Education and RACIAL INEQUALITY

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Main Topics:

- Education
- Income
- The Workforce
- Racism and My Thoughts

Executive Summary

The world is full of inequalities. In the United States, there are many inequalities among the different races. Taking note in the different educational backgrounds in the different groups is the key when analyzing the inequalities among the different races. The United States, the land of opportunity, does provide the American Dream. However, the American Dream must come with equal quality education for all. Education is the foundation that affects people for the rest of their lives in the area of inequality between the races in income, in the workforce, and in unemployment.
**Race and Education**

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Not only is there a disadvantage for these minorities to graduate, but there also may be a disadvantage for them to succeed if and/or when they graduate. Graduating from high school can dictate whether an individual is eligible to apply and be accepted into any post high school education. There are two major standardized tests required by most colleges and universities to gain entrance, the SAT and the ACT. “Average (SAT) scores by African-American, American Indian and Hispanic students trailed average results among whites by a larger margin in 2001 then they did a decade ago” (http://archives.cnn.com/2001/fyi/teachers.ednews/08/28/sat.scores/). The ACT’s national averages showed trends similar to the SAT (http://archives.cnn.com/2001/fyi/teachers.ednews/08/28/sat.scores/).
Many have noted that these tests may be unfair to minority students and students from lower economic level families. Even the College Board President Gaston Caperton notes the following:

"Tests are not the problem," said College Board President Gaston Caperton at a Washington news conference. "Students are not the problem. The problem we have is an unfair education system in America -- an unequal education system."

(http://archives.cnn.com/2001/fyi/teachers.ednews/08/28/sat.scores/)

Since the 2001 study, the SAT has been revamped. The high school graduates of 2006 will be the first class to take the new SAT for college admissions. But does revamping the test fix the unfair educations?

Black, Hispanic and Native American youths nationally stand just a 50-50 chance of graduating on time (http://www.wcuquad.com/news/2004/03/02/News/Racial.Gap.Of.High.School.Students.Studied-623004.shtml). This shows that Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans are a clear disadvantage of graduating from high school. Reworking the SAT so that certain minorities might do better does not help to them receive any better of an education or do anything to help with their future.
The above graph shows that nearly seventy percent of white high school graduates and about fifty-five percent of black graduates enroll in college. This is a significant difference. Another study shows “the racial gap in college completion rates grew from 13 percentage points in 1975 to 17 in percentage points in 1998”

Still, after high school, taking the SAT or ACT, and being accepted into a college or university, racial inequalities still exist. Getting into a college is only getting their foot in the door, especially for minority blacks
Being accepted into college does not really mean too much if one does not graduate and earn a degree.

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Inequalities in education, no doubt, carry over and create inequalities in income. The typical Black family had 60% as much income as a white family in 1968, but only 58% as much in 2002.

Education plays the key role in how much income somebody will and can bring in. “Finally, statistics show that the family that wants to get ahead should emphasize education” (http://www.ncpa.org/~ncpa/pd/economy/ecob2.html). According to the National Center for Policy Analysis, high school dropouts earn less than half what graduates make, college graduates make about eighty percent more than high school graduates, and those with graduate degrees make about two-and-one-half times more than high school graduates (http://www.ncpa.org/~ncpa/pd/economy/ecob2.html).
**Race in the Workforce**

Having a job does not mean everything. There are many different types of jobs available. In 2000, managers were compensated at the highest level of any major occupational group, at $37 per hour, and professional occupations had the second-highest compensation at $34 per hour.

It is not common for managers and professionals to have not earned a college degree. One knows that certain minorities have disadvantages in the world of academics. Being at a disadvantage in the world of academics is shown in the types of jobs that these minorities have. In 2000, blacks and Hispanics were almost twice as likely as whites to work in the service sector, such as food service or cleaning service, with compensation at $12 per hour.

“In the past decade, the percentage of workers who are managers or professionals increased from 29 percent to 33 percent for whites, from 16 percent to 22 percent for blacks, and from 13 percent to 14 percent for Hispanics. This represents a decline in the white-collar employment gap between whites and blacks, a trend that may be linked to increasing college graduation rates for young black workers, especially women.”

(www.prb.org/AmerisatTemplate.cfm?Section=RaceandEthnicity&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=7879)
One may look back to the differences in education to help explain why some minorities are often less than fortunate when it comes to the wages or salaries of their occupations. “Occupational differences are important because they affect potential earnings.”

Another area where there are inequalities in race is wage disparities. Wage disparities for the same or similar jobs would be a most direct effect of racism than the other inequalities in different occupations wages or incomes.
Race and Unemployment

“Past studies have found a rising black-white gap in unemployment between 1973 and 1993.”

This may have to do with the fact that less educated workers do not have the same amount of job security as those with college degrees. Less blacks and Hispanics go on to finish high school or earn degrees than do whites. Unemployment may result of poor education.
As one can see in the graph above, the unemployment rate of whites has been significantly lower than blacks and Hispanics. There is absolutely a racial inequality here that one can trace back elementary school or even earlier.

**Is it Racism?**

*“Laundry is the only thing that should be separated by color.”*  
-Author Unknown

Are the education and income inequalities between the races even caused by racism, or are there other factors?
“The report says a 1992 study found that tuition costs, alternatives to schooling, and family background characteristics explain little of the racial gap in educational attainment. More recent studies, however, have found the educational attainment of blacks to be equal to (or higher than) whites with similar levels of family income and education.”

(http://www.ncrel.org/gap/library/text/earlyeducation.htm)

There is, without a doubt, more to these inequalities of the different races/ethnicities than just racism. One must also take into account numerous other factors, especially where they may lie socio-economically. Some minorities such as the Asian population are doing quite well, in some cases better than whites. It can be hard to say that minorities are discriminated against solely because they are minorities, but may now include their education, experience, and their socio-economic status.

Education plays a big part in the inequalities that everybody can see today. Income inequalities can often be traced directly back to a major factor in education. Statistics show that whites and minorities often have had significant differences in income. Blacks usually, on average, have incomes less than most whites. In some cases, Asians, on average, may earn more than whites may. Education is the key factor for these inequalities. Income is often based on education and experience. Since a smaller percentage of blacks graduate high school than do whites, then it is only logical that the
average incomes for blacks are below that of whites. With a higher percentage of whites finishing high school, there are more opportunities for whites to continue to further their education, which result in higher paying jobs. Professionals, no matter what their race, make more comparable salaries than when comparing the different incomes across the whole board.

The results of education, or lack of education, also spill over into the area of unemployment. It is a given that employment relies on education. If the lesser percentage of blacks graduate high school, the lesser the percentage that go on to continue their education. A limited education just limits one to certain jobs. Limited job opportunities would result in higher chances of unemployment. It only makes sense that unemployment for any group would be higher with limited education.

Education must be factored as key for these major inequalities among the races. As many people know first hand, racism does exist and is a problem. However, I do not believe it is the number one issue today. One cannot always to turn the past for excuses. The controversy that surrounds affirmative action is that is looks to make up for injustices in the past. It may seem like a good idea, but for people to move forward, they must look forward, and not dwell on the past. The focus must be on the future. Early education of the young children is where many answers lie. The inequalities between the races in income, in the workforce, and unemployment can all be related back to education. The foundation must be concrete!
About the Author

Nicolas Restituto is a student at Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Missouri. He plans to graduate with a B.S. in Business Administration with a concentration in finance/economics. After graduation, he plans to further his education in law school. In his spare time, he enjoys skateboarding, listening to the music of the world famous Ramones, and following professional soccer.