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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to compare the self concept, academic achievement, and occupational aspirations of two samples of eleventh and twelfth grade black male students, who live in the inner city of a large metropolitan area and attend schools of racially different composition. The sample in the segregated black school consisted of 56 male pupils in several classes which were assigned by the principal to participate. The sample in the interracial schools consisted of 45 volunteers from the 92 potential subjects. Both groups included students taking college preparatory, business, vocational, and general education courses. All data were collected during May, 1970. The academic achievement of the subjects was measured by the Cray American History Test. When the raw scores of this test were analyzed holding age and IQ constant, the difference between the groups was significant with the subjects in the interracial schools having the higher mean score. The total score made by each subject on the Self Concept As a Learner scale was considered indicative of his feeling of competence in the classroom. The mean of the segregated, inner-city school sample was significantly higher than the mean of the sample in the interracial schools. (Author/JM)

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THE INNER-CITY BLACK MALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT:
HIS SELF CONCEPT, ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT,
AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

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In the past three decades much research has been conducted on the three main variables of this paper--self concept, academic achievement, and level of aspiration. The relationship existing among these variables is dynamic and circular. The child who has a positive self concept is more likely to succeed academically than the child who has a negative self concept (Coopersmith, 1959), and the individual's level of aspiration is believed to be directly influenced by both his self concept and his academic achievement (Super, 1960).

Since the self concept is important to both the achievement and aspirations of the individual, investigators have recently turned their attention to the self concept of the black student in racially different school settings. The results of this research have been inconsistent. Some studies have found no difference between the self concepts of black children in segregated vs integrated schools while other findings support segregated (Gottlieb, 1964) or integrated (Caplan, 1966) school settings.

Research on the educational aspirations of black students and the attitude of their parents toward higher education indicates that black youth are raising their occupational goals and their parents are encouraging them in their ambitions (Gottlieb, 1964, Hindelang, 1970).

The purpose of this study was to compare the self concept, academic achievement, and occupational aspirations of two samples of eleventh and twelfth grade black male students who live in the inner city of a large metropolitan area and attend schools of racially different composition. The

major objective was increased understanding of the black, lower-class male student in racially different school settings.

METHOD

Selection of Instruments

All of the measures had to be objectively scored, and available reliability coefficients had to be .80 or higher.

The Self Concept as a Learner (SCAL) was selected because it dealt with the specific aspect of self concept which this study was attempting to assess: the perception of self as a learner in the school situation. The instrument was developed by Waetjen and Grambs from three sources, The Tennessee Mental Health Self Concept, Bill's Index of Adjustment and Values, and a Q-sort procedure of the authors. It consists of fifty statements as possible descriptions of one's self as a learner. The items are divided into four component parts: motivation, task orientation, problem solving ability, and class membership. The scale utilizes ratings based on a five point Likert-type scale. (Zero to four was used in this study.) (Waetjen and Grambs) The reliability coefficient for this instrument based on 542 eleventh graders was .93 (Olavarri).

Since American history was the most easily compared subject common to all four schools, the Crary American History Test-Form E was selected as the measure of academic achievement. There are seventy-six items on the test--forty-seven test knowledge and twenty-nine understanding. The reliability coefficient based on a sample of 9523 American history students in all types of courses was .91 (Crary, 1961).

Occupational aspiration was measured by the Occupational Aspiration Scale (OAS) copyrighted by Archibald O. Haller in 1957. The OAS takes only

twenty minutes to complete and yields four subscores--Short Range Idealistic, Short Range Realistic, Long Range Idealistic, and Long Range Realistic--and a total maximum score of seventy-two which is taken as a measure of the individual's occupational aspiration. The reliability coefficients for two different Michigan high school samples were .82 (N = 441) and .84 (N = 94) (Haller and Miller, 1969).

Since the OAS had been used primarily with adolescent boys living in Wisconsin, several of the job titles were inappropriate for use with urban youth; therefore, modifications¹ were made which necessitated the calculation of a new reliability coefficient. Fifty black inner-city high school juniors and seniors served as the reliability sample for this version. Form X and Form Y were administered five weeks apart and resulted in a reliability coefficient of .82.

Information concerning the socioeconomic background of the subject, his further educational plans, and his parents' attitude toward higher education was obtained by a multiple-choice type self-report questionnaire.

Selection of Schools

The Negro-white student ratio was used as one criterion for selecting the interracial schools. At the time of the study, the proportion of white students in each of the three schools chosen equalled or was greater than the proportion of Negroes. These schools also are located in outlying districts of the city. The de facto segregated inner-city school was chosen because it has always been a Negro school and is located in the center of the area

¹The following substitutions were made: 1.9 Computer Programmer for County Agricultural Agent; 2.9 Systems Analyst for Railroad Engineer; 8.4 Key punch Operator for Lumberjack

designated as "inner city" by the Research and Development Division of the Baltimore City Public Schools.

Selection of Subjects

All of the study subjects had to reside within the designated inner-city area, all had to be in the eleventh or twelfth grade, and all had to have been enrolled in the school before October 1968. The sample in the segregated black school consisted of fifty-six male pupils in several classes which were assigned by the principal to participate. The sample in the interracial schools consisted of forty-five volunteers from the ninety-two potential subjects. Both groups included students taking college preparatory, business, vocational, and general education courses. The similarity between the groups can be seen in Tables 1, 2, and 3. Intelligence was the only variable on which the two samples differed significantly.

TABLE 1

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR STUDY VARIABLES FOR SEGREGATED SCHOOL AND INTERRACIAL SCHOOLS

Variable	Segregated School (N = 56)		Interracial Schools (N = 45)	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Age	18.17	.98	17.91	.56
I.Q.	80.07	11.78	95.31	11.67 *
Self Concept as a Learner	135.17	24.11	128.98	19.72
Crary American History Test				
Raw Score	14.80	8.81	26.56	11.49
Percentage Correct	29.30	13.19	41.84	19.03
Standard Score	127.16	12.59	139.54	17.86
Occupational Aspiration Scale	44.00	10.87	45.02	8.96
Eleventh Grade Average	71.13	7.95	70.76	6.13

* P <.05 for difference in means

TABLE 2

CORRELATION MATRIX FOR STUDY VARIABLES
SEGREGATED SCHOOL (N = 56)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	1.00	-.50*	-.07	-.15	-.08	-.17	.11	-.16
2. I.Q.		1.00	.28*	.32*' .31*' .46*	.05'	-.19'	.28*	
3. SCAL			1.00	.38*	.46*	.16	.20	.32*
4. Cray History Test - Raw Score				1.00	.86*	.13'	.15	.48*
5. Cray History Test - Percent Correct Score					1.00	.20'	.16	.43*
6. Cray History Test - Standard Score						1.00	.11	.03
7. OAS							1.00	.15
8. 11th Grade Average								1.00

*P<.05 for correlation

'P<.05 for difference in correlations

TABLE 3

CORRELATION MATRIX FOR STUDY VARIABLES
INTERRACIAL SCHOOLS (N = 45)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	1.00	-.33*	-.10	-.23	-.29	-.24	-.23	-.27*
2. I.Q.		1.00	.29*	.78*' .78*' .70*' .78*' .30*' .41*				
3. SCAL			1.00	.11	.10	.12	.18	.50*
4. Crary History Test - Raw Score			*	1.00	.87*	.99*' .99*' .34*		
5. Crary History Test - Percent Correct					1.00	.88*' .88*' .29*		
6. Crary History Test - Standard Score						1.00	.33*	.35*
7. OAS							1.00	.15
8. 11th Grade Average								1.00

*P<.05 for correlation

'P<.05 for difference in correlations

Procedure

All data were collected during May 1970. The procedures varied slightly in the two types of schools. At the segregated inner-city school, the subjects were assembled in the school cafeteria, and a member of the outside research team explained the purpose of the study before administering the instruments. In the interracial schools, potential subjects were given a letter explaining the purpose of the study and requesting their cooperation. Guidance counselors in these schools assembled the volunteers and conducted the survey. Although the administrators were different persons in each school, all were furnished with explicit instructions to insure uniformity.

In addition to the data gathered on the measurement instruments, the Otis-Lennon Deviation IQ, age, and eleventh grade average of academic subjects were obtained from each subjects personal record.

Four statistical procedures were used to analyze the data: analysis of covariance, correlation, item analysis, and Student's t-test of significance. Analysis of covariance with age and IQ as covariates was used to test the difference in self concept, academic achievement, and occupational aspirations. The product-moment correlation was used to obtain information concerning the relationships existing among the variables for each sample. T-tests were calculated to test the significance of the correlations and the differences between the correlations of the variables in the two groups and the significance of the difference between the means of the standardized scores for the Crary American History Test and the IQ. Item analysis of the questionnaire made comparison of the two study samples possible. Throughout the study the .05 level of significance was adopted.

RESULTS

The total score made by each subject on the SCAL was considered indicative of his feeling of competence in the classroom. The mean of the segregated, inner-city school sample was higher than the mean of the sample in the interracial schools. This difference was significant when age and IQ were covariates in the analysis of the data.

TABLE 4

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF SAMPLES OF INNER-CITY BLACK MALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE SEGREGATED SCHOOL AND THREE INTERRACIAL SCHOOLS SELF CONCEPT AS A LEARNER USING AGE AND IQ AS COVARIATES

Source	df	SS	MS	F	P
Between	1	3559.95	3559.95	7.67	<.05
Within	99	4505.83	464.47		
Total	100	8065.78			

	<u>Control Variables</u>		<u>Criterion Variable</u>		
	Age	IQ	Unadj.M	Adj.M	Adj.SE
Segregated School	18.17	80.07	135.17	138.66	3.12
Interracial School	17.91	95.31	128.98	124.63	3.54

The academic achievement of the subjects was measured by the Cray American History Test. When the raw scores of this test were analyzed holding age and IQ constant, the difference between the groups was significant with the subjects in the interracial schools having the higher mean score.

TABLE 5

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF SAMPLES OF INNER-CITY BLACK MALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE SEGREGATED SCHOOL AND THREE INTERRACIAL SCHOOLS CRARY AMERICAN HISTORY TEST RAW SCORES USING AGE AND IQ AS COVARIATES

Source	df	SS	MS	F	P	
Between	1	430.16	430.16	5.723	< .05	
Within	99	7290.58	75.16			
Total	100	7720.74				
		<u>Control Variables</u>		<u>Criterion Variable</u>		
		Age	IQ	Unadj.M	Adj.M	Adj.SE
Segregated School		18.17	80.07	14.80	17.86	1.25
Interracial School		17.91	95.31	26.56	22.75	1.42

Because of a discernible difference in the number of questions attempted by the two groups, the raw scores were converted to scores indicating the percentage correct of items answered. The F-ratio computed from these data holding age and IQ constant was not significant.

TABLE 6

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF SAMPLES OF INNER-CITY BLACK MALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE SEGREGATED SCHOOL AND THREE INTERRACIAL SCHOOLS CRARY AMERICAN HISTORY TEST PERCENT CORRECT OF ITEMS ANSWERED USING AGE AND IQ AS COVARIATES

Source	df	SS	MS	F	P
Between	1	321.37	321.37	2.26	NS
Within	99	13800.43	142.27		
Total	100	14121.80			

	Control Variables		Criterion Variable		
	Age	IQ	Unadj.M	Adj.M	Adj.SE
Segregated School	18.17	80.07	29.30	33.01	1.72
Interracial School	17.91	95.31	41.84	37.23	1.96

When the raw scores were transformed to the standard scores recommended by the test manual, the t-test of the means was not significant.

TABLE 7

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF STANDARD SCORES ON CRARY AMERICAN HISTORY TEST FOR BLACK MALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE SEGREGATED SCHOOL AND THREE INTERRACIAL SCHOOLS

School	N	Mean	S.D.	t	df
Segregated School	56	127.16	12.59	1.10	99
Interracial Schools	45	139.54	17.86		

The means obtained on the OAS by the two samples were very similar, and the F-ratio calculated holding age and IQ constant was not significant.

TABLE 8

ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF SAMPLES OF INNER-CITY BLACK MALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE SEGREGATED SCHOOL AND THREE INTERRACIAL SCHOOLS OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION SCALE USING AGE AND IQ AS COVARIATES

Source	df	SS	MS	F	P
Between	1	12.23	12.23	.118	NS
Within	99	10090.40	104.02		
Total	100	10102.63			

	Control Variables		Criterion Variable		
	Age	IQ	Unadj.M	Adj.M	Adj.SE
Segregated School	18.17	80.07	44.00	44.08	1.47
Interracial School	17.91	95.31	45.02	44.91	1.67

The items on the questionnaire concerning the attitude of the parents toward his future educational plans were very similar: 67 percent of the fathers and 84 percent of the mothers of the subjects in the segregated school and 64 percent of the fathers and 89 percent of the mothers of the sample in the interracial schools were reported as encouraging their sons to go to college. The proportion of parents who were advocating leaving high school in order to work was less than five percent of the total group.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that in this sample of black male inner-city high school students those who attended the segregated high school had a higher self concept than those in the interracial schools. Several reasons may be postulated for this difference. First, the lower self concept may have existed before the student entered the interracial

school, and enrollment may have been sought as a status symbol in order to enhance self perception. Second, these subjects may have had a higher need for achievement than they were able to attain. In contrast, the sample in the segregated school may have had a lower need for achievement; they may have accepted their grades and may not have been as critical of their achievement.

A third explanation may be that the other students in the interracial schools were of the middle socioeconomic class while the sample represented the lower class. Many of the subjects in this study had never been in an integrated school of middle class orientation before and had not been exposed to the competition for grades which exists in such schools. Although these young men had probably been the best motivated and highest achieving students in their previous schools, they may have found it more difficult to succeed among students who may have possessed a higher degree of the two characteristics which make the middle-class child a good student: personal need for achievement and cultural achievement value orientation. (Rosen, 1956) Further, the subscore for the items related to peer group relationships correlated more highly with the total score for the sample in the segregated school than for the sample in the interracial schools. This difference may have been influenced by the fact that the black student in the school which has a homogeneous student body experiences favorable interpersonal relations with his classmates. These favorable reflected appraisals may affect his feeling of worth, competence, and self-confidence. Conversely, the inner-city student in the interracial schools did not come from the same socioeconomic background as his classmates and may have felt that he was not accepted. As a result, the reflected appraisals he perceived may have led to a negative feeling of low self-evaluation and inferiority.

A fourth hypothesis may be that the amount of time the students devoted to extracurricular activities affected their interpersonal relations with other students. A larger proportion of the subjects in the segregated school reported interest in several diverse extracurricular activities. This difference may be attributed to the fact that the subject attending the outlying schools spent more time in transit from home to school than his counterpart who attended the community school. Since many favorable contacts are made in the non-academic activities, this lack of interaction may have made it difficult for the subjects in the interracial schools to find common bonds or interests with other students.

A final possibility may be that the black student attending a school staffed primarily by white teachers may not be able to relate positively to his teachers. Gottlieb reported that the black student had a better relationship with the black teacher than the white teacher and a more favorable perception of the black teacher's ability and desire to help him achieve his goal. Since the percentage of black teachers for each of the interracial schools was low--14 percent, 39 percent, and 23 percent--the school faculties may have influenced the self concept of the sample in these schools causing the disparity.

In comparing the academic achievement as measured by the objective history test, the sample in the interracial schools obtained a significantly higher raw score than the sample in the segregated school. However, an unforeseen bias due to the procedures followed for student participation in the interracial schools may have influenced the results. Since only those students were included who volunteered and were excused from class by their subject teachers, it is possible that the sample included students who could afford to miss class time and were highly motivated. They may have applied

themselves diligently in taking the history test. In an attempt to eliminate any bias, percentage correct scores and standardized test scores were tested, and the difference between the two samples was no longer significant.

These results may be taken as an indication that the student in the segregated school has achieved at the same rate as his counterpart in the interracial schools, but because of lack of motivation to work fast, or some unknown psychological factor, does not perform as well on a timed test.

There was no difference in the scores made by the two samples on the Occupational Aspiration Scale. The subjects in both groups selected such occupations as civil engineer, psychologist, airline pilot, biologist, welfare worker, and lawyer. Seventy-two percent of the total sample indicated a desire to go to college despite the fact that the majority of their parents were not able to finance future education. The proportion of parents who were encouraging their sons to go to college was great in both groups, and only five percent were advocating that the subject leave high school to obtain work.

IMPLICATIONS

This study focused on a limited number of variables in an attempt to assess the effects of school integration on a sample of inner-city black male high school students. The questions investigated were concerned with the welfare of the black student and all contributed to one general question: Is there an implicit advantage in attendance at an interracial school for inner-city black male adolescents? The results indicate that for this study sample, self concept seemed to be adversely affected, academic achievement appeared to show little gain, and occupational aspirations showed no difference.

The results obtained on occupational aspiration may be interpreted as reflecting a general trend toward higher occupational aspirations of black youth and greater support for education by black parents of the lower socioeconomic class. Going to the interracial suburban school did not tend to raise the aspirational level of the male ghetto residents since their choices did not differ significantly from those of their counterparts in the segregated inner-city school.

For those people who feel that the foremost purposes of education are academic achievement and occupational aspirations, these results indicate that no difference exists between the two samples on these variables. If the primary concern, however, is self concept, the interracial suburban school seems to have some detrimental effect on the student from the inner-city black population.

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