

Racial Identity of Children in Integrated, Predominantly White, and Black Schools

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ABSTRACT. Fourth-grade children in three school settings (integrated, Black, and White) were assessed by 3 methods: the Draw-A-Person test, the spontaneous self-concept test, and the picture test. The effect of school's population on a child's racial identity was studied. The children in the integrated school setting mentioned race and ethnicity significantly more often than did children in either of the other two settings. The children from both the integrated and the predominantly White schools also chose more friends from the outgroup than did the children in the predominantly Black school. The children in the non-integrated schools disliked other races more. All groups chose their own race when asked to indicate which child looked most like them. Contrary to the research hypothesis, the children in the predominantly White school produced drawings that depicted their race more obviously than did children from either of the other schools.

MANY SOCIAL PROBLEMS that affect minority children in the United States today, such as low self-esteem, delinquency, and school misbehavior, can be caused by racism. These problems, in turn, affect larger communities by exhausting resources and consequently causing societal rifts between minority and majority groups, ultimately hampering the community's ability to function: "Once racist attitudes, values, and ways are established in individuals, change is difficult. Thus, prevention in early childhood is extremely important, yet early childhood education has not given adequate attention to this matter" (Comer, 1989, p. 353). In his

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book *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1968), Erikson stated that the negative views of minorities perpetuated by society as a whole are likely to create self-hatred and negative self-identity. Without racial pride, people are ill prepared for the way they will be treated in today's society (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987). Beale-Spencer, discussing Bond's (1928) early 20th-century perspective, said Bond suggested that "race pride bolsters one's self-respect, exalts one's conception of oneself, and inures the individual against the pain incident to a low status" (1987, p. 114).

Majority group members also may experience an impaired self-identity because of race-related issues: "Because United States culture is centered around white norms, white people rarely have to come to terms with that part of their identity. *White people do not see themselves as white*" (Katz, 1978, pp. 13–14). Seeing White people only as a norm by which to measure others is a narrow view that is acquired by living in a society that perpetuates White norms and by believing that what differs from these norms is a deviation. Racial identity and acceptance are important for all races, especially in this increasingly multicultural society.

Biernat's (1990) contact hypothesis states that "coming in contact with, or becoming familiar with, members of a stereotyped group will lead to reductions in negative attitudes toward the group" (p. 1487). Many researchers who tested that hypothesis concluded that such exposure produces positive attitude changes (Aboud, Taylor, & Doumani, 1973; Amir, 1969; Desforges et al., 1991; Sigelman & Welch, 1993; Stephan & Rosenfield, 1978; Williams & Byars, 1970). Sigelman and Welch explained that direct contact produces more positive attitudes because in the absence of such contact, people generalize and stereotype from other information sources (e.g., media). With contact, however, myths and stereotypes can be combated and new views formed (Sigelman & Welch, 1993). Despite the influence of contact itself, some researchers believe that contact alone is not sufficient to counter racism (Grant, 1990) but that "[m]aking the acquaintance of people from other ethnic groups is an important factor . . . in beginning the process of reducing prejudice and stereotyped views of the other group" (Amir, Sharan, & Ben-Ari, 1984, p. 9). As a controlled environment, school can play a vital role in improving racial identity, understanding, and education (Amir et al.).

Derman-Sparks, Tanaka Higa, and Sparks (1980) suggested that from 5 to 8 years old, children have the major tasks of acquiring information about their own identity and understanding others' differences. Learning from television and the examples of others, children between the ages of 8 and 12 begin to internalize, to act upon, and, in turn, to perpetuate society's expectations (Comer, 1989). The early school years are crucial for the formation of the child's own racial identity as well as an understanding of prejudice and fairness (Derman-Sparks et al.). As most children will have formed strong racial attitudes by late elementary school, many of them influenced by the school environments, researchers should examine children from schools with various racial make-ups to determine the effects of the setting on the development of racial identity. We designed the present

study to assess the impact of these different environments on children's racial identity and self-concept by studying four elementary schools (two racially heterogeneous, one predominantly Black, and one predominantly White).

Many procedures have been widely used to assess the extent of racial identity and racial acceptance in elementary school children. Three of the most widely used tests over the years and across groups are the picture test (George & Hoppe, 1979; Horowitz, 1936; Horowitz, 1939; Newman, Liss, & Sherman, 1983; Rice, Ruiz, & Padilla, 1974); the Draw-A-Person test (Coles, 1964; Dennis, 1966, 1968; Machover, 1949; Pfeffer, 1984, 1987; Schofield, 1978); and the spontaneous self-concept test (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954; McGuire, McGuire, Child, & Fujioka, 1978; McGuire & Padawer-Singer, 1976; Verna, 1981). Because these tests require little or no writing skill, they are easy to administer to children.

Each test provides an important part of the assessment of racial attitudes in children. With the exception of the Pfeffer studies (1984, 1987), all the research, including the current study, has been conducted in North America. In each area—picture studies, Draw-A-Person studies, and spontaneous self-concept studies—results have varied, but it was often found that when “the student body [becomes] ethnically more heterogeneous [it] enhances [the] salience of own ethnicity in the student” (McGuire, McGuire, Child, & Fujioka, 1978, p. 517). Sadler (1994) found that the more exposure Whites had to other races in childhood, the more comfortable they were with their own racial identity.

In the current study, we examined the impact of a school's racial make-up on its students. We hypothesized that the children in the integrated schools would be more likely than the children in the nonintegrated schools to mention their race and also that the children in the predominantly Black school would mention race more than the children in the White school would. Consistent with the research, we hypothesized that children in the racially balanced school would display greater acceptance of other races (through friendship choice, rejection choice, etc.) than would children from the predominantly minority or majority schools. We further hypothesized, with respect to the Draw-A-Person study, that the children in the integrated school would be more likely than the children from the other two schools to make their races obvious in their drawings. By running an additional analysis, we explored whether the tests were measuring the same constructs.

Method

Participants

Our sample consisted of 159 fourth-grade children aged 8–11 years ($M = 9.35$ years): 96 White and 63 Black; 87 girls and 71 boys (1 participant did not indicate gender). The participants were drawn from four southeastern Connecticut grade schools—one predominantly White, one predominantly Black, and two integrated.

Schools

Integrated schools. The two integrated schools were in a mid- to low-income urban area within 5 miles of each other. According to the available data reported by the schools, approximately 58% of the children at each school were receiving free or reduced-cost lunches.

Of the 44 participants from the integrated schools, 22 were White, and 22 were Black. There were 29 girls and 15 boys, aged 8 to 10 years ($M = 9.23$ years). In the integrated schools, the fourth-grade classes had the following approximate composition: 60% minority students (including Hispanic, Black, and Asian American) and 38% White students. Of the minority students, 38% were Black. For this study, we combined the data from the two integrated schools.

Predominantly White school. The predominantly White school was in a suburban area with a middle-income population. According to the available data reported by the school, approximately 18% of the students were receiving free or reduced-cost lunches.

There were 74 students, 35 female and 38 male, from the predominantly White school who took part in the study. All the participants were White, with a mean age of 9.2 years. The fourth-grade classes at the predominantly White school included approximately 7% minority students (including American Indian, Asian American, Black, and Hispanic).

Predominantly Black school. The predominantly Black school was in an urban area with a low-income population. Approximately 86% of the students were receiving free or reduced-cost lunches. The fourth-grade classes consisted solely of Black students. There were 41 students, 23 female and 18 male, from this school who took part in the study. All the participants were Black, with a mean age of 9.8 years.

Measures

Draw-A-Person. The Draw-A-Person test was modeled after that used by Karen Pfeffer (1987). The children were each given a piece of $8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 11''$ white paper and a box of Crayola Multicultural Crayons and then were asked to draw pictures of themselves. Each box of crayons contained eight colors: white, apricot, peach, mahogany, tan, burnt sienna, sepia, and black. There were no time limits and no restrictions except that the pictures be of the children themselves.

Picture test. The picture test we used was a modified version of the test used by George and Hoppe (1979). The original test contained pictures of adults from four ethnic groups (Black, White, Asian American, and Native American). Because of the populations being tested, we used only three ethnic groups (Black,

Hispanic, and White) and pictures of children rather than adults; we made these changes so that the participants could more easily identify with the pictures. We used two stimuli: one with pictures of girls (one of each race), and the other with pictures of boys (one of each race). In the pictures, the three girls and the three boys were dressed identically and had the same features with the exception of skin color and hair. Under each girl and boy was a letter (A, B, or C) that the children used to label their answers to the questions.

Each participant was given a list of questions to answer (see Appendix). These questions were designed to assess the child's ability to distinguish between and label the races, the child's racial identification, and the child's group preference. For each question, the children were asked to select one of the pictures (by letter) as their answer. Before asking the questions, we stressed that there were no right or wrong answers. The questions were similar to those used in past doll-and-picture studies (Crooks, 1970; George & Hoppe, 1979; Hraba & Grant, 1970; Rice, Ruiz, & Padilla, 1974).

Spontaneous self-concept. The format used for the spontaneous self-concept test is based on that used by McGuire et al. (1978). We asked each child to answer two questions: (a) "Tell us what you are" and (b) "Tell us what you are not"; we then set a time limit of 10 min for each section. We modified the McGuire et al. (1978) method for this study: Rather than conducting an oral interview with each child without a minimum goal, we asked the students to write down their answers with a minimum listing of 10 items. Before testing, we emphasized that there were no right or wrong answers and that the children should write down whatever came to mind.

Scoring

Draw-A-Person. Our scoring system for the Draw-A-Person study was a modified version of the system used by Schofield (1978). In Schofield's study, the children received yellow, orange, red, blue, peach, brown, and black crayons, whereas in the present study, they received only colors that could be considered skin colors. In Schofield's study, the scoring system was a 7-point scale with three ratings for pictures that appeared Black (1–3), two ratings for pictures that appeared White (5–6), one rating for fanciful (7), and one rating for indeterminate (4). We modified this scale so that there were three ratings for Black, three ratings for White, and one rating for indeterminate (see scoring system below). Each picture was scored by three judges, two White and one Black. The highest interrater reliability (r) among the judges was .87 ($p < .01$), though all were significant at the .01 level. For those drawings without a common score, the raters met to come to an agreement. The goal was to rate each child on a continuous scale from "obviously Black" to "obviously White": 1 = *face and all other skin that is shaded is black or brown*; 2 = *face is black or brown, but other skin is col-*

ored differently; 3 = some skin, but not the face, is black or brown (or some other sign of being Black, for example, hair); 4 = no coloring of skin or any other sign of race; 5 = some skin, but not the face, is peach or apricot (or some other sign of being White); 6 = face is peach or apricot but other skin is colored differently; and 7 = face and all other skin shaded is peach or apricot.

Picture test. For the questions related to race preference and self-identification, the children received a score of 1 if they chose their own race ("same race") or a score of 0 if they chose one of the other two races ("other race"). For each question, the category of race that the child selected was also noted and compared. A total score was also given for correct racial identifications (e.g., "Which child is Black?").

Self-concept test. The scoring for the self-concept test was based on two previous studies on racial identity (George & Hoppe, 1979; McGuire, McGuire, Child, & Fujioka, 1978): 0 if there was no mention of race/ethnicity; 1 point if there was one mention but it was made in the "Tell me what you are not" section of the study; 2 points if there was one mention but it was made in the "Tell me what you are" section of the study; and 3 points if there were two or more mentions.

Procedure

The tests were administered by two White women in their twenties who served as the experimenters. Past researchers in the area of racial identity found no effect for race or sex of experimenter on the participants' responses (Hraba & Grant, 1970; Morland, 1966); therefore, we varied neither race nor sex. Each experimenter was trained and given a script to follow for the general directions. Children who had received parental permission were tested; because of the small number of Hispanic children tested, we did not include their data in subsequent analyses. In each school, only a few children did not have parental permission, and their teachers sent them out of the room.

Upon entering the classroom, the experimenter introduced herself and explained that she was there to do a study on how fourth graders viewed themselves. After asking the students to clear their desks, the experimenter passed out a sheet of white paper and a box of Crayola Multicultural Crayons to each child. Instructions were read before each test. After the children were instructed to draw pictures of themselves, the experimenter walked through the room observing and answering questions.

After all the children had finished drawing their pictures, the experimenter passed out a survey packet to each child. The top sheet contained the first half of the spontaneous self-concept study questions used by McGuire et al. (1978). The instructions were read aloud, and the class was given approximately 10 min to complete the task. After the completion of the first page, the experi-

menter asked the children to turn to the second page, which contained the second half of the spontaneous self-concept test. They were also given 10 min for that section.

After the participants had completed the first two sheets, the experimenter passed out pictures for the picture study. Each girl received a sheet with pictures of a White girl, a Hispanic girl, and a Black girl; each boy received a sheet with pictures of a White boy, a Hispanic boy, and a Black boy. The class was then asked to turn to the third page, which contained eight questions (Appendix). The experimenter asked the children to record their responses to the questions in the answer blank next to each question.

When each child completed the study, the pictures were stapled to the packets and collected. The children were thanked and told that they could keep the crayons as a reward for their participation. Each participant's race was recorded with the help of the teacher either before the packets were passed out or while they were being collected.

Results

Self-Concept and Racial Selection

To assess the effect of the racial makeup of the schools on self-concept, we calculated separate 3 (school) \times 2 (gender) and 2 (gender) \times 2 (race) multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) on the race/ethnicity score from the spontaneous self-concept test. It was necessary to calculate separate school and race analyses because of the problem of empty cells (e.g., no White children in the Black school). The results of the School \times Gender analysis indicated an overall effect for school: Wilks's lambda = .936, $F(4, 302) = 2.54$, $p < .05$. There were no interaction effects for school and gender and no effect for gender. Subsequent univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) for school revealed significance for the race/ethnicity score.

Using the Tukey HSD, we performed follow-up tests: The children at the integrated school made significantly more self-concept comments about race/ethnicity ($M = 1.20$, $SD = 1.32$) than did the children from the predominantly White school ($M = 0.57$, $SD = 1.06$), $F(2, 158) = 4.35$, $p < .05$.

The results of the 2 (gender) \times 2 (race) MANOVA showed an overall effect for race: Wilks's lambda = .940, $F(2, 153) = 4.89$, $p < .01$. No significant differences for gender or interaction effects were found. The ANOVAs for race indicated significant differences on the race/ethnicity statements.

The results of Tukey analyses for race indicated that the Black children were significantly more likely ($M = 1.19$, $SD = 1.29$) to mention race/ethnicity than were the White children ($M = 0.63$, $SD = 1.12$), $F(1, 125) = 8.92$, $p < .01$.

To evaluate whether significant differences between schools could be generated by one race answering differently and skewing the data, we calculated a final

2 (race) \times 2 (gender) MANOVA for the Black children and the White children in the integrated school. The MANOVA run on the self race/ethnicity variable showed no significant results.

Race Preference

To examine the race choices on the picture test, we calculated five 3 (school) \times 2 (self/other) chi-squares and five 3 (school) \times 3 (race choice) chi-squares. The variables included a self/other score as well as a race-choice score for the last five questions on the picture test. Significance for the self/other chi-square was found only for the question "Which person would you like to be friends with?"— $\chi^2(1, N = 138) = 11.96, p < .005$. Analyses for specific race choices indicated significance for the following questions: (a) "Which person (if any) do you not like?"— $\chi^2(1, N = 106) = 12.88, p < .05$; (b) "Which person would you like to be friends with?"— $\chi^2(1, N = 132) = 12.59, p < .05$; (c) "Which person looks most like you?"— $\chi^2(1, N = 151) = 66.03, p < .00001$; and (d) "Which person would you like to be like?"— $\chi^2(1, N = 147) = 33.7, p < .00001$. To determine exactly where the differences occurred, we compared only two schools at a time in subsequent chi-squares. In answering the question "Which person would you like to be friends with?" children from both the integrated and the predominantly White schools chose a race other than their own more often than did the children in the predominantly Black school. The children in the White school more often chose the Black child as the one they disliked; in turn, the children in the Black school more often chose the White child as the one they disliked. When asked whom they would like to be like, the children from the Black school differed from the children from both of the other two schools, loading heavily on the Black and Hispanic cells, whereas the other two schools loaded on the White and Hispanic cells (Table 1). There was a significant difference among the schools for the question "Which person looks most like you?" Each school loaded heavily in the cell(s) of its own racial group(s) (Table 2).

TABLE 1
Answers to the Question "Which Person Would You Like to Be Like?"

School	Race choice					
	White		Hispanic		Black	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Integrated	13	30	21	49	9	21
White	25	37	37	55	5	8
Black	1	3	18	49	18	49

TABLE 2
Answers to the Question "Which Person Looks Most Like You?"

School	Race choice					
	White		Hispanic		Black	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Integrated	17	39	9	20	18	41
White	45	64	22	31	3	4
Black	2	5	10	27	25	68

Racial Identification

There were no significant differences between the schools or races in terms of the ability to identify the three pictures correctly. The Black picture was identified correctly 91% of the time, the White picture was identified correctly 98% of the time, and the Hispanic picture was identified correctly 91% of the time.

Racial Identity

To examine racial identity with the Draw-A-Person device, we performed three ANOVAs to compare each school with the other two; we modified the scale as necessary so that for all the children, a score of 7 indicated most obviously their own race. The children in the White school produced drawings significantly more obviously their own race ($M = 6.18$, $SD = 1.66$) than did the children in either the integrated school ($M = 5.07$, $SD = 2.04$), $F(1, 117) = 10.29$, $p < .005$, or the Black school ($M = 5.28$, $SD = 2.10$), $F(1, 113) = 6.30$, $p < .05$. There was no significant difference between the drawings of the children in the integrated school and those of the children in the Black school.

Test Correlation

We performed correlations among the three tests to assess whether they measured the same constructs. First, we calculated a correlation between the score of the Draw-A-Person study and the race/ethnicity self-concept variables. No relationships were found.

To provide similar analyses with the dichotomous variables on the picture device, we performed a factor analysis; it indicated that the five questions grouped in accordance with a two-factor model. Because all items loaded .60 or greater, we retained them all. Factor 1, Likability, had an eigenvalue of 2.13 and accounted for 43% of the variance. Factor 1 included the items "Which person would you like to be like?" "Which person (if any) do you not like?" and "Which

person would you like to be friends with?" Factor 2, Appearance, had an eigenvalue of 1.10 and accounted for 22% of the variance. Factor 2 included the items "Which person looks most like you?" and "Which person looks the nicest?" The correlations between the likability and appearance variables and the variables from the Draw-A-Person and self-concept tests were not significant.

Discussion

Using schools with three different racial compositions and three tests of racial identity yielded a variety of results that both support and refute previous research. The diversity of populations and assessment methods also makes direct comparison with earlier, simpler studies more complex.

The present finding of more references to race/ethnicity in the integrated school than in the predominantly White school supports the hypothesis that exposure to other races increases the salience of one's own race. This finding also follows a trend in previous studies (McGuire, McGuire, Child, & Fujioka, 1978; McGuire & Padawer-Singer, 1976): Such results could be explained by the distinctiveness postulate, which implies "that as schools integrate, children become more conscious of their ethnicity and more likely to define themselves in terms of it than in ethnically segregated schools" (McGuire et al., p. 512).

Exposure to other races may also explain why the children from the integrated schools chose opposite-race friends more often than did the Black children from the nonintegrated school. This finding may stem from the daily contact the children in the integrated setting have with other races, supporting the hypothesis that the children in the integrated schools are more accepting of other races. Contrary to previous findings, children from all the schools chose their own races significantly more often than other races in response to the questions about whom they would like to be like and who looked most like them. In most of the earlier research, Black children chose races other than their own in response to those questions (Crooks, 1970; Gregor & McPherson, 1966; Morland, 1966; Newman, Liss, & Sherman, 1983). This trend to choose one's own race when asked which child looked like them and whom they would like to be like may indicate an overall trend of increasing pride among Black children in the United States (Hraba & Grant, 1970). Findings that the White and Black children in the nonintegrated schools chose another race (Black and White, respectively) as one they disliked at significantly greater rates than the children in the integrated schools may be attributable to the lack of daily contact with other races in the nonintegrated schools as well as to a higher level of acceptance of other races in the integrated schools.

In the Draw-A-Person study, contrary to the hypothesis, the White children in the nonintegrated school drew pictures that were more obviously their race than did the children in either of the other schools. Combined with the greater number of mentions of race by Black children in the integrated schools, this find-

ing may suggest a greater salience of race for Blacks in integrated settings. This salience may in turn cause them to be more aware of society's racial tensions and greater acceptance of Whites as the "norm"; the increased awareness consequently makes them self-conscious about portraying their skin color in their drawings. This idea is supported by Schofield, who hypothesized that "because [White children] experience less conflict over their racial identity [they] would be more likely than [B]lacks to draw a racially unambiguous picture by coloring in the face" (1978, p. 316).

The Draw-A-Person results also showed inconsistencies with those of previous studies in which Black children tended not to draw obviously Black pictures (Dennis, 1966; Pfeffer, 1984; Schofield, 1978). In a recent study with Black children, Pfeffer (1987) substituted the traditional instruction, "Draw a person," with the new instruction, "Draw yourself"; the use of darker colors and the number of obviously Black pictures increased. To advance this procedure, we used Crayola Multicultural Crayons to ensure the ability of children to find a color that could approximate their skin color. Perhaps our use of these crayons and instructions increased the number of pictures portraying a skin color.

The correlational analyses among the tests did not provide much support for the belief that these tests examine racial identity in the same way. There are many different components of racial identity such as awareness, self-identification, attitudes, and beliefs (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987); perhaps these tests are simply exploring different aspects.

Because this study has yielded findings that differ from those of previous studies, we suggest additional research in this area. Because no researcher in the past has used three racial identity measures across three types of schools and two racial groups, further investigation of the effects of environment on racial identity is needed.

Development of racial identity is difficult enough for White children, even as part of the majority culture; for ethnic and racial minorities, however, such development becomes even more difficult (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990). It is important to examine the effects of different environments on children's racial development because, as Comer (1989) observed, "[r]acism interferes with the normal development of those children subjected to it. It hampers their ability to function at their full potential as children and later as adults" (p. 354). If racial contact through schools can change racial attitudes and decrease racism, then it is important to explore further these environments as venues for change. Our findings suggest that the children in the segregated schools do not lack pride or identity; rather, they lack the level of acceptance enjoyed by children in the integrated schools.

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APPENDIX

After the display of a set of pictures of children of different racial backgrounds and a letter next to each picture, the following questions were asked of each child:

1. Which person is African American/Black?
2. Which person is White?
3. Which person is Latino/a (Hispanic)?
4. Which person looks most like you?
5. Which person looks the nicest?
6. Which person would you like to be like?
7. Which person (if any) do you not like?
8. Which person would you like to be friends with?

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