levels that tend to be vital in the current gaps in academic achievement among White and Black school children.
Psychological Issues

Few social scientists and health providers in the United States would disagree with the proposition that there is a significant relationship between quality of our past and present sociocultural experiences and the academic or educational achievement of an individual in our schools. The proposition rests on the premise that general unmet psychosocial needs, especially when accompanied by government policies that foster social and economic inequities, can lead to negative educational and academic achievement in a student group.

Much of the chronic school failure of Afro-American children can be understood as reflecting problems in motivation. Far too many minority children perform poorly in school not because they lack basic intellectual capacities or specific learning skills but because they have low expectations, feel hopeless, lack interest, or give up in the face of potential failure. These are motivational concerns and they are just as important to understanding academic achievement among Blacks as is our more traditional focus on basic cognitive processes.

Need for achievement, or the achievement motive, is a relatively stable feature of personality reflecting the desire to do things well and to compete against a standard of excellence. Individuals who are high in achievement motive appear to be interested in excellence for its own sake rather than for the rewards it brings. These are the students, for example, who work hard to excel but might not necessarily elect the most advanced courses. In a similar channel, such highly motivated individuals tend to be moderate risk takers and to have realistic aspirations.

The social self-image is very often the self-image of the home, the self-image of the playground, the self-image of the streets, the basketball court, the football field, etc. The social self-image can be described in relation to others who are a part of the environment. The social self-image determines most often how individuals feel about their interaction with others. It is reflected in how individuals carry themselves, how they speak, how they adorn themselves, how they react in social settings, and how they develop social skills. There are three primary influences in the development of the social self-image in Black students: the home and family, the peer group, and other social systems.
Parents, siblings, and other family members have much to do with how a child internalizes feelings of love and acceptance. Social skills, personality, and character are shaped in the formative years before school by the family. Similarly, a child's perception of his or her physical attraction and non-academic abilities are molded in these early years as a result of the influences of those within the family circle. Children who have strong bonds with members of their "family unit"—regardless of family size, income, or status—are likely to see themselves in the most positive light. On the other hand, children who experience aloofness, excessive criticism, and lack of love with the family circle are likely to fault themselves. Even sibling rivalry can be damaging to the development of a strong social self-image in some children.

Afro-America children are no different than any other group of children; they all require acceptance. They are likely to be especially loyal to those who show an acceptance of shortcomings, an appreciation of their strengths, and an approval of their unique talents and abilities. Alvin Poussaint, a renowned Black psychologist, found that Black children have strong needs for achievement and approval. Very often, these needs are satisfied in peer groups where rapport is established and bonds are made. In a comparative study of self-perceptions among Black girls and boys, Bruce Hare found that the self-image of Black boys depended on non-academic factors such as social ability and peer acceptance. The self-image of Black girls, in comparison, was related more strongly to academic achievement.

It is through the acceptance of the peer group that many youth develop behavioral norms. The way many Black youth talk, walk, dress, dance, play competitive sports, rap, and even "play the dozens" with one another reflects the extent to which they have internalized their self-worth and "place" within their peer group subculture. How they see themselves in the context of peer relations is very important to their social development. When peers provide appreciation and approval, they often become the primary support unit.

As powerful as the social self-image is, it alone does not indicate the likelihood for future success in a high-tech society. Nor does it determine the extent to which youth are likely to be motivated to achieve success in "mainstream America." It is the academic self-image that dictates how well children will fare in a society where survival will require higher-order thinking skills.
and other academic competencies. It is not unusual for some children to display a positive social self-image within their families and communities and a negative academic self-image in educational environments.

The academic self-image is molded in our classrooms. Years ago Charles Silberman found that 80% of Black children have positive self-images when they enter school, 20% still do by the fifth grade, but only 5% do by their senior year in high school. In a 1985 study of the progressively decreasing scores of Black students on Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills in the District of Columbia Public Schools, Bell found that as Black children mature, they begin to experience many hostilities imposed by “majority” culture. Such hostilities often are rooted in the inability of teachers to augment the academic self-image of these youth.

The key ingredient for improving the academic self-image of all youth is “accomplishment.” An academic environment that offers encouragement, praise, and the opportunity for accomplishment will promote the development of a positive self-image. Children who are without significant opportunities for in-school success are likely to feel frustrated and inept. However, since the need for accomplishment is so great, many students who are denied in-school success will seek accomplishment outside of school—even if it is through illegal or unacceptable behavior.

Because the academic self-image of Black students is vital to their academic success, teachers must work hard to ensure that these students have positive experiences in school. Black youth may be taught at home to appreciate certain skills that are not always valued in classrooms and that do not reflect the school’s norm. Educators who endeavor to motivate Black students must recognize that both the school environment and teacher behavior can contribute to either the development or the alleviation of these characteristics. Quite often, these characteristics indicate a fear of, or intimidation by, other people. Children experiencing this emotion may do things to give people a reason to dislike them. Often, however, they go to great extremes to win approval and affection. It is so important for teachers to understand that some children exhibiting these characteristics have been emotionally bruised. Sensitive to even the most unintentional slights, and well aware of the existence of racism, sexism, and classism, many of these youth are only seeking to prevent additional emotional pain.
Perceived Causes of the Academic Achievement Gaps

Performance differences between schools with predominantly Black and predominantly White enrollments often have been attributed to disparities in the quality of education between such schools. It is certainly true that the quality of a school’s curriculum, the character of its facilities, and the attitudes and qualifications of its teaching and administrative staff can affect the attitudes, morale, and performance of students.

There are some noticeable differences in the quality of school facilities available to Black school children and White school children in the Nation’s metropolitan areas. The majority of schools in the metropolitan areas (where Blacks up make more than 70% of the school population) operate with facilities with few science laboratories and need supplies. Facilities in the metropolitan areas are also exposed to inadequate heating and cooling, lighting, and even attractive lunch programs. White school children often benefit from newly constructed facilities with equipment laboratories and libraries with extensive literature.

Similar differences exist in educational offerings available to Black and White students. Reports have been made that Whites more often attend schools which advanced courses in particular subjects, such as science and language. They also were more likely to be in schools with fewer pupils per teacher. This particular discrepancy makes it more difficult for Black students to prepare for college. With preparatory and advance courses, Black students are subject to fall behind and develop mental blocks that will effect their learning capacity for the future. Also it has been found that schools with nearly all Black enrollments were overcrowded more often than nearly all White schools. This often resulted in the establishment of classes in temporary structures-sometimes in the basements of churches or other public buildings.

Teachers are the most important element in the quality of education schools offer. The extent of their experience, the quality of their training, and their attitudes towards students all are important. Black students were exposed less often than White students to teachers whose college major was in an academic subject-mathematics, science, or literature. Black children also were more likely than Whites to have teachers with lower verbal achievement levels. The differences in the qualifications and attitudes of teachers have a regular relationship to student performance.
When Black students have less qualified teachers they perform academically less than when their teachers are more qualified.

Summary

This review of related literature focuses on potential causes of academic performance discrepancies between Black and White students. These discrepancies are expected to spark some serious considerations towards recent educational reform. It was noted that psychological issues, such as motivation and self-image, play an important part in the academic success of Black school children. In the following chapter, the methods for collecting data required for completion of this research will be presented.
CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The problem of this study was to examine the patterns and differences in academic performances levels between Black and White school children on a national level from the 1970's to the 1990's. When evaluating the performance levels of both groups of students, there will be several areas of concentration. Chapter III will be responsible for the explanation of the methods and procedures used to collect data for this study. Also within the boundaries of Chapter III, a description of the population used will be given. Finally, this chapter will provide a complete narration of the types of statistical analysis performed on the data.

POPULATION

The population selected for this study consisted of Black and White school children in the United States that were enrolled in a public school during a period between the 1970's and the 1990's. For the analysis of the dropout rate, students from grades 10-12 and ages ranging from 15-24 were modeled. For the evaluation of physical and social variables such as motivation, self-image, and the exploration of test scores, a similar sample group of Black and White students will be used.

METHODS FOR COLLECTING DATA

The format of this research study can be categorized as the historical type, consequently all statistical data needed was requisitioned through written and verbal inquiries to various educational organizations. Information on the dropout rates recorded were provided by the Department of Research, Testing and Statistics, of Norfolk Public Schools. All remaining statistical information recorded in this study was provided by research publications furnished by the Department of Education and the National Center for Education Statistics.
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data sampled in this study was arranged according to race as well as gender to determine any differences between Black and White school children. For each year during the period from 1970 to the 1990's, scores in the areas of mathematics, science, and reading were used to plot academic achievement trends. Also, within the same time frame mentioned earlier, total percentage numbers regarding dropout rates were recorded for both Black and White student populations.

SUMMARY

Chapter III focused on the methods and procedures utilized for the comparisons made within this document. This particular research followed a historical format, therefore the majority of the necessary data was acquired from other already existing publications. Within the content of Chapter III, a description of the population, the statistical analysis, and a discussion of the methods use to collect the data was revealed. The results of the findings can be found in Chapter IV of this study.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of the statistical data collected to complete this study. From requests sent to the National Center for Education Statistics and the Department of Research, Testing and Statistics, of Norfolk Public Schools, all pertinent data required for the research was submitted. Once the gathering process of the data was complete, the following research goals were addressed.

1. Explore some of the characteristics in low self-esteem or image and motivation among Black school children.
2. Expose the overall effectiveness of public school desegregation.
3. Examine the academic performance trends between Black and White school children by making a comparison between dropout rates, science scores, mathematics scores, and reading scores between both groups.

Psychosocial Characteristics

Teachers, parents, and educational leaders have ignored behavior characteristics that may provide warnings among children who may develop characteristics of low academic self-image or characteristics of high social self-image. Gordon, the author of "Black Students: Psychosocial Issues and Academic Achievement", found that teachers who have negative attitudes toward their students contribute to the massive educational failure of Black children. Yet, an attempt by teachers to build on the positive social strengths of Black youth can actually serve to enhance their academic self-image. Table 1 provides a partial listing of characteristics of low academic self-image and high social self-image which many Black youth, especially boys, are likely to display in tandem.
TABLE I
LOW ACADEMIC SELF-IMAGE AND HIGH SOCIAL SELF-IMAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Low Academic Self-Image</th>
<th>Characteristics of High Social Self-Image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Failure to complete</td>
<td>Confidence in performing before others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostility/disruptive behavior or defiant speech in class</td>
<td>Unique ability in social skills such as sports, dancing, “playing the dozens,” rapping, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daydreaming, poor attention span</td>
<td>Mutual supportive system with others peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little or no eye contact</td>
<td>Keen interest and preoccupation with social activities such as listening to music, dancing, sports participation, art work, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent use of excuses</td>
<td>Non-verbal communication and eye contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated and deliberate tardiness and absences</td>
<td>Desire for success in “social” functions/ notice of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No volunteering or participating</td>
<td>Extensive desire for interaction with those most encouraging and supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tendency to be withdrawn and isolated</td>
<td>Friendly, sincere behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike for school and/ or the school teacher</td>
<td>Facial expression and body movements reflect enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facial expressions and body movement tend to show visible pain, frustration, and anxiety</td>
<td>Facial expressions and body movements reflect enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of failure and of trying</td>
<td>Persistence in the learning and performance of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(These responses are those provided most often by more than 2,000 teachers surveyed by Crystal Kuykendall between 1984-1987.)

Dropout Rates

Since the Supreme Court ruling in the Brown vs Board of Education case, citizens of the United States have been under the assumption that education would benefit every nationality of students equally. According to Table 2, from the 1970 school year, about fifteen years later, the
dropout rate among Black males which was at 29.4 percent was more than double that of White males 12.2 percent. Meanwhile Black females were also twice as much more likely to dropout of school. According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, dropouts are persons who are not enrolled in school and who are not high school graduates.

People who have received GED credentials are counted as graduates.

TABLE 2

Total percentage of students that dropout of school by race/sex: from 1970 to 1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All Races</th>
<th>White Males</th>
<th>Black Males</th>
<th>White Females</th>
<th>Black Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics
Figure 1, displays the dropout from Table 2, in graphical form. It seems that as the years advance, the dropout rates between all Black and White students seems to decrease. For example, during the 1970 school year the Black male dropout rate was almost at 30%, while the White males dropout percentage was at 12.5%. But during the 1990’s the Black male rate was at 15%, while the White males show a 10% dropout rate. In this graph the dropout rate gap between the races and sex can be easily viewed.

**FIGURE1**

*Total percentage of students that dropout of school by race/sex: from 1970 to 1994*

Much of the interest in measuring dropouts stems from a concern over how well prepared young adults are for entry into the work force. As the emphasis on skilled labor and technology increases in the work place, a high school education serves more and more as a minimum requirement for entry into the labor force. This then leads to interest in a measure of the number of young adults who have completed a high school program.
The majority of young adults complete the required secondary school course work and graduate with a regular high school diploma. Strictly speaking, a high school graduation rate is based on students receiving regular high school diplomas. In 1994, 79.4 percent of the young adults ages 18 through 24, who were not still enrolled in a high school program, were graduates holding regular high school diplomas. See Table 3.

### TABLE 3

Total percentage of completion rate by race and by type of certificate: from 1990 to 1994.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion method</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
<td>84.9%</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
<td>86.2%</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>81.0%</td>
<td>80.9%</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td>79.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>89.6%</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
<td>90.1%</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>85.4%</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Other young adults complete their high school education by successfully passing an exam, such as the General Educational Development (GED), required for an alternative credential. The size of this group is relatively small; in 1994, 6.4 percent of the 18 through 24
year olds who were not still enrolled in a high school program reported holding an alternative certificate.

The high school completion rate combines these recipients of alternative certificates along with students graduating with regular high school diplomas, to provide a measure of the young adults who have completed a high school program and are ready to enter the labor force or move on to a post-secondary educational program. In 1994, 85.8 percent of the young adults ages 18 through 24, who were not still enrolled in a high school program, held a high school credential. This rate measures the high school completion status of young adults, regardless of the year of high school completion. Over the last 18 years, the completion rate has increased. The 1994 high school status completion rate is higher than the recorded lows of 82.8 observed in 1972 and of 83.1 observed in 1979. See Figure 2.

FIGURE 2
High school completion rates for all 18 through 24 year olds, by race-ethnicity: October 1972 through October 1994.

Academic Achievement Trends

Figure 3 shows trends in average science scale scores for White and Black students. After a period of decline during the 1970s and early 1980s for White 9 year olds and during the 1970s for White 13 year olds, performance improved. These gains resulted in 1994 average scores for both age groups that were higher than those in 1970 but did not differ significantly from 1992 levels. The average score of White 17 year olds declined from 1969 to 1982. Despite gains that have been made since that time, the 1994 average score for these students continued to be lower than the average score of their counterparts in 1969.

The average score of Black 9 year olds increased between 1970 and 1994. An overall pattern of increased performance was also observed for Black 13 year olds. The 1994 average score was higher than the average score observed in 1973 and 1977, but did not differ significantly from the 1970 and 1992 average scores. Following a decline from 1969 to 1982 in the average score of 17 year old Black students, an overall pattern of increased performance was evident. In 1994, however, the average score of these students remained at a level not significantly different from that in 1969, and average scores in the four most recent assessments did not differ significantly.

Figure 4 shows the trends in average mathematics scale scores for White and Black students from 1973 to 1994. The performance of White 9 and 13 year olds remained relatively stable throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Beginning with the 1990 assessment for 9 year olds and the 1992 assessment for 13 year olds, gains over 1973 averages were observed. In 1994, both 9 and 13 year old White students had average scores that were higher than that of their counterparts in 1973. The average scores of White 17 year olds declined from 1973 to 1982. Since that time, gains have been made. However, no significant difference between the 1973 and 1994 average scores was observed for these students.
For Black students at all three ages, significant gains in performance have been observed from 1973 to 1994. Although performance has been relatively stable during the 1990s, the average score of Black students in each age group continued to be higher.
Figure 5 shows trends in average reading scale scores for White and Black students.

Among White students, the average score of 9 year olds increased from 1971 to 1980. Since that
time, performance declined slightly in the early 1980s and then remained relatively stable through the remainder of the 1980s and early 1990s, so that in 1994 the average score was not significantly different from the average in 1971. The average score of 13 year old White students showed a general though uneven pattern of increase between 1971 and 1994. The average score in 1994 was significantly higher than was the score in 1971. Although a pattern of increased performance across the assessment years was observed in the results for 17 year old White students, the 1994 average score did not differ significantly from the 1971 average score.

In all age groups, Black students demonstrated a pattern of increased performance through the 1970s and 1980s followed by a period of decline in the early 1990s. However, the 1994 average score in each age group remained higher than the 1971 average.

FIGURE 5

Trends in Average Reading Scale Scores by Race/Ethnicity, 1971 to 1994
SUMMARY

Chapter IV presented the data and findings that were collected and interpreted from publications by the Department of Education. The discussion of the findings were presented in graphical tables to show patterns and trend levels in dropout rates and academic performance levels. Chapter V gives a summary of the findings of the study. It also presents the conclusion and recommendations from the results interpreted from Chapter IV.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The problem of this study was to examine the patterns and performance trends among Black and White high school students on a national level from the 1970's to the 1990's. Chapter V is divided into three sections. The first section summaries the entire study. The next section, discusses any conclusions drawn from the findings of the study. The final section makes recommendations based on the findings of this study.

SUMMARY

This study provided an introduction to the evaluation of the patterns and the performance trends between Black and White school children. Background information on early educational reform and its current results was reported. The goals of this research were to explore some of the potential causes in low self-esteem or image and motivation among Black school children, analyze the overall effectiveness of public school desegregation, and examine the academic performance trends between Black and White school children, by making a comparison between dropout rates, science scores, mathematics scores, and reading scores between both groups. The background and significance dealt with the importance of this particular study. The assumptions before the completion of this study were based upon theories that desegregation of the public schools in the United States did not prove to be 100% beneficial to Black students. Despite the efforts to provide equality education through desegregation, black students are continuing not to measure up to the academic achievement levels of other students from different ethnic groups. Currently, there are adverse school environments within inner city schools where Blacks represent more than 80% of the population and the of suburban school areas where White school children represent more than 80% of the population.

A Review of Literature determined the breadth of authoritative knowledge and research done in this area. It focused first on discussion of the first educational reform with the plans to integrate public schools after the 1954 Supreme Court ruling of Brown vs. Board of Education.
Next, it addressed some potential causes of academic performance differences between Blacks and Whites.

The methods and procedures of this study outlined and the described the population used. Since this particular study followed a historical format, therefore no instrument was needed to gather data. The majority of the data presented in this study was provide through publications from the Department of Education. The task for this study was to display the statistic data in a graphical format in which comparisons of the overall performance of Blacks and White students during the 1970's to the 1990's could be made.

CONCLUSION

Based upon the interpretation of the data collected for this study, the following conclusions were drawn from the research goal outlined in this study.

1. The first research goal involved the exploration of some of the characteristics of low self-esteem or image and motivation among Black school children. Self-esteem or image and motivation of Black school children was the major factor for the elimination of segregated schools in 1954. Anytime a student displays any disruptive behavior, such as daydreaming, facial expressions, withdrawal and isolation from the class, he or she may be experiencing low academic self image. On the other hand, students with high social self image will display characteristics such as, a desire for success in “social” functions, unique abilities in social skills such as sports, dancing, rapping, etc., and also friendly attitudes.

2. The next research goal included the evaluation of academic performance trends among Black and White school children. Since the implementation of desegregation, there has been some overall improvement between the academic achievement levels of Black school children. But according to the data presented, after the late 80's the performance levels of Black and White students were beginning to widen, with Black school children falling behind in test scores in the areas of mathematics, science, and reading. The overall dropout rate has decreased since 1970. The percentage of dropout rates of Black males and females were double that of their
counterparts in 1970. In 1993, the gaps between the Blacks and Whites has significantly diminished.

3. The final research goal encompasses an analysis of the overall effectiveness of public school desegregation. So far the Black student body has improved slower in many areas of academics. For example, there are fewer dropouts than in 1970, but out of the Black students graduating, how many of them are just barely getting by or have the adequate skills to pursue higher education or enter the job market? The educational opportunities provide by the public schools system are more equally than the period of segregated schools, but what about the discrepancies in the areas of advanced courses and college prep classes? Self image and motivation continues to be a problem as well as academic achievement gaps; and as long as the students of both samples are not performing evenly, educational reform is in a pressing need.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

What schools can do to affect student achievement outcomes, especially among Black students, has been and will continue to be a source of controversy for long periods of time unless the following recommendations are taken into consideration.

1. Tracking and teacher expectations should be two of the main concerns of educators who argue that schools can prevent minority under achievement. Low teacher expectations in combination with practices, such as ability grouping and tracking, frequently sort Black students into a “hidden curriculum”. This hidden curriculum is usually less demanding and is believed to allocate and socialize Blacks toward lower levels of attainment and achievement. Research on ability grouping does show that Blacks are disproportionately located in low-ability groups and non-college preparatory tracks where the pacing and dynamics of low-ability groups and classrooms are substantially different from those of high-ability groups and classrooms. Therefore, it is recommended that any grouping of students into lower level curriculums should be eliminated. Higher achievement should be gradually forced upon these students and the areas in which they are not strong in should be concentrated on.
2. Classroom environments should engage more in cooperative learning experiments that involve small teams of four to six students to maximize internal communication with respect to gender, race, and other ability levels. The intent is to encourage more advanced students to help slower ones and then to reward the teams in such a way that slower students could contribute equally to the team score.

3. Our government should become more involved in the quest for equality education. The government has the ability to offset the discrepancies with funding, curriculums, and facilities between inner city and suburban area schools.

4. Increase parental involvement. It is just as vital as anything else, that the parents of Black school children insure that their children are being well prepared for the new technological work force that is awaiting them.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


