

PERCEPTIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL MINORITY STUDENTS AND HIGH SCHOOL
TEACHERS REGARDING RACISM: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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Perceptions of High School Minority Students and High School Teachers Regarding
Racism: A Phenomenological Study

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ABSTRACT

Paige Boomer. PERCEPTIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL MINORITY STUDENTS AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS REGARDING RACISM: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY. (Under the direction of Dr. Connie McDonald) School of Education, May 2011.

Research shows that racism is still prevalent in schools today. This qualitative study using a phenomenological design identified different forms of racism in schools and the impact racism has on students and teachers. The study identifies the perceptions 9th-12th grade minority students and high school teachers have regarding racism, and compares and contrast those perceptions in a rural Georgia high school. Participants were selected from a pool of approximately 103 ethnic minority high school students and 68 high school teachers. The participants were selected through purposeful sampling due to ones minority status or employment status. Surveys, individual interviews, and journaling were the data collection methods used in the study. The Social Identity Theory (SIT) was the theoretical framework used when examining data and uncovering themes. The study showed that 28 of the minority students and three non-minority teachers were impacted by racism. The above numbers prove there is a discrepancy between minority student and teacher perceptions of racism. The study describes how racism exists within the school under study. Findings include the affect racism plays on self-esteem, academics, and racial bullying. Suggestions for future studies are also included.

Dedication

First and foremost I want to thank my Lord and Savior for placing the desire in my heart to obtain a Doctorate degree and never leaving my side through the whole journey.

Saying thank you is not enough about a husband who stood with me the whole journey, supported me, calmed me, and believed in me so much that I began to believe in myself. How blessed am I! I love you Mike.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In a rural Georgia high school, one walks in the school and can hear the sounds of lockers banging, students talking and laughing, bells sounding, and teachers discussing the plans for the day. All seems typical for a high school setting. Upon entrance to the school, one may not notice anything different about the school compared to others. In the United States, there is a sea of different faces due to the merging of many cultures, ethnicities, and races, mirroring what Eoyang (1995) described as “a crazy quilt of cultures; its energy, its verve, its good nature, its imagination, its daring, have attracted people from all over the world” (p. 170).

The ethnic minority population in U.S. schools continues to grow in ethnic diversity (Bazron, Osher, & Fleischman, 2005). The success of ethnic minority students plays an incredible role in the future of the United States. The educational system must attend to the racial minority population in order to encourage success in schools. The debate need not be whether one is excited about the growth of ethnic minority populations but instead on how schools can help the students reach full potential.

Does racism exist and impact students in this rural Georgia high school? This rural Georgia high school has 849 total students and 103 minority students. It is the only high school in the county. Do the educators recognize and address racism in the school? The issue of racism has been around as long as people have inhabited the earth. The *Merriam Webster Dictionary* defines *racism* as a belief that race is the main determinant of individual traits and abilities and differences in race generate superiority of a certain race (Merriam Webster, 1997). In schools, race often plays a part when considering students' academic achievements and opportunities, social acceptance, and well-being.

Asante (2003) argued, “Discrimination in education has become synonymous with the most pervasive form of racism” (p. 213). Educators cannot control racism outside the school environment, but with knowledge and understanding of racism within the school walls, educators can work to erase racism in the schools.

Problem Statement

The United States has a long history of unequal treatment among different ethnic groups. Unequal treatment occurred in the early 1700s by Christians who looked upon Native Americans as heathens. Colonists used religious differences to justify running Native Americans from the land and at times making them slaves. The English, Irish, and Native Americans were used for some time as slaves or slave-like labor in the English colonies (Blum, 2002). Africans were brought to the Americas for the purpose of being enslaved. African Americans were used based on the fact that Africans were readily identifiable, not familiar with the territory, and spoke many different dialects. These characteristics lowered the chances of escape. Unfortunately, when the slave population was low, the colonists could simply import more. The economic reasons for slavery were based on the need to harvest tobacco, sugar, cotton, and rice (Blum, 2002).

Racial restrictions were put on most ethnic groups in the United States (Franklin, 1995). In 1830, the United States Congress initiated the Indian Removal Act, and in 1850, set up reservations where the Native Americans were to live (Franklin, 1995). In 1849, Chinese immigrants were brought over to work on the transcontinental railroad. African Americans were finally allowed naturalization in 1870, but many federal policies in 1880 denied the Chinese immigrants rights. Native Americans were not given the

right of citizenship until 1924 while East Asians and Filipinos were not included until 1952 (Blum, 2002).

There have been many positive changes on the road to erasing racism. In 1865, the Civil War ended, and slavery was abolished (Franklin, 1995). In 1924, Native Americans were given the right to vote. *Brown vs. Board of Education* of 1954 granted separate but equal treatment for African Americans in schools. Names like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King were synonymous with the Civil Rights movement. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 stated that discrimination was not allowed in public schools (Franklin, 1995). Even though African Americans had the right to vote, there were many obstacles that prevented African American participation. Poll taxes, literacy tests, and other obstacles kept many African Americans from being able to vote. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 allowed the federal government to supervise voting registrations and elections, which allowed many African Americans and non-English speaking Americans the ability to vote for the first time (Franklin, 1995). The Bilingual Education Act (also known as Title VII) of 1968 was established to ensure programs were developed to meet the needs of limited English speaking children (Allen, 2006). In 1972, the government adopted an Ethnic Heritage Studies Program. The program showed educators how to encourage understanding and appreciation for all different cultures (Franklin, 1995).

Affirmative action policy addresses equal rights for disadvantaged African Americans and other minorities (Franklin, 1995). The problem of racism and unequal treatment has diminished since the time of slavery, but there are still positive changes that need to be made. Americans need to connect with each other and talk about race intelligently (Cose, 1997). Racism is still prevalent in many schools today (Beswick,

1990; Pennino, 2007). Moreover, racism often plays a role in students' acceptance among peers and teachers, which can have a bearing on one's well-being. Students should not be subjected to racial slurs, racial stereotypes, unequal treatment, or racially motivated violence in schools today. Asante (2003) conveyed, "Racism in education cannot be overcome by the expression of goodwill; it must be confronted constantly in every conscious way" (p. 223).

Racial stereotypes are so imbedded into the United States and school culture that one may find it difficult to change. Furthermore, school staff and students are often unaware a change is needed. In October 2007, some racially motivated incidents took place at Warwick High School in Pennsylvania. Some Caucasian students threw trash at minority students, waved the Confederate flag, and engaged in racial slurs. The media was criticized for sharing the story of the students and others in the community (Pennino, 2007). The community had a difficult time dealing with the incident. Some wanted to ignore the behaviors and situation, but some felt the need to address the situation. In January of the same year, the YMCA in the community organized study circles to battle racism (Grimaud, 2008). Phillips (2008) noted that one of the ways to battle racism in schools is to simply talk about the racism to a teacher, parent, or anyone who will listen and take action about a racial situation that needs to be addressed. Communication and openness is one way teachers are helping combat racism. There needs to be open discussion about differences, similarities, and respect for all students. Ignoring the different racial groups will not deter students from partaking in racial stereotypes, slurs, and activities. Racism always looms overhead, but people often ignore it until a severe racial conflict occurs. Racism in schools is racism and should be tackled (Oakley-Smith,

2008). A review of literature suggested that although much progress has been made to eliminate racism in schools, discrimination in education still exists and is one of the most pervasive forms of racism (Beswick, 1990; Brinson, Kottler, & Fisher, 2004; O'Conner, Hill, & Robinson, 2009; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008).

In order to bring attention to the problem of racism in this rural Georgia high school, I looked through the theoretical lens of Social Identity Theory (SIT). SIT finds that the racial prejudices, racial slurs, and stereotypes one encounters are based on the group of which one is a part (Abrams, 1994; Kimsey, 2009). In a study conducted by Wittenbrink, Judd, and Park (1997), they discovered that a persons' membership in a particular group plays a role in negative racial stereotypes. SIT guided the study of the perceptions minority high school students and high school teachers have on racism.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to discover the perceptions minority students and high school teachers had about racism in a rural Georgia high school. Did the students feel racism is prevalent in the high school? Were the educators aware of racism in the school? What can be done to help those experiencing racism? The goal was to investigate how educators can help students deal with racism and encourage discussion among educators about racism.

As a Christian educator, it is of great importance to show love and support to all children regardless of race. Jesus said, "Whoever accepts a child like this in my name accepts me. And whoever accepts me accepts the One who sent me" (Mark 9:37, New Century Version). Acceptance of children from all races and cultures in schools is important for more than just educational success. Acceptance embodies the future of the

world. This world is replete with great diversity. This diversity is one of God's greatest gifts, but it also poses a great challenge (Shipman, 1994).

Focus and Intent

The focus of this research was to gain an understanding of the perceptions minority students and high school teachers had on racism. The study focuses on how the students and teachers felt about racism in a rural Georgia high school. By using surveys, individual interviews, and participant journaling, I was able to define how minority students and teachers felt about racism in the school. Sharing the information with educators encourages a discussion of racism through which knowledge can be gained on how to best help minority students cope with racism.

The intent of this study was to investigate the minority students' and high school teachers' perceptions on racism and to examine effective ways to increase support for dealing with racism. The goal was to explore themes that emerge to gain an understanding of the participants' points of view. The Social Identity Theory (SIT) was the theoretical framework I employed when data was analyzed and themes discovered. SIT suggests that how one perceives racism is based on the group with which one is affiliated (Shinnar, 2008). The voices of the minority students and high school teachers were captured in order to recognize when racism occurred and how to help students who were experiencing this phenomenon.

Situation to Self

I am presently an English Language Learner (ELL) teacher in a small rural county in Georgia. As an ELL teacher, I hear much discussion from students about racism. Many students have shared negative experiences in which racism was involved. In many

cases, the minority students I taught have felt neglected in the schools. I have witnessed situations where students have endured verbal abuse by other students. Names such as “wetback,” “border jumper,” and “foreigner” have been used to diminish students’ self-worth. I have also witnessed situations where students have been disciplined more severely for standing up for themselves than the nonminority student who initiated an argument. Racial stereotyping and jokes are very commonplace among students, so much so that it is not deemed unacceptable. Some of the students I interviewed were previous students. A rapport and relationship was already built with many of the students who were interviewed, making it more likely for true feelings about racism to be shared. Even though a relationship was established with the participants, I am a non minority Caucasian female, which could have affected the openness of the participants. Like the researcher, the teacher participants were all Caucasians, which could have impacted the study. As an ELL teacher in a small system, I work with some of the minority students and therefore have an incredible opportunity to make a difference in the lives of those whose school experiences are impacted by racism.

The interest in this topic is grounded in witnessed events in which ELL students have been involved. There is a strong need for educators to recognize and understand the hurtful nature of racism. When racism is ignored, it can lead to long term emotional effects (Beswick, 1990). Children with emotional difficulty are at a higher risk of having problems at school (Raver, 2003). Researching the racism issue can provide answers and insight that may help resolve the problem in schools.

A researcher often has a paradigm or worldview that shapes their research. A worldview is a simple set of beliefs that steer one’s actions (Guba, 1990). I feel as an

ELL teacher, I should be an ally and advocate for the minority races in a school setting. Throughout the research process, the voice of the minority students was captured. Insight into minority students' perceptions on racism was sought, and changes can be made to help the students deal with racism. Creswell (2007) stated, "The basic tenet of this worldview is that research should contain an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of participants, the institutions in which they live and work, or even the researchers' lives" (p. 21). My goal was to provide a voice for the minority students and in turn raise awareness and improve the lives and education of minority students.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this research study:

1. What are the perceptions that 9th-12th grade minority students have about racism?
2. What are the perceptions that 9th-12th grade teachers have about racism?
3. How do 9th-12th grade minority students and 9th-12th grade teachers' perceptions of racism compare and contrast?

The perceptions that minority students and teachers in the high school have about racism were investigated. I hoped to capture the voices of the participants to discover if racism occurred and how to help students who have experienced racism. Surveys, interviews, and journaling of participants were analyzed to discover racism occurrences in the school. Beswick (1990) argued, "It is not just the condescension and violence exhibited toward minorities that must be taken into account when looking at incidents of racism. Restrictions on minorities' opportunity to succeed are often racially determined" (p. 2).

The educator plays a significant role in how racism is portrayed in schools. I explored different strategies and interventions that can help students deal with racism.

Significance of Research

Singleton and Linton (2006) stated, “Racial inequity in American education—and frustration with it—has a long history dating back to the founding of the nation” (p. 164). Much of the research states there are significant inequities in funding, quality, and organization in the American educational system (Noguera, 2008; O’Conner, Hill, & Robinson, 2009; Singleton & Linton, 2006). This study examined the perceptions 9th-12th grade minority students and 9th-12th grade high school teachers have on racism. By sharing information from the study, I hope to encourage discussion among educators about racism. Through an analysis of the data collected, teachers gain an understanding of when racism occurs and how to help students who are affected. The study can also be used to enhance the education of the minority students at this school by increasing awareness of racism and promoting positive ways to battle it.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study focused on the perceptions 9th -12th grade minority students and 9th-12th grade high school teachers have of racism. The history of race and racism is long and complex (Singleton & Linton, 2006). A great deal of literature and research has been conducted addressing racism and its many components. This literature review highlights race, racism, cultural integration, and the history of racial treatment of Native Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans, and Hispanics. The literature review also examines the theories of racism, racism in schools, and the programs in schools that address racial studies and ethnic understanding. Further, examining the literature enhances the analysis process (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) by sharpening the researcher's role as the human instrument in the study.

Race

What is race? This question has been asked for years. The answers found in the literature are wide and varied. Sowell (1994) noted that race was first used to distinguish between Irish, English, Germans, and Slavs. It began as a way of identifying people of different backgrounds and makeup. It was not intended to be used to ostracize or overpower other people (Sowell, 1994). Another researcher wrote that race arose from the colonization of the New World and importation of slaves (Graves, 2001). Regardless of when the idea of race began, one is born a certain race, which cannot be changed (Franklin, 1995).

Blum (2002) stated, "Races are large groupings of persons, distinguished by physical features such as skin color, hair texture, and facial features" (p. 98). Physical differences often make one an easy racial target. Race is more than appearance; race

encompasses one's ethnicity, culture, and history (Hein, 2004). People should be judged by the content of character, not race. Sowell (1994) noted, "Racial, ethnic, and cultural differences among peoples play a major role in the events of our times, in countries around the world, and have played a major role in the long history of human race" (p. 1). The United States is a nation made up of many different races, for immigrants have always come to America. Some stand on the theory that the United States is a melting pot. A melting pot is a container which blends separate materials into one. A melting pot implies that all races blend together as one, hence losing the characteristics that make one different (Franklin, 1995). Franklin (1995) conveyed, "The United States government classifies people in five racial groups: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, African American, Caucasian, and Hispanic" (p. 13). This leaves out many different races. One can be from many different ethnic groups. Which race box is one to check? Graves (2001) argued, "The problem as we enter the twenty-first century is that we have believed in the reality of race for so long that many will wonder how to live without it" (p. 197).

Racism

Racism is the result of fear and ignorance, and it requires power (D'Souza, 1995). People often misunderstand others who are different from themselves, which leaves much room for fear and ignorance. Often times, people want to be in control of things and feel their race does things the best. This breeds selfishness, arrogance, and narrow mindedness (Franklin, 1995). Vines and Baird (2009) stated, "Racism has been defined as the beliefs, attitudes, institutional arrangements, and acts that tend to denigrate individuals or groups because of phenotypic characteristics or ethnic variation" (p. 156).

Children begin to notice differences, such as color, as early as age two (Beswick, 1990). Students begin to relate to his or her racial group between the ages of two and six. Parents often play a major role in how children perceive other races. The influence can be either positive or negative (Beswick, 1990). Peers also have a big influence on how children feel about people from other racial groups (Savard & Aragon, 1989).

Jackson (2000) stated, “Americans of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds encounter racial issues in school, the work place, and community” (p.33). Most students have acquired some racial stereotyping by the elementary school age (Beswick, 1990). Negative stereotypes create prejudice. Acting on prejudices is discrimination (Franklin, 1995). Society creates stereotypes based on observations and patterns of group behavior (Sowell, 1994). Bell (1987) wrote *And We Are Not Saved: The Elusive Quest for Racial Justice* and Hacker (1992) wrote the book, *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*. Both authors stress the point that racism is the Achilles’ heel of American society (Asante, 2003).

Diversity defines America. Some feel only one type of American exists, not African American, Hispanic, Asian, and so forth (Eoyang, 1995). D’Souza (1995) posited that racism is not just a Caucasian issue. D’Souza noted that even ethnic minority groups can be racist. One racial group can discriminate against another racial minority group. Some groups blame others for failure. People from different racial groups can have racial paranoia, in which everything is blamed on racism. Many feel that racism is just part of American life. On the other hand, some Caucasians feel there is not a race problem in the United States but an African American problem (D’Souza, 1995). Still others feel that racism is kept alive by imaginations of African Americans and other

ethnic minority activists (D'Souza, 1995). Eoyang (1995) argued, "It is racism that all races should be against, and there is no way to eradicate another person's racism by opposing it with your own" (p. 161).

Cultural Integration

A person's identity is formed by race, religion, and nationality. Researchers have found that many races experience acculturation, which is the process of one group taking on the characteristics of another group (Jackson, 2000; Franklin, 1995; George & Yancey, 2009). The most extreme form of acculturation is assimilation in which one takes on so many traits that a separate identity no longer exists (Franklin, 1995). George and Yancey (2004) stated, "Proponents of assimilation contend that a core set of values inexorably unites Americans, creating a common culture which cuts across all racial and ethnic boundaries" (p. 1). When the United States was newly formed, leaders expressed ideas about assimilation. George Washington spoke of immigrants abandoning previous habits, language, and values that were brought to the colonies. Washington expressed the theory of immigrants assimilating into the colonies to become one people (Franklin, 1995). Franklin (1995) stated, "John Adams advised that foreigners 'must cast off the European skin, never to resume it'" (p. 27). Hence, assimilation is not a new idea.

History of Racial Treatment

In the 1990 U.S. Census, the government recognized five ethnic groups: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, African Americans, Caucasian, or Hispanic (Franklin, 1995). The 2010 Census went a step further to determine one's race by breaking down each race by specific ethnic origin (see Appendix B). For example, if one is of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin, it must be noted the

specific race category, such as Puerto Rican, Cuban, Mexican American, and so forth (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2010).

The school system involved in this study categorizes the student population by the following ethnic groups: Asian, Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Multi-racial, and White (Power School, 2010) (see Appendix C). Using the categories accepted by the school system, I will examine the racial treatment of the above races. There are more past and present experiences, ideas, and patterns that can possibly be addressed. I am aware that the following discussion is a partial attempt to examine racial treatment of different races in the past that can be continued infinitively. It is important for the past to be examined in order to understand the racism of today. While the past needs to be remembered, educators cannot move away from racism if dwelling in the past. Cose (1997) noted, “There is a danger however, in dwelling too long on the past; it can distract one from taking advantage of the opportunities in the present” (p. 223).

Native Americans. The Native American journey in the United States has been a very oppressed and trying one. Native Americans were looked upon as savages who were a barrier in the settler’s way (Thomas, 2000). The relations between the Caucasians and the Native Americans were often violent in the struggle for land (Franklin, 1995). The colonists dressed up as Indians as a sign of violence during the Boston Tea Party. Colonists expected the Native Americans to assimilate into the American culture and to abandon their language, habits, customs, and culture. Even the Declaration of Independence mentions the Native Americans as “merciless Indian savages” (Thomas, 2000). In 1830, the Indian Removal Act was put into place, and the relocation of all Native Americans to reservations occurred in 1838. The Trail of Tears is one of the most

well-known, brutal removals documented. The Cherokees were forced to move from Georgia to Oklahoma (Thomas, 2000). By 1880, almost all Native Americans were poor, discouraged, and living on reservations. The Native Americans no longer occupied the land they previously inhabited. In 1924, Native Americans were denied citizenship (Blum, 2002). The movement of assimilation of the Native Americans in the 1950s did not work. The movement failed after taking many young Native Americans and placing them in schools to “Whiten” them. The movement made the young Native Americans outsiders in both cultures (Thomas, 2000). Franklin (1995) stated, “It was common, in fact, to refer to Native Americans as ‘Vanishing Americans’” (p. 72).

The Native American rights organizations began to emerge in the 1960s during the ethnic revival movement. By the 1980s, a lot of tribes had opened up gambling casinos in order to bring in revenue for the tribe (Franklin, 1995). Some tribes had financial gains due to finding oil and other minerals on the reservations. Still, life expectancy was lower for Native Americans than the typical American (Franklin, 1995). Franklin (1995) stated, “Instead of becoming independent, Native Americans had to rely more and more on government aid” (p. 81).

Surprisingly, Native Americans have appeared on many coins. The Indian head penny (1859-1909), buffalo nickel (1913-1938), gold quarter and half eagle (1908-1929), and Chief One Papa five dollar certificate (since 1899) have been printed and circulated in the United States (Thomas, 2000). Since 1990, the Native American population has increased. The growth in the Native American population was partially because more people claimed identity (Blum, 2002). Thomas (2000) found that “even today, although

the language and imagery have moderated somewhat, mainstream America still reflects strangely contradictory love-hate feelings toward the Indian” (p. 23).

Asian Americans. Blum (2002) noted, “Asian Americans, though still a relatively small minority, are the most rapidly growing one” (p. 51). Chinese began to immigrate to the U.S. to work on the transcontinental railroad in 1849 (Blum, 2002). Asians faced discrimination by not being able to vote, own property, or legally immigrant in the 1800’s exclusion laws (Kukathas, 2008). By the 1970s and 1980s, immigration laws encouraged a surge of Asians to the United States. In the 19th century, Asians were thought of as unfit, unmotivated, sneaky, and dangerous. Racial tensions between Asian Americans and other Americans were at a high during World War II and the Vietnam War. Some of the above stereotypes have been erased and replaced with new stereotypes. Although some of the new stereotypes are flattering, such as being high performers and having strong families, these stereotypes can still be harmful (Blum, 2002).

The cultures, values, and beliefs of separate Asian groups can be very different. Often grouping them together as one race can be racist and cause frustration for those categorized. Dr. Birgeneau, a chancellor at University of California, Berkeley, found that the category of Asian is no longer appropriate, for Koreans, Japanese, Chinese, and so forth are not the same (Kukathas, 2008).

African Americans. The African American introduction to the New World was strained and vicious due to slavery. Even after the end of slavery, African Americans continued to face racism, discrimination, and prejudice. African Americans have always had second class status. Segregation was practiced in the United States for many years

after the end of slavery. The Civil Rights movement helped make some positive changes for African Americans (Asante, 2003). For example, they gained the right to vote.

African Americans were not given economic opportunities, and some were destined for poverty (Jacobs, 1999). The Kerner Commission Report (1960) said the African American community is much poorer than the Caucasian community (as cited in Asante, 2003). There is a connection between race and arrests, suspensions, and expulsion from school (Kukathas, 2008; Noguera, 2008; Sowell, 1994). However, this issue is so controversial it is often avoided in public discussions (Noguera, 2008). The overwhelming representation of African Americans in the criminal systems suggests that African Americans are mistreated by policemen and courts (D'Souza, 1995).

Organizations were formed by leaders in the African American community to provide support. One such organization is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The NAACP was founded in 1909 and continues with the same mission still today. The mission of the NAACP is to support political, economical, social, and educational rights for all and abolish racial hatred and discrimination (NAACP, 2009). Asante (2003) stated, "African Americans are not a beggar people; we simply want the nation to confront its own history and do justice" (p. 8).

The United States Census Bureau (2000) found that minorities make up 28% of the national population and estimates that 38% of the population in 2025 will be minorities (Howard, 2006). Affirmative Action is a federal policy designed to remedy past and present discrimination (Scuro, 2004). Affirmative Action policies were put in place to end discrimination by allowing for more job and educational opportunities for African Americans and other minority groups (Franklin, 1995). Howard (2006) noted,

“Most attacks on affirmative action are based on the issue of fairness for the sake of fairness we ought to end ‘special preferences for special groups’” (p. 81). Advocates of affirmative action feel that if preferential treatment is involved, then people of color and women should benefit from affirmative action well into the twenty-second century (Howard, 2006). In a 1991 poll, the United States showed that 13% of Americans detested the African American minority (Patterson, 1997). Princeton political scientist Hochschild (1995) had much to say when looking at the American Dream. Hochschild disputed that Caucasians felt African Americans were receiving the same opportunities with less discrimination while African Americans felt Caucasians had a greater chance of participating in dreams and discrimination was increasing. Both races were picturing the same American dream, but with different perspectives (Wolfe, 1998).

Many cases related to affirmative action have been taken to the Supreme Court over the years. One of the latest Supreme Court decisions relating to affirmative action took place on June 29, 2009. The Ricci v. DeStefano case involved 17 Caucasian firefighters and 1 Hispanic firefighter. The plaintiffs argued that when a 2003 lieutenant and captain exam had been thrown out because very few minorities passed, this was reverse discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The New Haven fire department claims the exam was thrown out because it had such an adverse impact on minority applicants (Editorial, 2009). The Supreme court ruled (5-4) in favor of the plaintiffs, stating that the New Haven Fire Department’s action was a violation of Title VII (Editorial, 2009). The continuous battle over affirmative action leaves both minorities and non minorities feeling put upon (D’Souza, 1995).

Even with much discrimination and prejudice surrounding them, African Americans are full citizens of the United States. African Americans have and continue to play a huge part in music, dance, sports, and fashion. Patterson (1997) stated, “ Afro-Americans are now very much a part of the nation’s political life, occupying positions in numbers and importance that go well beyond mere ethnic representation or tokenism” (p. 17). When Patterson made the statement about African Americans in politics, names such as Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice were household names. Barack Obama is presently the President of the United States. When Barack Obama was running for president, there was much debate about his race. The media focused more on him being the first African American president, when in fact Obama could be labeled the first Hawaiian president or multiracial president. Kukathas (2008) stated, “At the same time, Obama’s identity reveals the complex blindness and slipperiness of American conceptions of race, culture, and ethnicity” (p. 53).

Hispanics. The Hispanic or Latino population is very diverse. Blum (2002) maintained, “Latinos are essentially equal to Blacks as the largest ethnoracial minority” (p. 51). The population is made up mostly of Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans. From 1961-1970 more than 255,000 Cubans came to the United States. The reason for this influx to the U.S. was Fidel Castro overthrew the Cuban government in 1959. Castro was a communist dictator, so the U.S. government made special provisions for the Cuban people as political refugees. Then in 1980, Castro removed restrictions on leaving Cuba, so another wave of Cubans came to the U.S. Just because the Cubans came to the U.S. does not mean acceptance was abundant. Puerto Ricans are a mixture of Caucasian and African American ancestry. Puerto Ricans are United States citizens, but they still

experience racial discrimination because of color (Franklin, 1995). Puerto Rico continues to have ongoing political troubles with the United States, and many feel Puerto Rico needs to become the 51st state. Puerto Ricans are not allowed to vote in presidential elections under the Constitution even though citizenship is held. Puerto Ricans are subject to the power of the United States Congress yet have no political rights (Roman, 2002). Most Mexicans began to come north to find work in the 1980s (Franklin, 1995). There has been a huge influx of Mexican immigrants into the U.S. Two-thirds of immigrants arrive in the states of Texas, Florida, California, and New York. From these states, the immigrants spread out in all directions (Kukathos, 2008). Many people express concerns because of the high numbers of Mexicans coming to the U.S. There is a lot of fear of Mexicans taking jobs and money from people born in the U.S. Kukathos (2008) declared, “They are taking the places of the old who are dying, the young who are leaving, and the locals who refuse to take the low-paying, menial jobs that abound” (p. 66).

Many Americans have differing views of Hispanic immigrants because of the language and illegal immigration debate. Many have expressed frustration with displaying everything in English and Spanish. The fact that many signs and communications are in Spanish and English encourages some racial tension (Wolfe, 1998). Most Americans support legal immigration but oppose illegal immigration. For example, public opinion data collected in 1998 showed that 73% of Americans would oppose denying benefits of health and educational support to legal immigrants, but 24% would agree to it. However, the views are divided evenly between those who feel government should help illegal immigrants with health care and educational support

(Wolfe, 1998). Wolfe (1998) noted, “Illegal immigrants come from everywhere—they arrive at the Kennedy Airport just as they cross the Rio Grande at night—but most middle-class Americans associate illegal immigration with Mexican immigration” (p. 147).

Even though Hispanics still experience a great deal of racism, they are increasingly represented in the government. Henry Cisneros and Federico Pena were on former President Bill Clinton’s Cabinet. Herman Badillo was the first Puerto Rican elected to Congress, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen was the first Cuban American elected to Congress (Franklin, 1995). Sonia Sotomayor, appointed in 2009, is the first Hispanic on the Supreme Court. Sotomayor’s appointment to the Supreme Court is a notable step for Hispanics. President Obama feels Sotomayor brings empathy and understanding to the court (Babbin, 2009).

Theories of Racism

All research is guided by a theoretical perspective. High quality research is done by using a theoretical base to guide the collection and analysis of data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). There are many theories of racism. The theories of racism examined in this literature review are deficiency theories, bias theories, and structural theories. The deficiency theories put the responsibility on the minority groups (Conyers, 2002). Bias theories hold the majority groups responsible (Conyers, 2002). Structural theories question the need for social justice (McDowell & Jeris, 2004). The theory that lends itself to this study is the Social Identity Theory (SIT). Kimsey (2009) stated, “The theory states that individuals will evaluate themselves and others according to the group they are

affiliated with” (p. 2). An examination of the theories made the researcher aware of the theoretical framework that will help shape the study on the perceptions of racism.

Deficiency Theories. Deficiency theories are based on the concept that the status of minority groups is a result of some biological, structural, or cultural deficiency (Barrera, 1974, 1979). Deficiency theories place the blame on the minority groups. The structure of minority groups’ attitudes and values are often blamed. For example, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, in 1965, declared that African American families are weak because of male role confusion (Conyers, 2002). Samuel Morton was the first documented scientist who felt a correlation between skull size and intelligence existed. Morton developed the polygenesis theory that stated each race was created separately with specific characteristics (Stanton, 1960). Wolpoff and Caspari (1997) stated, “In the 19th century, before Darwin and before the acceptance of biological evolution, polygenism was particularly popular in America because of its implications for the status of African slaves” (p. 77). The theory was used to bring acceptance to slavery. Darwin popularized the idea that the strong will survive (McGrath, 1997). Deficiency theories also stress that there can be deficiencies in the structure of groups, such as weak family structures or attitudes and values from ethnic minority groups (Conyers, 2002).

Bias Theories. Bias theories focus on the prejudice and discrimination experienced by an ethnic minority group or groups. The bias theories put the blame on the dominant group. The White Anglo majority is held accountable for the prejudice and discrimination placed on racial minority groups (Conyers, 2002). Ogbu’s (1987, 2003) cultural ecological theory (CET) explains that African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans feel one’s identity is opposed to Caucasians. The theory states that cultural

mismatches are at the center of minority underachievement. The CET is one of the most influential bias theories of the times (O'Connor, Hill, & Robinson, 2009). The social identity theory states that the amount a person identifies with ones' own group determines the discrimination one experiences (Kimsey, 2009). Bias theories focus on racial inequalities.

Structural Theories. Structural theories focus on racial inequalities in relation to social structure. The Marxist theory is focused on class inequality. The theory focuses on discrimination in the workplace (Conyers, 2002). Critical race theory began in the 1970s with legal scholars, namely Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado. The theory explains that racism is normal and experienced regularly by people of color. The theory challenges the lack of social justice (McDowell & Jeris, 2004). Although there are differences between structural theories, all of the theories examine racial discrimination.

Social Identity Theory. Social identity theory (SIT) appears to be the most useful for this study. SIT originated with Tajfel's (1978) work on group distinctions. SIT involves social categorization, social identity, and social comparison. Back and Solomos (2000) stated,

I mean here the great collective social identities which we thought of as large-scale, all encompassing, homogeneous, as unified collective identities, which could be spoken about almost as if they were singular actors in their own right but which, indeed, placed, positioned, stabilized, and allowed us to understand and read, almost as a code, the imperatives of the individual self: the great collective social identities of class, of race, of nation, of gender, and of the West. (p. 146)

The individual person is in a certain category based on race and identifies with the group. Social comparisons occur based on the group one is a part (Eller, 1996). Goar (2007) stated, “The theory suggests that personal identity is highly differentiated and based, in part on membership in social categories” (p. 537). SIT examines the idea of difference and the stereotypes that often arise. Social Identity Theory stands on the basis that a person’s social identity plays a part in racism (Kimsey, 2009).

Social Identity Theory refers to the process by which people define self-concept based on membership in a particular group (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Markus & Cross, 1990). SIT will be used to guide the study and analysis because the participants may identify with a certain group based on ones’ race. The study will look at the participants’ perceptions of racism. A salient social category functions psychologically to persuade one’s perceptions, actions, and treatment by others (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Social identity is often determined by social interactions. In-group stereotypes and social norms need to be grounded in social consensus before becoming effective guides for in-group behavior (Haslam, 1997; Haslam, Turner, Oakes, McGarty, & Reynolds, 1998). Group norms have a strong significance for the group members. Group norms hold a frame of reference by which the world is perceived (Ukwuegbu, 2008). SIT should prove to be invaluable in the study of racism and the perceptions held by participants of different ethnic groups.

Racism in Schools

Student performance and emotional well-being. Research indicates that racial tensions and stereotypes impact how a child feels that one can learn (Beswick, 1990; Bankston & Zhou, 2002; Raver, 2003). Poor social well-being can lower cognitive

ability and promote personality disorders (Raver,2003). Educational institutions must work hard to bring about equality between all populations. All social institutions must change the way people view race (Graves, 2001). Sometimes students' perspectives and beliefs are devalued in the classroom. Making a student feel unheard is generally not the intention of most teachers. However, at times teachers inflict values and opinions that are not supported by the students. The damage emotionally can be great for some students. The student may withdraw socially, and school performance can be hindered (Brooks & Thompson, 2005). Paley (1989) stated,

The challenge in teaching is to find a way of communicating to each child the idea that his or her special quality is understood, is valued, and can be talked about. It is not easy, because we are influenced by the fears and prejudices, apprehensions and expectations, which have become a carefully hidden part of every one of use. (p. xx)

Student achievement. Continued underachievement with minority students is a serious problem facing the United States schools today (Bankston & Zhao, 2002). The at-risk student has inadequate educational outcomes. The term at-risk has become synonymous with ethnic minority students (O'Connor, Hill, & Robinson, 2009). The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was signed into law in January 2001 by President Bush. NCLB has been a focal point of education reform. The NCLB seeks to improve education for disadvantaged students, improve achievement for all, and increase accountability for schools. The law states that all students' grades 3-8 are tested annually in reading and math and once in high school while making adequate yearly progress (AYP). The students must be proficient in math and reading by 2013-2014 (Raudenbush,

2004). Schools that do not meet AYP for five years must go through some restructuring by the district. Advocates of the NCLB Act feel it appropriately assesses progress in education and maintains accountability. People who oppose the act are ready to get back to a system that reflects a better curriculum (Education Week, 2009).

Test scores reflect far more than just academic ability. The test scores include student and family backgrounds, health, socioeconomic status, previous experiences, and cultural factors. Test scores vary by race. It is difficult for many racially diverse schools to meet AYP. In most states, Caucasians score between half and three-quarters of a standard deviation higher than minority students on standardized tests (Haretos, 2005). A range of national longitudinal data reports found that there are big gaps in test scores between African Americans and Caucasians, and Hispanics and Caucasians (see Teachman, Paasch, & Carver, 1996; Velez, 1989; Warren, 1996; White & Kaufman, 1997). These studies also show that African Americans and Hispanics are at an extreme disadvantage in relation to dropout rate and grade point average (O'Connor et al., 2009). Achievement gaps of Native Americans have not been widely studied due to the small population size. However, dropout rates of Native Americans are the largest among ethnic minority groups (O'Connor et al., 2009).

Researchers found that Caucasian and African Americans start off at the same academic level when entering school, but gaps increase as students progress through school. Asians are generally high performing in school. Researchers found that Asian parents highly value education, and therefore, Asian students do well (O'Connor et al., 2009). O'Connor et al. (2009) found, "Recent National Assessment of Educational Progress scores, however, suggest that the achievement of Asian Americans is

comparable to that of Whites on some measures and exceeds White performance on others” (p. 4). High achievement of Asian Americans does not include Asian subgroups, particularly South Asian descent. Moreover, research shows that school resources and teacher quality do have an impact on student achievement but do not explain the reasons for racial gaps in achievement (O’Conner et al., 2009). O’Conner et al. (2009) argued, “Blacks and Latinos are more likely to find themselves in racially isolated schools that suffer with inadequate resources, particularly with regard to access to more rigorous courses and lower quality teachers” (p. 24).

Discipline. The treatment of minority students in schools has long been a topic for researchers. Bireda (2002) stated, “According to a variety of data, African Americans students, particularly males, receive a disproportionate amount of school disciplinary actions and referrals (p. 1). Social Identity Theory supports the idea social behavior, whether acceptable or not, is defined by the social identity of one’s race (Yardley & Honess, 1987).

Often, teachers misinterpret students’ cultural differences as misbehavior. Bazron, Osher, and Fleischman (2005) noted, “Several statistical studies have established that compared with their Caucasian peers, minority students are suspended from school more frequently and for longer durations, punished more severely, and disproportionately referred for restrictive special education services” (p. 83). A study examining suspension rates found that Hispanic students were more likely to get suspended than Caucasian students, but less likely than African American students. A national study done found that expulsion and suspension rates were highest for African American (35%) and American Indian (38%) students. Hispanic expulsion and suspension rate was next with

20%, Caucasian (15%) and Asian American (13%) students being expelled and suspended the least (Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). Minority students' behaviors are often perceived as sinister whereas Caucasian behaviors are often perceived as naïve. Some Caucasian teachers noted being openly scared of African American students (Gadsden et al, 2009).

Racial conflicts. Race and cultural differences are reasons some students do not feel safe in school. Wessler (2003) declared, "Students in middle school, high school, and even college consistently report that verbal harassment based on physical appearance, sexual orientation, academic ability, physical and mental disability, socioeconomic status, gender, religion, race, and ethnicity is pervasive" (p. 14). Racial bullying can occur very easily in a school setting. The people doing the bullying simply do so unaware to an adult. Minority students are at a high risk of experiencing racial bullying. Racial bullying can be in the form of racial slurs, putdowns, jokes, stereotyping, or prejudice. Racial bullying often begins as early as preschool, with parents passing the action on to the children (Coy, 2001). Violence has become common in many schools. Dalton and Howe (2000) stated, "Indeed, violence in schools run the gamut: homicide, assaults causing serious injuries, minor physical confrontations such as pushing, the possession of weapons, and verbal abuse including teasing and sexual and racial harassment" (p. 23). Posting signs of White supremacy symbols and shoving someone in the hallway are now considered violent acts. Students who are different are targeted. Racial minority youth who are marginalized are more prone to academic problems, delinquency, and violent activities (Beswick, 1990; Traore, 2008).

Furthermore, African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans generally come from low economic backgrounds, live in low income communities, and are more vulnerable to the negative aspects of society. The factors mentioned above often lead to self-destructive behaviors, such as gang involvement (Brinson, Kottier, & Fischer, 2004). Traore (2008) noted, "...both immigrant and native-born students of color may also encounter prejudices, stereotyping, and racism that have negative impacts on their self-esteem, mental health, and academic achievement" (p. 10). It is important for educators to be aware of the racial conflicts that occur in schools and be prepared to combat against it.

Programs in Schools

Culturally responsive education. Educators can no longer sit around and expect racism in school to go away. Racism must be addressed head on. Culturally responsive education is a powerful approach to combat racism. The use of cultural knowledge, performance styles, and previous experiences of ethnically diverse students makes learning more relevant and effective (Gay, 2002). Culturally responsive education will give students a more connectedness to the schools while reducing behavior issues, and creating more learning.

Administrators have a significant responsibility in making the school a culturally sensitive place. One should work hard to eliminate any school factors that put ethnic minority students at risk for behavior issues (Bireda, 2002). Administrators need to allow opportunities for the faculty to be trained on racism, prejudice, and culturally responsive education. It is also important for teachers to allow students to discuss race and social justice. In the diverse world today, students should be encouraged to bring up topics

about diversity and understanding. Every student should be treated as equal and feel that he or she is valued (Brooks & Thompson, 2005). Parents also need to be a part of the process. Race engulfs ethnicity, culture, and histories. Parents need to be educated on the racism patterns that exist and introduced to strategies that will create sensitivity for all involved (Hein, 2004). Many programs have been put in place to aid schools in being more culturally responsive. The AVID program in San Diego, California shows how schools can avoid tracking ethnic and language minority students (Mehan, Villanueva, Hubbard, & Lintz, 1996). Another program that allows students to connect with teachers by having a lower student teacher ratio is Project STAR in Tennessee (Finn, Gerber, Achilles, & Boyd-Zaharias, 2001). Culturally responsive education can be used with discipline as well. One school district in the Navajo Nation out west incorporated tradition and implemented a Sweat Lodge Program for students with behavior problems (Osher, Dwyer, & Jackson, 2004).

Anti-racist education. Advocates for anti-racist education feel it is necessary for every institution and school to look at anti-racist education (Asante, 2003). Anti-racist education addresses stereotypes, bias, prejudices, and discrimination. Advocates of anti-racist education feel it addresses the real concerns of the racial minorities (Mansfield & Kehoe, 1994). Anti-racist perspective addresses intergroup equity, educational disadvantage, racism, critical analysis, and equal rights. Just like multicultural education, anti-racist education supports teaching heritage languages while student teamwork and conversations are encouraged. According to anti-racist education, bias, tracking, and assessment restrictions should be removed from the curriculum. Anti-racist education was developed in the United Kingdom and United States in the early 1970s. Studies are

being conducted to inform educators how to provide curriculums from multiple cultural perspectives. Bullock (2005) investigated early learning programs in Fiji, and Gilliard and Moore (2007) investigated tribal education programs on the Flathead Indian Reservation (Gilliard, Moore, & Lemieux, 2007). Anti-racist and basic education are combined in a Mexican migrant farming community in rural Wyoming to ensure students have a sense of self-worth, belonging, identity, and achievement (Gilliard et al, 2007). Anti-racist education has not been highly criticized, but some have considered the program to be too political with critics noting that the program can have negative results (Mansfield & Kehoe, 1994).

Multicultural education. Multicultural education, like anti-racist education, emphasizes heritage languages, and student collaboration and dialogue are encouraged. Multicultural education addresses intergroup harmony, underachievement, prejudice, equal opportunity, and pride in diversity and cultural heritage (Mansfield & Kehoe, 1994). D'Souza (1995) stated, "Many multicultural advocates seek a complete renovation of the curriculum, not to eliminate Western influence but to promote among students an enhanced respect for all cultures" (p. 21). Advocates state that multicultural education is necessary so that students will be successful in the global economy because the diverse population improves intergroup relations, and education is better when presented from different perspectives. Some critics claim that multicultural education leads students to a set of beliefs without allowing for one's own thoughts (Sowell, 1993). Other critics claim that multicultural education was implemented to reinforce the status quo (Mansfield & Kehoe, 1994). In 1990 National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) required institutions to incorporate multicultural elements into

admissions, professional studies, field experiences, and minority faculty recruitment. Many universities such as Boston University, Clark College, Indiana University, and University of Southern California have multicultural education programs. Still, there are many secondary schools that lack multicultural education policies and implementation plans (Huerta, 1999).

Peace education/global education. Over the years, there has been a reduction in peace education. This philosophy instills the need for a safe and sustainable environment. It shows students the need for nonviolence, love, and compassion for others. Peace education also addresses the violence that seems to be a dominate form of expression in society today. There are many different programs of peace education. Cook (2008) stated, “Both collections define peacemaking as mainly an interpersonal experience, resulting in personal conflict, racism, gender, and sexual exclusions, and environmental degradation” (p. 890). Many advocates say peace education is needed for diversity education, violence prevention, civic studies, and problem solving. At this time, peace education has become synonymous with community safety. Peace education is often embedded in global education in today’s curriculums (Cook, 2008). In classrooms at Buena High School in Sierra Vista, Arizona, students are given the opportunity to study and discuss recent United States immigration policies openly in class. The students role play and participate in group projects to gain a better understanding of different perspectives on immigration (Graseck, 2009). Global issues are taught at Mountain View High School in Stafford, Virginia, and world trade is examined at Hudson High School in Massachusetts. Classroom discussions on major issues are at the top of the curriculum list at Winamac Community High School in Winamac, Indiana (Graseck, 2009).

Students certainly have opinions about issues that are happening in the world. Teachers need to encourage appropriate dialogue through which students can respectfully debate policies and issues in the world. Structuring discussions allow the students to look beyond the classroom and into the global world (Graseck, 2009). Anti-bullying and conflict resolution strategies play a big part in peace education (Cook, 2008). The Hudson River Playback Theatre in New Paltz, New York incorporates anti-bullying programs to give students a safe environment to share bullying experiences (Salas, 2005). Zhao (2009) declared, “As institutions charged with the responsibility for preparing future citizens, schools must educate students to become competent citizens of the global village” (p. 60).

Need for Study

The study examined the high school minority students and high school teachers’ perceptions of racism in a rural high school setting. The literature demonstrates that racism remains prevalent in schools today and that educators need assistance in combating racism. The literature is clear that students who deal with racism have academic, social, emotional, and physical problems.

This study uncovered where and how racism exists within the school. Often times, the administrators’ and teachers’ behavior in the classroom is the hidden curriculum (Paley, 1989). The ethnic minority students’ and the high school teachers’ perceptions of racism in a high school setting was discovered. The study may likely stimulate discussions among educators about how to combat racism in schools. My goal was to discover if racism occurred and how to help students who might be experiencing racism. I used Social Identity Theory (SIT) as the theoretical lens that drove the research.

When one's in-group is negatively assessed in comparison to an out-group, perceptions of negative social identity may appear (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The study can be used to improve the quality of education of ethnic minority students. Paley (1989) stated, "The children have much to teach us, if we but stop and listen" (p. 136).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to investigate how minority students and high school teachers felt about and perceived racism in a high school setting and to stimulate discussions among educators about how best to combat racism in schools. Beswick (1990) maintained, "Racism is a developed set of attitudes that include antagonism based on the supposed superiority of one group or on the supposed inferiority of another group, premised solely on skin color or race" (p. 1). The research suggests that racism is the feeling that one race is superior over another race (Franklin, 1995). Racism can be covert and overt, and intentional and unintentional when it saturates a school (Oakley-Smith, 2008). Racism continues to play a part in society, and many people of different cultures and backgrounds encounter racial issues at school and work (Jackson, 2000). Often people do not consider themselves to be racist if things are said in a joking manner, even if the words spoken are hurtful (Pennino, 2007). Schools should be safe places where all people are judged for his or her character, not ones' race or ethnicity (Graves, 2001). Racism has been a serious issue and concern in society and the educational arena.

A qualitative approach was used to explore 9th through 12th grade minority students' and 9th through 12th grade teachers' perceptions of racism in a rural Georgia high school. A phenomenological design was used to gain understanding of the participant's point of view of the racism phenomenon. Purposeful sampling was used in the study. Minority students who were enrolled at the high school and teachers employed at the high school completed a survey (see Appendix D & E). From the survey results, data was collected through semi-structured interviews (see Appendix F). Student and teacher journaling was used as well to gain a window into when the participants felt racist

situations occurred, how situations were perceived, and how and why incidences were responded to by others in the building. Participants were asked to produce one journal entry a week for a period of nine weeks. The participants included in the journals what they experienced with racism that week as well as what they learned about themselves. Often educators cannot respond to situations that are not apparent. By gaining understanding of the participants' views on racism, I intended to elicit direction for educators on how to help students cope with racism.

Design

A qualitative approach is employed when one wants to have a better understanding of human behavior and experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007). Quality is the nature of something. Qualitative inquiry focuses on the meaning of things (Maanen, Dabbs, & Faulkner, 1982). Creswell (2007) noted, "Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 37). Moreover, qualitative research interprets a reality that helps one understand the human condition (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I was the human instrument, and data was collected through observation, surveys, interviews, and journaling. Maxwell (1996) stated, "In a qualitative study, you are interested not only in the physical events and behavior that is taking place, but also in how the participants in your study make sense of this and how their understandings influence their behavior" (p. 17).

One of the strengths of qualitative research is that it focuses on naturally occurring events in normal settings so that the researcher can get a handle on real life

experiences. A second strength of qualitative inquiry is the data provides rich descriptions within a ring of truth that affects the reader (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Data collected over a sustained period of time makes qualitative research powerful for examining any process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I collected data on racial perceptions for nine weeks. Themes emerged and were identified through the data analysis process. The study explored and analyzed the themes to gain an understanding of the participants' points of view.

A phenomenological design was used to determine the shared perceptions the participants have about racism. Stewart and Mickunas (1990) expressed, "For the phenomenologist, the perceived world is the real world" (p. 100). The design was appropriate for the study because the purpose was to capture the voices of the participants about this particular phenomenon (i.e., racism) (Creswell, 2007). Ihde (1977) maintained, "Phenomenology calls on us to pretend that what we have as primary, as first given, are these immediate experiences, and to look carefully at them, perhaps more carefully than ever before" (p. 34). Through this design, I better understand the participants' feelings and experiences of racism in their lives. Phenomenologists believe that there are numerous ways for interpreting experiences through interactions with others, and the meaning of our experiences make up reality (Greene, 1978). The participants' behaviors were monitored and stories were collected to gain knowledge of the participants' perceptions of racism. Gaining knowledge of racial perceptions, situations, and encounters allows one to determine strategies and interventions that can be used to help when dealing with racism.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the perceptions that 9th-12th grade minority students have about racism?
2. What are the perceptions that 9th-12th grade teachers have about racism?
3. How do 9th-12th grade minority students and 9th-12th grade teachers' perceptions of racism compare and contrast?

Social Identity Theory (SIT) suggests that self-concept is a basic human need.

Individuals respond to threats to one's identity in a variety of ways which enable one to maintain a positive or negative view of self or reference group (Phinney, Chavaria, & Tate, 1992). It is very appropriate for this study to look through the theoretical lens of SIT. Membership in one's ethnic group has shown to be more salient among ethnic minorities than majority counterparts, which plays an important role in the formation of self-concept (Miville, Koonce, Darlington, & Whitlock, 2000; Phinney et al., 1992; Tajfel, 1981). By examining the perceptions minority high school students and high school teachers have on racism through SIT, true understanding can be gained of racism in schools.

Site

The study was held in a small rural northeast Georgia high school. The high school is the only one in the small county. The county is made up of one primary, one elementary, one middle, and one high school. One group of participants in the study was 9th through 12th grade minority students. The students ranged from 14 to 18 years of age. The total enrollment for the school year 2010-2011 in the high school was 849, with 22 Asian, 28 African Americans, 50 Hispanic, 0 American Indian/Alaska Native, and 3 Multi-racial students. There was a total of 103 minority students (male = 56, female = 7)

(Power School, 2010). The racial minority students at the high school composed 13% of the total population (A. Hopkins, personal communication, August 25, 2010). During the study, the high school had 849 9-12th graders. The county where the high school is located had 2,925 students total.

The high school is the only non-Title 1 School in the county. However, the school qualifies for Title I services based on the free and reduced meals percentage. Every student in the school is provided a handbook, and the handbook includes all the policies and procedures the students must adhere to. The discipline section outlines the school dress code and bullying policies. The school was chosen for the study because I taught many of the minority students in an English Language Learner (ELL) setting in the lower grades. An already established relationship with students proved to give the researcher a cooperative environment in which to conduct the study. Also, being a teacher in the same system where the study was conducted allowed the researcher easy access to the research site.

The high school was built in 2000 and is a beautiful state of the art school. There is only one trailer which houses the alternative school/in-school suspension area. The trailer can house up to 18 students. There are 68 staff members to facilitate student success with 39 faculty members being male and 29 female. The faculty and staff are 100% Caucasian. One principal and two assistant principals are employed at the high school. There are presently one full time and one part time counselor, and one graduation coach. There is one school resource officer and one media specialist. The faculty holds many advanced degrees. The degrees earned are 22% bachelor, 45% masters, 21% specialists, and 3% doctorate (A. Hopkins, personal communication, August 27, 2010).

The school offers many academic classes to the students, such as math, science, English, reading, and social studies. Other classes are offered, such as art, band, woodshop, drafting, home economics, junior reserve officer training corps (JROTC), agriculture class, and auto tech. Other classes offered are physical education, technology, health occupations, business communications, and driver's education.

Many advanced placement classes are offered for academically advanced students. Spanish, French, and English language learner classes are also offered. The Students With A Purpose (SWAP) program is available after school for students to receive help in any area needed academically. Funding for this program is received through a grant. The grant must be applied for every three years (C. Bray, personal communication, August 4, 2009).

Participants

The participants were selected from a rural high school in northeast Georgia. Each participant was selected through purposeful sampling due to his or her minority status or teacher employment. Creswell (2007) noted, "This means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (p. 125). The minority students and teachers were identified by retrieving a list of each population from the assistant principal. Surveys were used to identify minority students and teachers who are impacted by racism (see Appendixes D & E).

The State of Georgia is a member of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. The WIDA Consortium developed English Language Proficiency Standards (ELP), which address the needs of English Language Learners on

the road to becoming proficient in the English language. WIDA developed standards and performance indicators for all members to follow. WIDA partnered with the Center for Applied Linguistics for test development and MetriTech, Inc. for printing, distributing, scoring, and reporting of all ACCESS test (Gottlieb, Cranley, & Cammilleri, 2007). The school involved in the study gives the ACCESS test to all English Language Learner (ELL) students every year. In order to assure validity of any participant who is an ELL student, I obtained the ACCESS scores of the ELL participant. The scores were gathered from the assistant principal who retrieved the scores from the participants' permanent records. According to the WIDA Performance Definitions, students who score on tier 4 or above are considered to be proficient enough in the English language to assure validity of data collected. Starting at tier 4 and going to tier 6 are expanding, bridging, and reaching in relation to the English language. The WIDA Performance Definitions (Appendix A) include the definitions of how English language learners process, understand, produce, and use the language (Gottlieb et al., 2007).

There are a total of 103 minority students (male = 56, female = 47) attending the high school under study. The total enrollment in the high school is 849 with 28 African Americans, 22 Asians, 50 Hispanics, 0 American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 3 Multi-racial students (Power School, 2010). A total of 44 students participated in the initial step in the study. That means 43% of the minority students at the high school filled out the survey. Out of the 44 who completed the survey, a total of 28 marked five or more answers "disagree" or "no opinion" indicating that he or she must have something to say about racism and was therefore selected to be interviewed. That means that 64% of those who completed a survey were interviewed and kept journals to gain an understanding of

the perceptions of racism. Tables 1 and 2, show the grades and ethnic groups of the study's student participants.

Table 1

Participants Who Completed the Survey

Grade	Hispanic	Asian	African American	Multiracial	Total
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)
9 th	7(0.16)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	7(0.16)
10 th	6(0.14)	0(0.0)	3(0.07)	0(0.0)	9(0.20)
11 th	5(0.11)	3(0.07)	3(0.07)	0(0.0)	11(0.25)
12 th	7(0.16)	6(0.14)	4(0.09)	0(0.0)	17(0.39)
Totals	25(0.57)	9(0.20)	10(0.23)	0(0.0)	44(1)

Note. n= number.

Table 2

Participants Who Were Interviewed and Kept Journals

Grade	Hispanic	Asian	African American	Multiracial	Totals
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)
9 th	3(0.11)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(0.11)
10 th	5(0.18)	0(0.0)	2(0.07)	0(0.0)	7(0.25)
11 th	4(0.14)	1(0.04)	3(0.11)	0(0.0)	8(0.28)
12 th	4(0.14)	2(0.07)	4(0.14)	0(0.0)	10(0.36)
Totals	16(0.57)	3(0.11)	9(0.32)	0(0.0)	28(1)

Note. n = number.

Female students vs. male students. Table 3 shows that the number of females who completed the survey was greater than the number of males. The number of females who completed the survey was 27 while the number of males was 17. Females made up 61% while the males comprised 39%, which is a difference of 22%. By completing the

survey, the females in all three minority groups had a higher participation percentage than the males. Hispanic and Asian females participated at a 12% (female = 56%, male = 44%) greater rate than the male counterparts, but the African Americans females participated at a 60% (female = 80%, male = 20%) greater rate than the African American males.

Table 3

Females and Males Who Completed the Survey

Grade	Female n(%)	Male n(%)	Total n(%)
9 th	4(0.09)	3(0.07)	7(0.16)
10 th	6(0.14)	3(0.07)	9(0.20)
11 th	5(0.11)	6(0.14)	11(0.25)
12 th	12(0.27)	5(0.11)	17(0.39)
Totals	27(0.61)	17(0.39)	44(1)

Note. n = number.

The percentage of minority females who were interviewed was far greater than the minority males, which is displayed in Table 4. The total females who participated in the interview were 19 while the total males were 9. The percentage of females was 68% while the percentage of males was 32%, which is a difference of 36%. The number of females interviewed in all three minority groups was greater than the male participants who were interviewed. There were 12% more Hispanic females interviewed than male Hispanics (female = 56%, male = 44%), 78% more African American females interviewed than males (females = 89%, male = 11%), and 34% more Asian females interviewed than males (female = 67%, male = 33%).

Table 4

Females and Males Interviewed

Grade	Female n(%)	Male n(%)	Total n(%)
9 th	2(0.07)	1(0.04)	3(0.11)
10 th	6(0.21)	1(0.04)	7(0.25)
11 th	4(0.14)	4(0.14)	8(0.28)
12 th	7(0.25)	3(0.11)	10(0.36)
Totals	19(0.68)	9(0.32)	28(1)

Note. n = number.

Teacher participants. There are 68 (male = 39, female = 29) teachers employed at the high school under study. All the teachers employed at the high school are Caucasian. Thirty one (male =17, female = 14) teachers agreed to participate in the study and completed the survey. Out of the 31 (46%) that completed the survey three (10%) proved to have something to say about racism and were invited to participate in the interview process and keep a journal. The three (male = 1, female = 2) teacher participants proved to have something to say about racism by marking five or more “disagree” or “no opinion” answers on the survey.

Data Collection

Before collecting data, I gained approval from Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix G). IRBs are committees that review research on human subjects at colleges, universities, and other places where research takes place (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I also gained approval from the superintendent of the school system to conduct the study (Appendix H). After gaining IRB approval and district approval, the process of collecting data began. Data was collected for a nine week period

beginning October 21, 2010 and ending January 13, 2011. Consent forms (see Appendix I) were given to the student participants (over 17), teacher participants (see Appendix J), and parents of students who were ages 14 through 17 (see Appendices K & L). The students that were age 14-17 completed an assent form (see Appendix M). The informed consent forms can contribute to the empowering of the participants (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The teachers were given the form at a faculty meeting where I explained the process and reason for the study. The minority students were given the form at a special meeting where the inquiry was reviewed and the reason for the study shared. The forms with the researcher's contact information were sent home with the students so that parents could ask questions as needed. Participants were assured that the study is voluntary and will not affect school or work experience. The forms are very clear that at any time if someone decides to stop participating in the study, all of his or her data will be destroyed and removed from the results. All the forms explain clearly that the only documents that have the participant's name on them are the survey and consent or assent form. All data that was collected is kept in locked file cabinets. All survey and permission forms are kept in a separate locked file cabinet from all other data collected. The researcher's filing system made retrieval of data easy to locate for analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Forms will be in the locked file for three years after the study is completed before being destroyed. The parent consent (see Appendix L) was translated into Spanish by a certified high school Spanish teacher. Any minority students and high school teachers who agreed to the informed consent or assent were invited to participate in the study.

Once the type of research, site, participants, and access to conduct study was granted, then the process of data collection began. Qualitative inquiry usually lends itself to a longer data collection process than does quantitative. There are many different forms of data collection that prove to be useful in a phenomenological study (Creswell, 2007). The first tool I used in collecting the data was a survey. The surveys were given to the participants to complete. It was determined based on participant responses from the surveys who would be interviewed and keep a journal.

Survey. A list of the minority students enrolled and teachers employed at the high school was retrieved from the school records. The minority students and teachers were given a survey (Appendices D & E) to complete if consent or assent forms were completed and permission to participate was given. The surveys were compiled by referring to the literature review to achieve face validity. The respondents' surveys were confidential to allow for candid answers. The survey questions were guided by the Social Identity Theory (SIT). SIT states that one group discriminates in favor of the group in which they belong and against an out-group (Haslam, 2001). SIT attempts to explain that when one's in-group is negatively assessed in comparison to an out-group, perceptions of negative social identity may surface (Shinnar, 2008). SIT helps to identify the components of racism and is therefore a natural guide for the survey questions. The survey has a total of ten questions. Ten questions were chosen because 10 is enough to get an idea of whether the participant is impacted by racism but not so long that the participant would put the survey aside and not complete. I was careful to make sure the survey questions were short, clear, and do not contain unfamiliar language. Glatthorn and Joyner (2005) stated, "You can prevent the problem of nonresponse by using an

instrument that is very clearly written and easy to complete” (p. 134). Any minority student and teacher who marked five or more disagree or no opinion responses indicated that he or she must have a lot to say about racism and was individually interviewed.

The literature was taken into account when the survey questions were considered. The questions were written in a positive manner and were designed with the intention to avoid leading in any way. As shown in Tables 5 and 6, questions on both the minority student and teacher survey are based on several themes that appear repeatedly in the literature.

Table 5

Student Survey

Please respond by circling the appropriate responses. Note: Please answer according to your opinion, not others.

Vocabulary: Racism is a belief that one race is superior (better) than another race.

1. My school is welcoming and secure to all.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
 2. In situations such as name calling, racial slurs, and jokes, the faculty and staff respond appropriately.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
 3. I am comfortable telling a teacher if a racial conflict occurs at school.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
 4. I have not had to tell a teacher about a racial issue in my high school.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
 5. Racism is discussed openly in class.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
 6. All students receive equal attention from faculty regardless of race.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
 7. There is no stereotyping of other students based on his or her race at my school.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
 8. In our school all races relate well together.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
 9. I feel free to ask people who are using discriminatory language and behaviors to stop.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
 10. Multicultural visuals are displayed at my school.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
-

Table 6

Teacher Survey

Please respond by circling the appropriate responses. Note: Please answer according to your opinion, not others.

Vocabulary: Racism is a belief that one race is superior (better) than another race.

1. My school feels welcoming and secure to all.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
2. Students are made to feel respected by having incidents such as name calling, racial slurs, and jokes dealt with seriously.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
3. I demonstrate knowledge and awareness of the issues of racism.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
4. I continually educate myself about racism and multicultural issues.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
5. I can identify racism when it is occurring.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
6. I feel students receive equal attention by faculty and other students regardless of race.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
7. I avoid stereotyping a student based on his or her race.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
8. In our school all races relate well together.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
9. Staff members consistently use non-discriminatory language and behavior towards ethnic students.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
10. I pay attention to ethnic minority students so I can understand his or her needs.
Agree Disagree No Opinion

Question one on both surveys is, My school is welcoming and secure to all. If a student does not feel respected, then he or she is made to feel unwelcome in one's own school. Hein (2004) argued, "Nobody, in my vision of a global future, should be made to feel bad because of who they are" (p. 5). It is the responsibility of the school faculty and staff to create a school climate that is culturally sensitive and secure for all (Bireda, 2002).

Question two on both surveys is, In situations such as name calling, racial slurs, and jokes, the faculty and staff responds appropriately and students are made to feel respected by having incidents such as name calling, racial slurs, and jokes dealt with seriously. Research indicates racial stereotypes, neglect, and verbal abuse affects one's learning and personality (Graves, 2001). Abuse toward minority students can result in low self-esteem which can produce low academic performance (Bankston & Zhao, 2002).

Questions three and four on the student survey are, I am comfortable telling a teacher if a racial conflict occurs at school and I have not had to tell a teacher about a racial issue in my high school. There is racism in many schools, and students need to be able to tell an adult about a racial conflict. School communities where the issues are addressed up front are more likely to create an atmosphere where all students feel welcome and supported (Coy, 2001). Students should tell a teacher as quickly as possible after the conflict occurs, so the situation can be resolved (Phillips, 2008).

Questions three, four, and five on the teacher survey are, I demonstrate knowledge and awareness of the issues of racism, I continually educate myself about racism and multicultural issues, and I can identify racism when it is occurring. As an educator, one must be aware of what racism is and how to address an issue that arises.

Educators must be armed with strategies and interventions for responding to racial conflict situations (Brinson, Kottier, & Fisher, 2004). Educators must be educated about racism so that they can recognize all the many forms of racism. Racism can be quite obvious if one knows where to look (Pennino, 2007). Zhao (2009) stated, “Cross-cultural competency involves a deep understanding and appreciation of different cultures” (p. 63).

Question five on the student survey is, Racism is discussed openly in classrooms. It is important in high school that students talk and share about racial issues, controversies, and civic issues. Talking about such things prepares students to be responsible citizens. It is an educators’ job to awaken students’ voices on controversial issues (Graseck, 2009). School curriculums often deal with cultures but rarely address social injustice and racism. In most cases as students get older, they learn that comments dealing with race and social injustice are considered rude so they stop bringing topics up in class (Brooks & Thompson, 2005). Talking about racism is not an easy or comfortable topic for anyone, but students and teachers must communicate with each other about racism in order to put an end to it all together (Grimaud, 2008).

Question six on both surveys is, All students receive equal attention from faculty regardless of race. While students need to discuss the many differences between each other due to race, culture, and ethnicity the attention one receives should be the same (Hein, 2004).

Questions seven on both surveys is, There is no stereotyping of other students based on his or her race in our school, and I avoid stereotyping a student based on his or her race. Stereotyping a student based on ones’ race is a big problem in society today. Stereotypes are mental pictures of people who are not the same as oneself. Sometimes

stereotypes are positive, but they are often negative (Franklin, 1995). Stereotyping is very dangerous because it causes one to see all people from a certain race as the same. A person may identify all from one race in a negative way, which can be very harmful to those who are stereotyped (Blum, 2002).

Question eight on both surveys is, In our school all races relate well together. Students from all races must learn to be productive and peaceful. It is the responsibility of the schools to educate students to relate together in order to be competent citizens of the world. Often the lack of knowledge and understanding about other cultures fuels fear (Zhao, 2009). According to Banks and Banks (2001), one of the goals of multicultural education is to help students acquire skills to communicate, understand, and respect people from other diverse groups (Colon- Munoz, Brady, & SooHoo, 2010).

Question nine on both surveys is, I feel free to ask people who are using discriminatory language and behaviors to stop and I have never noticed staff members using discriminatory language and behavior towards ethnic students. Discrimination is when one acts on his or her prejudices. The act of discrimination based on race is usually very emotionally harmful (Franklin, 1995).

Question ten on the student survey states, Multicultural visuals are displayed at my school. To allow children from all ethnic backgrounds and races to feel respected pictures and photos representing different racial groups and multiracial groups should be found on walls in the schools. Multicultural books, games, dolls, and songs should be found in our schools today (Hein, 2004).

Question ten on the teacher survey states, I pay attention to ethnic minority students so I can understand his or her needs. It is very important for educators to be

aware of cultural and racial differences among students. An increasing amount of research shows the importance of educators addressing the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. If there is a cultural disconnect, it can lead to poor self image, poor grades, and discipline problems (Bazron, Osher, & Fleischman, 2005).

Content validity was addressed by reviews of surveys by other professionals in the field (Creswell, 2007). Face validity of the survey was addressed by anchoring the survey questions to the review of literature. Professionals in the field examined the survey questions to confirm content validity. Reviewer A has 37 years experience in education. She holds a Specialist Degree in Educational Administration, Masters in Special Education, and a Bachelor of Science Degree. Her experience ranges from teacher, instructional lead teacher, assistant principal, director of special programs, and special education specialist. As the director of special programs, she was over the ELL program where she worked with many students and families whom are ethnic minorities. Her education and expertise with the ELL program made her an excellent candidate for examining the survey and interview questions to ensure content validity. Reviewer B is a high school assistant principal. She has been an educator for over 20 years and has a Specialist Degree in Leadership. Some of her job responsibilities include curriculum, testing coordination, and discipline at the high school. Her knowledge and experience working with ethnic students and addressing racism through discipline matters made her more than qualified to examine the survey and interview questions. I was careful to instruct the professionals to look for wording that could be leading and any other biases that could affect the results.

I met with Reviewer A first and discussed the study in great detail. Reviewer A examined the surveys and made several suggestions. The original directions for the surveys asked the participants to simply check all statements that apply. Reviewer A suggested that I change the directions by having the participants circle agree, disagree, and no opinion to each statement. The reviewer also felt it was necessary to include a statement in the directions noting that answers should be given according to participants' opinions, not others. I used the word feel often in many of the questions. For example, question three had been, I do not feel comfortable telling a teacher if a racial conflict occurs at school. Reviewer A recommended that the word feel be taken out of the questions. I changed question three to, I am comfortable telling a teacher if a racial conflict occurs at school. Many of the questions were worded negatively. For example, question seven read, Stereotyping other students based on their race is a problem in our school. Reviewer A suggested that all questions be phrased positively in order to promote consistency among responses and to not lead the participants' answers. I changed question seven to read, There is no stereotyping of other students based on his or her race at my school.

Next, I met with Reviewer B and discussed the study in great detail. Reviewer B also reviewed the surveys in order to obtain content validity. Reviewer B made several suggestions such as not using the word "get" in questions six. Question six on the student survey stated that all students get equal attention from faculty regardless of race. I changed it to read, All students receive equal attention from faculty regardless of race. The teacher survey read, I feel students get equal attention by faculty and other students regardless of race. Question six on the teacher survey was changed to, I feel students

receive equal attention by faculty and other students regardless of race. Reviewer B also suggested that the phrase all races be used instead of people of different races. The reviewer made the suggestion simply for grammatical reasons. For example, question eight was changed to, In our school all races seem to relate together well.

During a phone conference with the dissertation committee, a change was suggested for question nine on the teacher survey. The committee noticed that the question was worded to be a double negative. Question nine read, I have never noticed staff members using discriminatory language and behavior towards ethnic students. The question now reads, Staff members consistently use non-discriminatory language and behavior towards ethnic students.

Individual interviews. Interviewing is one of the most powerful ways in which a person tries to understand fellow human beings (Fontana & Frey, 2000). The interview questions (see Appendix F) center around the minority student and high school teachers' perspectives on racism. The interview questions are guided by the social identity theory (SIT). SIT states that people seek to obtain positive self-esteem by differentiating in a positive manner between one's in-group and an out-group, and the search for positive distinctiveness means that people's impression of self is defined by "we" rather than "I" (Haslam, 2001). People identify with various racial, ethnic, and religious groups (Greene, 2004). Therefore, much can be learned by applying SIT to participants' perceptions of racism. The interview was an important part of this qualitative study because it helped the researcher gain insight into how each participant perceives racism in his or her world. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) stated, "Good interviews produce rich data filled with words that reveal the respondents' perspectives" (p. 104). Both genders

and all minority groups were represented in the individual interviews with the students and teachers. Content validity was achieved by having other professionals in the field (i.e. Reviewers A and B) thoroughly review the questions to assure validity. Both reviewers found the questions to be well written and appropriate for the study. During a phone conference with the dissertation committee, a suggestion for change pertaining to the interview questions was mentioned. The committee found question nine about the programs currently at the school to help with the issue of racism no longer was needed. The focus of the study is on the perceptions of the 9th-12th grade minority students and high school teachers. Therefore, the question about the programs at the school is unnecessary. The interview questions are open ended, allowing for a great deal of discussion.

A participant who marked five or more answers “disagree” or “no opinion” on the survey was invited to participate in an individual interview. I explained the reason for the interview and assured confidentiality. Permission via consent (see Appendixes I, J, K, and L) and assent forms (see Appendix M) was obtained to record the interviews before implementing interviews (Creswell, 2007). The interviews were recorded for later transcription. The participants’ answers and comfort level determined the depth of results.

During the interview, I tried to stay within a timeframe, be respectful and courteous, be a good listener, and offer no advice (Creswell, 2007). I started with some questions that were intended to put the participant at ease, for example, what do you like to do in your spare time? During the interview, I responded when necessary to encourage the continuation of the conversation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The first three questions,

which address information about family and friends, were asked to put the participant at ease. Off target talk is not considered a waste of time but rather an investment in the quality of subsequent responses (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Questions four through eight addressed the issues of racism in the schools among peers, students, and educators. Question nine states, Is there any more insight that will help me understand the issue of racism at your school? I asked this question to make sure that the participant has shared everything needed to gain ones true perspective on racism. I was intentional at the end of the interview to thank the participants for their time. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) noted, “Your gratitude is the interviewees’ deserved return for their investment in your research project; it is readily within your power to provide” (p. 91).

Journaling. For the purpose of later document analysis, individual interviewees kept journals for a period of nine weeks. The journal was a written journal, not done electronically. The participants were given a journal and were asked to document personal racial experiences. Participants were instructed to write or draw about any events that took place in relation to racism. The journaling could be about an event or experience that impacted him or her personally, or one he or she witnessed. I instructed the participants to write at least once a week in the journal. I asked the participants to include anything that was learned about oneself through the journaling. I made the participants aware that all journals are confidential and should not be shared with friends or colleagues. Further, the participant was instructed to not use any specific names in the journal.

Journaling may reveal different or similar information than the interviews. Documents support the researchers’ observations and interviews which make the findings

more trustworthy (Creswell, 2007). Beyond corroboration, the journals may raise questions about the direction of the research and encourage the researcher to take new directions with the inquiry. The journals also provide personal information that is unavailable from other sources (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The participants were given the journals individually at the time of the interviews. At that time I explained the reasons and expectations for the journals. I collected the journals at the study site at the end of the nine week period.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is when the data collected are stored, organized, and analyzed. The data was analyzed by using open coding. Strauss (1987) stated, “This is unrestricted coding of the data” (p. 28). Open coding is appropriate when one is searching for common themes within the interviews and journaling (Creswell, 2007). Emerging themes were highlighted and put into color coded categories. Memoing was used in order to gain an understanding of data. I was aware that new themes and issues may continue to emerge during the whole analysis process. Strauss (1987) stated, “Data collection never entirely ceases because coding and memoing continue to raise fresh questions that can only be addressed by the gathering of new data or the examining of previous data” (p. 27). Feedback was retrieved and reviewed to ensure data credibility. Rich data was used by sharing quotes and stories of the students and teachers (Creswell, 2007). Member checking was used to ensure data accuracy. I took parts of the final product to the participants for reviewing to determine accuracy. I was looking for individual stories, feelings, perceptions, and experiences about racism from the minority high school students and high school teachers.

Transcription. I transcribed the individual interviews to ensure credibility so that I did not omit any information. Accuracy of transcriptions was checked by utilizing member checking. The participants were given an opportunity to examine transcripts of which he or she was involved. The participants were given a number to ensure privacy. I listened to the audio recording and read the transcripts repeatedly in order to determine emerging themes that reflected a sense of the participants' feelings and perceptions on racism.

Memoing. I repeatedly reviewed the transcripts in order to determine the developing themes. Creswell (2007) stated, "The theory emerges with help from the process of memoing, a process in which the researcher writes down any ideas about the evolving theory throughout the process of open, axial, and selective coding" (p. 67). Notes were written in the margins of the transcripts and examined. Analytic memos were used to form questions and thoughts about the data. By writing memos (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), I began gathering thoughts which was the beginning of the analysis process (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Self reflective memos were used to show personal thoughts to participants' reactions. Memos allow one to check thoughts. The use of different types of memos helped with identifying bias (Creswell, 2007).

Open coding. Open coding was the first step used to analyze data. Open coding is used when a researcher looks for themes within the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Strauss (1987) noted, "This open coding is done (as some of the case illustrations will show) by scrutinizing the field note, interview, or other document very closely: line by line, or even word by word" (p. 28). As the words and the lines are analyzed, information begins to come to the surface (Strauss, 1987). Repeatedly reading and

listening to the transcripts helped achieve understanding. The research questions were considered when reviewing for patterns, themes, and repeated phrases (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Data was sorted and put into categories for a better understanding. The analysis process involved sorting the data into categories and using color coding to facilitate the process. Developing a list of coding categories after the data was collected was an important part of the analysis. I developed a coding system with a limited number of codes (e.g., 30 or 50), as recommended by Bogdan and Biklen, (2007). I developed charts to outline the similarities and differences that emerged from the participants' statements. The real purpose of coding is to open up the inquiry (Strauss, 1987).

Rich data. Rich data simply means providing data with enough detail to gain a clear picture of what is going on (Maxwell, 1996). Rich data was achieved by the thorough and open ended nature of the interview process. A thick description of the participants' feelings and views was demonstrated by using direct quotes from participant. Everyone has a story to tell, and the participants were no different. Interactions, responses, and body language are all considered rich data. Journaling is also an excellent way to gain rich data in which to categorize and determine patterns. For this reason, the participants kept a journal noting any time he or she was impacted by racism.

Feedback. When the process of coding and analyzing the data was completed, two other professionals in the field of multicultural education reviewed the data for credibility. The first professional is an educator of 37 years experience, with some time spent as the Special Programs Director at the school under study. The second professional has been an educator for over 20 years and is presently a high school assistant principal at the school under study. Both of the professionals examined and

evaluated the themes and patterns found by the researcher and noted whether appropriate. The participants' names were kept confidential from the two professionals. Maxwell (1996) noted, "Soliciting feedback from others is an extremely useful strategy for identifying validity threats, your own biases and assumptions, and flaws in your logic or methods" (p. 94).

Member checking. Member checking is an important technique in data collection because it ensures that the data is accurate and credible according to the participants (Maxwell, 1996). I gave the participants the parts of the study they were involved in for them to review. Each participant reviewed the data for accuracy. Member checking is another way for the researcher to confirm the data is exact (Creswell, 2007) and rules out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what the participants say and the perception had on what is going on (Maxwell, 1996).

Triangulation. Triangulation must be obtained to ensure credibility of the study. When multiple data collection sources and numerous data analysis procedures are used, triangulation occurs (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Triangulation in this study was achieved by using surveys, individual interviews, and participant journaling. Collecting multiple sources of data gives a deeper knowledge of the phenomena of study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I used more than one source of information to determine facts and gain a full understanding of the phenomenon of racism. I also used multiple data analysis procedures, such as member checking, transcription, memoing, open coding, rich data, and feedback.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

Qualitative research, although new to social sciences in 1960, has become a trustworthy and credible approach to research (Creswell, 2007). This study is a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design. All good researchers view the study through a theoretical lens (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The theoretical lens used in this study is Social Identity Theory (SIT). SIT asserts that how strongly a person relates to his or her own group will establish the amount of prejudice one will experience (Kimsey, 2009). SIT suggests that group norms act as frames of reference for the ethnic minority students to view the world (Bridges, 2010). SIT shaped the study of the perceptions high school minority students and high school teachers have on racism, increasing the trustworthiness and credibility of this research.

The criteria for trustworthiness are the combination of credibility, confirmability, dependability, transferability, and authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Certain aspects were considered, and operational techniques were implemented to assure credibility in the study. The study focused on the perceptions minority high school students and high school teachers have on racism. All of the teachers and minority students were selected through purposeful sampling and completed a survey to assure credibility. Transcription of interviews was employed to ensure that I did not omit any information. Member checking was utilized to ensure accuracy of transcriptions. Memoing is the process by which the researcher writes down any ideas about the themes that evolve throughout the open, axial, and selective coding process (Creswell, 2007). I employed different types of memos to check my thoughts and eliminate bias. Feedback was gained to assure credibility. It is important to acquire feedback from others to eliminate validity threats, biases, flaws, and assumptions (Maxwell, 1996). For this reason, two professionals in the

field of multicultural education reviewed the data collected to provide evidence of credibility.

Triangulation is another way to maintain credibility of the study. Triangulation is the use of many sources of data in a study to lead to a fuller understanding of the phenomenon of study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I employed multiple data collection sources such as surveys, interviews, and participant journaling. I also had in place multiple data analysis procedures such as transcription, member checking, memoing, open coding, rich data, and feedback to guarantee credibility.

No data was collected until I obtained Institutional Review Board approval from Liberty University as well as approval from the superintendent of the school in the county where the study took place. I obtained consent or assent forms from all participants before I began the study in order to ensure that the study is trustworthy. All participant information and collected data remains confidential with only the researcher aware of participant identity. In order to maintain trustworthiness, the data is being kept in locked file cabinets and electronic files saved under password protection for up to three years after the study is completed, at which time the data will be destroyed.

Researcher's Perspective

The study examined minority students' and teachers' perspectives on racism in a high school setting. I am presently an English Language Learner (ELL) teacher in a primary and middle school setting and have previously taught ELL in an elementary setting. All ELL students are minorities. The elementary and middle school students shared many concerns and frustrations about racism in the schools. I saw many situations where racism reared its ugly head. It appeared that many of the students who behaved as

racist did so because of parental influence. Working with minority children opens one's eyes to the racism that occurs in schools. Students often feel mistreated by educators and students because of a lack of understanding. One student expressed sadness because his peers felt he did not deserve the same chance for a good life. He could not understand why cultural and geographic birth differences should dictate his chance for happiness in the United States. Students should be able to share openly about racial concerns they may encounter (Brooks & Thompson, 2005).

As a teacher of English Language Learners (ELLs), it was important to put aside previous ideas about racism. I was aware of feelings that some racism does occur in the school. I was careful not to let previous notions about racial issues influence interactions with the participants. Psathas (1973) felt that the phenomenologist must begin the study with silence. I listened to how the participants felt by acting like there was no prior knowledge on the subject (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Maxwell (1996) stated, "In qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument of the research, and the research relationship is the means by which the research gets done" (p. 66). I was diligent in gaining the trust of the participants. Trust is the foundation for gaining full accurate disclosure from the participants. Trust can be gained by showing genuine interest in what the participants are sharing (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Using the SIT as a theoretical background, I looked for the study to stimulate discussion between educators on racism in schools. Educators may gain a better understanding of how minority students feel about racism in order to best work with this population. As a Christian educator, I feel it is important for all educators to have a genuine respect and understanding for other cultures. Paley (1989) argued, "Our children

must grow up knowing and liking those who look and speak in different ways, or they will live as strangers in a hostile land” (p. 132).

Summary

Minority students and high school teachers’ voices were examined through a qualitative study using a phenomenological method of inquiry. I began with a convenience sample of all the teachers and minority students in the school and then purposefully selected participants (students = 28, teacher = 3) who had been impacted by racism. I used surveys, individual interviews, and journaling to gain perspectives of racism. Social Identity Theory suggests that no matter how strongly students identify with peers and significant others, teachers can strongly influence a students’ behavior (Chatzisarantis, Hagger, Wang, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2009).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine the perceptions of racism held by 9th-12th grade minority students and 9th-12th grade high school teachers in a rural Georgia high school. The following research questions were explored:

1. What are the perceptions that 9th-12th grade minority students have about racism?
2. What are the perceptions 9th-12th grade teachers have about racism?
3. How do 9th-12th grade minority students and 9th-12th grade teachers' perceptions of racism compare and contrast?

Purposeful sampling was done by gaining a list of the minority students and all teachers (non-minority) employed at the high school in the study. High school minority students and high school teachers were asked to complete a survey to determine the impact felt by racism. The survey was composed of ten questions. Any participant who marked five or more "disagree" or "no opinion" responses out of the ten were chosen to further participate in the interviews and journaling. Twenty eight out of the 44 minority students and three out of the 31 non-minority teachers who completed the surveys were invited to be interviewed. After the survey results, data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Student and teacher journaling was also done to obtain a view into how the participants view racism. Interviews were transcribed in order to assure credibility. In order to protect the participants' identities, numbers were assigned to each participant. Open coding was used to determine emerging themes in the interviews and

journals. Data was highlighted and sorted into color coded categories to facilitate the data analysis process. I also used memoing in order to determine the developing themes. When the procedure of coding and analyzing the data was completed, two professionals reviewed the data to provide feedback in order to enhance credibility. Member checking with participants was used to confirm the data was accurate. In an attempt to determine the perceptions of racism held by the participants, several prominent themes emerged through the data analysis process. The first theme that emerged was the participants' development of racial perceptions through home life and cultural experiences. The participants' worldview seemed to play a role in how racism was perceived. The second theme that appeared was the participants' perceived awareness of racism and its frequency in the school under study. Participants' opinions and observations on peers behaviors and attitudes concerning racism is the third theme that surfaced from the data analysis. The participants' reaction to racism was the last theme that emerged. The four themes that emerged helped answer the research questions.

Student Portraits

A total of 44 out of 103 minority students participated in the study. Out of the 44 who completed the survey, 28 were chosen to be interviewed and kept journals. In this section, I present the student participants' stories as captured and developed by the researcher. Because I used Social Identity Theory (SIT) as the lens to guide the research, the students have been categorized by race. SIT finds that how strongly a person identifies with his or her own group will determine the amount of discrimination one will face (Kimsey, 2009). Every measure was taken to produce accurate representations of participants' responses. The interviews were repeatedly listened to and transcribed in

order to ensure accuracy. I have left all spelling and punctuation from the journals exactly how it was written by participants, and the language I used within is directly taken from the transcriptions of student responses. Rich data was achieved by using quotes from participants and implementing member checking.

Asian student portraits. A total of nine Asian students filled out the survey with only three fitting the criteria to be interviewed. The three students were interviewed and kept journals. All three students turned in a journal. The demographics of the Asian student participants are provided in Table 7.

Table 7

Asian Participant Demographics

Student	Gender	Grade	Age	Ethnicity
5	Female	12 th	17	Hmong
21	Male	11 th	16	Hmong
26	Female	12 th	17	Hmong

Theme 1: Participants' development of racial perceptions through home life and cultural experiences. The three students all enjoy hanging out with friends. Student 5 enjoys playing video games with friends and family. Student 21 enjoys shopping and texting with friends. Student 26 enjoys reading and cross stitching. All three spoke about being very shy and quiet in the school setting, and the students talked of financial problems at home. The students' ethnicity, culture, and family situations all contribute to their worldviews and perceptions of racism. I already had a relationship established with all three students, so the students appeared to be at ease during the interviews.

Theme 2: Participants' perceived awareness of racism and its frequency.

Student 26 noted, "Racism is where like people discriminating like talk saying bad things about your culture, your language, your overall appearance." All three students shared experiences during which his or her language was mocked and Asian jokes were stated. Student 5 and 26 expressed that minority girls were discriminated against by faculty when it comes to the dress code. Both students feel that female minority students get clothing checked for appropriate length more often than female majority students. Student 5 and 21 expressed that racism is not very common. The surveys and the journals support these students' opinions about the frequency of racial occurrences. Student 5 only made one journal entry out of an opportunity to write during a nine week period, while student 21 only documented three journals entries about racial incidences in the school. However, student 26 felt racist situations were directed at her daily. She spoke of being picked on daily in the parking lot while going to her car. She shared that the boys would always "mock my language and keep telling me I'm a Chinese female dog."

Theme 3: Participants' opinions and observations on peer behaviors and attitudes concerning racism. When asked about how peers perceive racism, all three students spoke of how their friends stand up to those being racist if it goes too far. Student 21 stated, "They just sort of tell them to stop. Other than that they don't really do anything else." Student 26 spoke of how not all the students in the school are racist, just "one out of every 21 of them, so not many." Student 26 spoke of how some of her peers help when racial incidents occur in the school.

Theme 4: Participants' reaction to racism within the study. While all three students expressed that they do not like racism, it appears that racism is dealt with differently by each student. Student 5 spoke of how she shares racist comments or situations with her family. Student 5 gets strength from her parents because she stated, "They don't have their English isn't good, so most people will make fun of them because their English aren't that great." Her family enables her to look beyond the comments and move forward. Student 21 spoke of how racism used to hurt him, but now he just ignores it. Student 26 feels that the racist situations she has experienced have "changed me, and it made me into somebody who seems like I'm really scared to speak sometimes." Student 21 wrote in his journal, "Thinking back racism will always be wherever there is a wide range of ethnicity. So I guess it's something we can't control since it is something that Dwells in the Heart."

African American student portraits. Ten African American students completed the racism survey. Out of the ten who completed the survey, nine participants (male = 1, female = 8) were asked to participate in the follow up interview and journaling. The nine students were from grades tenth (2), eleventh (3), and twelfth (4). Out of those nine there were three (male = 1, female = 2) who did not return the journals, and one student who returned a journal did not have anything written in it. I made several attempts to make contact with these students, but they were unresponsive. The African American demographics are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

African American Participant Demographics

Student	Gender	Grade	Age	Ethnicity
6	Female	10 th	15	Afr. American
7	Female	12 th	17	Afr. American
10	Female	11 th	17	Afr. American
11	Female	11 th	17	Afr. American
13	Male	12 th	18	Afr. American
23	Female	11 th	16	Afr. American
24	Female	12 th	17	Afr. American
25	Female	12 th	17	Afr. American
28	Female	10 th	15	Afr. American

Theme 1: Participants' development of racial perceptions through home life and cultural experiences. Students 6 and 7 talked about having really big families where much time was spent. Student 6 also talked about playing basketball, and Students 13, 24, and 25 noted that he or she was very athletic and enjoyed playing sports. Student 7 loves to go to the library and read. Students 10, 11, 23, 24, and 25 all enjoy listening to music, shopping, and hanging out with friends. Student 10 and 28 spend a lot of time texting, using Facebook, and the computer. Student 13 expressed a love of sleeping, since he spent much time playing sports, going to school, and working. Student number 11 seemed suspicious of the whole process. She talked of being antisocial and stated, "I just don't let people in my space." All of the other students seemed very at ease with the interview process. A person's background including race, culture, and past experiences helps shape his or her perception of racism and the world as a whole.

Theme 2: Participants' perceived awareness of racism and its frequency. The students all spoke of racism as being a certain race not liking another race because of certain characteristics. Student 6 referred to racism as "disrespect where one is not treating others equally because of color." Student 10 stated, "Racism is talking bad about them." Students 24 and 25 noted that racism is judging someone based on color, religion, or beliefs. Student 25 feels that minority students are discriminated in some sports, especially cheerleading. She said, "I guess they don't want some Blacks to outshine others, or either others you know colors or races." Student 6 and 25 both expressed that racism is seen everyday, and student 23 noted that racism occurs often. Students 10, 13, 24, and 28 feel racial occurrences are common. Student 13 stated, "The jokes, yeah, they are pretty common." Student 24 conveyed, "A lot. Very common like if you mix." "Mixing" is the term used by some to identify interracial dating. She went on to talk about a White boy who talked some "trash" about mixing. She also added that the White boy spoke of how he would never date a white girl who had kissed a Black boy. Student 24 declared, "I just act like I don't hear them." She also talked about how students displaying rebel flags were offensive. Students 7 and 11 both stated that racism is not that common in the school. The surveys of students 7 and 11, conflict with their interview responses. According to their surveys, it would appear that the participants felt racism is common in their school. However, the journal entries support the belief that racism is not very common in the school. Student 7 only had three journal entries, and Student 11 had no journal entries over a nine week period. Student 7 expressed how she hears little comments now and then, but not very often. While Student 11 stated, "Every now and then. It's not that common."

Theme 3: Participants' opinions and observations on peer behaviors and attitudes concerning racism. High school students are very aware of how their peers perceive things. In terms of racism, students 6, 7, 10, and 24 talked of friends not liking the racism that occurs in the school. Students 10 and 25 spoke about how relationships are different since President Obama was elected into office. Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th President of the United States on January 20, 2009. When the President began his campaign for presidency, the media began to make his racial, cultural, and ethnic background a topic of discussion. It appeared that the question of his race received more attention than his policies (Kukathas, 2008). His candidacy embodied the difficulty that Americans have in speaking the truth about race and character (Fluker, 2009). In the high school where the study took place, several students noted President Obama's election as being a reason for racial issues. Student 10 stated, "I don't know it's like ever since the whole Obama thing like the school is divided." She went on to say that everyone used to get along, but since Obama was elected President, people changed and stopped talking to everybody. Student 25 declared, "Well, since you know we have a new President I guess they treat us a little different and all." She expressed how the other students say they do not like him because of other things, but she feels it is because he is African American. Student 25 noted that mentioning Obama Care in economics class is prohibited by the teacher. Student 25 feels highly offended by that fact. Student 7 spoke of the Obama jokes that continue to circulate around the school. Obama addressed how the country needs to talk about race issues that have never really been worked through (Fluker, 2009). Students 11, 13, and 23 expressed how his or her peers just "brush it off," "go with flow," and "don't bother with it." Student 13 noted that a lot of times everyone

is joking and laughing together. Student 25 argued, “They all don’t think the same as their friends.”

Theme 4: Participants’ reactions to racism within the study. Reactions to racism by all the African American student participants’ are very similar, except Student 13 who is not affected by racism at all. Student 13 argued, “I mean I know it is there, but I don’t really pay any attention to it.” Students 10 and 28 expressed how racism gets on their nerves. Student 28 wrote, “I mean they need to get over this color thing (you are what you are).” Fighting is the first thing that comes to mind for Student 6 when something racist happens around her or to her. She wrote, “My first thought was to hit him. The same boy that I have problems with said he was going to beat up every nigga in this school.” Students 7 and 25 said that racism causes hurt feelings. Students 7 and 25 expressed how frustrating it is to have a particular teacher not say anything or even participate when racist comments and jokes are made. Student 7 wrote, “And the teacher said NOTHING. And me being 1 of 3 blacks in the class felt alone and offended.” Student 25 even had her parent come to the school, but nothing ever became of it. While Student 11 discussed how racism makes her feel low, like she is not good enough. She argued, “I mean what do you expect when the majority of our school is White, so?” Student 25 spoke of how it is a majority White school, and they just see things differently.

Students 7, 24, and 28 all talked and wrote about an incident that happened between a White male and an African American male. The White male had continually made racial comments, like the “N” word to the African American student and his cousin. A fight broke out, was broken up, and punishment given. Student 24 wrote, “They both

got equal punishment but no action on how it started was really addressed and the boy sister posted on Facebook the south will rise again.” Student 28 wrote that teachers tell the students to stop saying racist stuff, such as the “N” word, but they do not listen. Student 7 wrote about the incident: “A mixture of anger and helplessness. We felt like nothing was going to be done to stop people from saying that word.” When talking about telling teachers about name-calling, Student 6 maintained, “I was told he got talked to, and for like a week I didn’t hear it. Okay, and a week later he started saying it again.” Student 24 stated, “Because it’s like you get In School Suspension (ISS) or something if you cuss and call somebody a “b” word, but if you get called a “Nig***” or something like that nothing happen.” Student 7 noted, “It has never been to that point where I have had to go tell the administrator or anything like that. It has never been to that point yet, but I think it could slowly progress to something like that.”

Hispanic student portraits. A total of 25 Hispanics completed the survey for the study. There was a total of 16 (male = 7, female = 9) students who indicated by survey answers that he or she had something to share about racism. So, the 16 students (9th = 3, 10th = 5, 11th = 4, 12th = 4) were interviewed and kept journals to determine perceptions of racism. Journals were not turned in by five of the students. One of the male students moved before journals were to be turned in, and the other four (male = 2, female = 2) just did not return the journals. One of the students (male) who turned in the journal had nothing written in it. I made repeated attempts at the school under study to obtain unreturned journals. The Hispanic student demographics can be found in Table 9.

Table 9

Hispanic Participant Demographics

Student	Gender	Grade	Age	Ethnicity
1	Female	12 th	18	Mexican
2	Female	11 th	15	Mexican
3	Female	11 th	16	Mexican
4	Male	11 th	16	Mexican
8	Female	11 th	16	Mexican
9	Female	11 th	16	Mexican
12	Female	12 th	18	Mexican
14	Female	10 th	14	Mexican
15	Male	11 th	16	Salvadorian
16	Male	10 th	15	Mexican
17	Female	9 th	14	Mexican
18	Male	11 th	16	Mexican
19	Male	12 th	18	Mexican
20	Male	9 th	14	Mexican
22	Female	11 th	16	Cuban
27	Male	12 th	18	Mexican

Theme 1: Participants' development of racial perceptions through home life

and cultural experiences. Students 2, 3, 14, 15, and 18 all spoke about getting along with everyone and having relationships with all races while students 3 and 4 spoke about only talking to their own race because they relate better. Students 1, 8, 16, and 27 spoke of having very close families with whom they spend lots of time. Student 27 stated, “We are working all the time for everybody, basically.” Students 9 and 12 discussed being in honors classes. Student 12 is a Georgia Merit Scholar and is preparing her path for

college. All the students spoke of hanging out with friends and family, enjoying music, and modern technology, such as texting, video games, and computers. I have a good relationship already established with many of the students. Almost all the students appeared to be very at ease during the interview. One of the female students got very emotional when talking about racism and cried.

Theme 2: Participants' perceived awareness of racism and its frequency. Being asked about racism is a tough question for anyone in high school. Students 1, 2, and 18 spoke of it being when one race feels superior over another race. Students 3, 12, 15, 16, 17, and 20 felt racism had everything to do with not liking someone because of the color of his or her skin. Student 15 declared, "Well I mean it ain't just between the Hispanics and Whites. It's like Blacks and Whites, Hispanics and Blacks and Whites everybody that is not the same color. That's what it is." Student 4 declared, "Not liking another race because of how they are." Students 14 and 27 noted that racism is when certain races hate each other for no reason. Race and religion are the components Student 9 feels make up racism. Students 8 and 22 feel racism is when people say things that are derogatory to others. When asked what racism is, Student 8 simply said, "Verbal." Does society play an important role in racial perceptions? Student 19 argued, "You know one race prioritizes another race because of society." Student 12 conveyed, "Well, I think it is mostly seen when we hit topics like illegal immigration, or like laws that are coming out of our world affairs class. I think people just believe the first thing that they hear."

According to Students 15, 16, and 18, racism was seen at the high school every day. Students 2, 3, 4, 19, and 20 felt racism was seen or heard every week. In her journal Student 2 declared, "This week we've just had problems with some of the White students

call the Mexicans and Blacks names when we pass by in the hallway.” Student 22 noted that racism is common when it comes to name calling, but it is not to the point where it is dangerous. Students 1, 8, 9, 14, 17, and 27 do not feel racism is common at the school. Student 1’s survey and number of journal entries (2) support his opinion that racism is not common in the school. Students 8, 9, 14, 17, and 27 surveys conflict with their opinion of racism not being common in the school, while the number of journal entries (0-2) in the nine week period supports their opinions. Student 1 noted, “It doesn’t really happen a lot. I really haven’t seen much.” Student 9 conveyed, “I mean I don’t see it much because I do have honor classes. And so like most of the people that are racist, they don’t, you know they are not really that smart.” Student 14 stated, “I don’t really see that much racism here.” Student 27 declared, “But, um I don’t think there is a problem.”

Theme 3: Participants’ opinions and observations on peer behaviors and attitude concerning racism. Peers are very important to high school students. When asked about how ones’ peers feel about racism Students 1, 2, and 17 expressed how his or her peers do not like it. Student 17 stated, “They don’t like it, because they just want for all of us to get along and not argue or fight about racism.” Student 20 noted how his peers are against racism, while Student 19 says his peers just ignore racism because it should not matter. Student 3 sadly expressed how she feels some of her peers “laugh at us.” Student 4 stated, “They give you a look, why are you here?” Student 9 made reference to who she called “rednecks” thinking there is nothing wrong with racism. Student 12 declared, “Like it’s mostly white people at our school, so they don’t see it as bad.” Students 14, 15, and 16 talked about how some students call each other names, but

it is often in a joking manner. Student 15 stated, “Because I mean we mess around and I say stuff back. You know we mess around. But sometimes they go too far, and I just tell them to calm down.”

Theme 4: Participants’ reactions to racism within the study. The last theme that emerged was the reaction the students had about the racism at the school. Many of the students feel mad and sad by the racism seen. Student 4 stated, “Sometimes it makes me feel bad, because it is not our fault that other people are coming here. Like, because we are Americans also.” The same student wondered if people would feel the same if they were the ones coming here. Student 3 argued, “It affects me because I know that I was born here, but you know my culture is my family they are illegal. And they do offend because that is me.” Student 8 talked about how it makes her feel bad because no one wants to experience racism. She spoke of doing an immigration project in class and a White male said that all the Mexicans should be thrown back across the border. Student 16 said he has learned to ignore the racial comments that he experiences in class. He feels that if he ignores them, he is the better person. He stated, “Racism is everywhere, everywhere you go.”

Student 17 is worried and afraid that the racial bullying that goes on will affect her younger siblings like the recent suicide that happened because of racial bullying. Student 22 stated, “It bothers me, but no matter people are going to say and think what they want.” Students 1, 2, 14, and 17 all wrote in journals about a fight that occurred between a Caucasian and African American student. In the journals he or she talked about the Caucasian boy calling the African American student the “N” word. The students all wrote of the Caucasian student being a redneck. Both students received in

school suspension. Students 12 and 15 feel that racism is a form of ignorance that is learned from parents. Student 15 noted, “I mean I understand they were brought up that way, cuz some parents are ignorant. That’s all it is ignorance.” Students 14 and 17 also wrote in the journals of a teacher calling the male students “fellows” one day in class. The teacher called one the African American students “brown fellow.” The students wrote of how offensive this name was to the African American student. Students 2 and 3 both talked about a teacher using a brown marker in class and explaining that she was using it to represent the brown people. The students expressed extreme disappointment in this teacher. Student 2 maintained, “I mean I don’t think she like meant it like that, but it kind of offended us.” The same students shared an incident where a teacher gave both girls a piece of green construction paper to represent a green card. The girls talked of how the teacher said it was a gift for Mexican Independence Day. The episode highly offended the girls. Student 2 stated, “He thought it was a joke.”

Students 9, 14, 18, and 27 feel that racism really does not have any affect over them. Those students noted that some of the “country boys” think of themselves as better than the minority students. Student 18 found, “It doesn’t really affect me. I mean everybody has their own thoughts. It doesn’t hurt me. I don’t really look into it.” Student 19 talked about how the school is fortunate to have several different ethnic groups. He stated, “You get to see traditions from other ethnicities, and you learn things from them as well as other people.” Student 14 stated, “Well it doesn’t affect me that much, because it don’t happen to me much.”

Factors that Impact Education

Three prominent factors that impact education in relation to the perceptions of racism held by the minority student and non-minority teacher participants emerged from the four themes during the data analysis process. The three factors are self-esteem, academics, and racial bullying. Many of the students expressed feeling depressed and discouraged because of the racial incidences that occur at the school. Student 23 stated, “I guess you could say it lowered my self-esteem.” Many of the minority students relayed stories and experiences relating to racism that carries over into their classes. Student 12 spoke of topics that occur in class that often lead into racial incidents. Student 12 stated, “And, you know most people just say out comments, and they don’t realize what they are saying.” According to the data, racial bullying often occurs in the form of name calling in the school under study. Student 14 stated, “They just call us bad names.” These factors are discussed further in this section.

Self-esteem. The data gathered from the interviews and journals made it clear that low self-esteem is in place for many of the minority students in the study. Student 26 spoke of being changed by the affects of racism. She expressed, “It’s just like probably all these mixed feelings that makes me just want to shut myself in a room and cry sometimes.” When asked how racism affects her personally, Student 11 declared, “It makes me feel low like I’m not good enough or whatever.” Students 6 and 8 expressed a desire to be treated equally and often offended by the words and actions intended for them and other minorities. Teacher 3 supported the previous findings by sharing an incident where the minority students showed signs of being “visibly disturbed and broken”. According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), a desire to belong and be accepted by the group he or she considers the out-group is a means to enhance one’s self-esteem

(Nesdale & Flessner, 2001). Students 23 and 24 often feel disrespected and uncomfortable in the classrooms and the school. Student 20 stated, “It like messes with me in the head.” “They give you a look like, why are you here?” argued Student 4. Student 3 expressed how she felt low and somehow less than others.

Academics. Many participants mentioned racism in relation to academics. Student 9 spoke of being a first generation student who will be the first in her family to graduate college. She is also in honors classes. When Student 9 was asked about how common racism is in the school she declared, “I mean I don’t see it much because I do have honor classes.” She went on to talk about how there are very few minority students in her classes. She expressed how she really does not see racism much because the people in honors classes are “smart and open-minded.” Student 12 is a Georgia Merit Scholar and at the time of the interview was ranked number 5 in her class. She stated, “I don’t think I have a problem with anybody in the school.” She spoke of how there are only a few minority students in her classes. She feels that the minority students are ignored “a little bit sometimes” because there are not many. Often minority students feel unwanted in higher level classes or feel unworthy to take the classes because there is no one who looks like them in the classes (Singleton & Linton, 2006). Teacher 1 wrote in his journal about two students who needed to take exams, but did not come to school because of the lack of administrative response to a racial incident that occurred in the cafeteria. Student 19 expressed how his family sees him as the smartest in the family and the first to go to college when he graduates. Student 19 makes focusing on schoolwork while ignoring negative attitudes a priority. He argued, “So I think about the positive

things I should do and what should help me perceive my career, which is ignoring anything that would come in my path.”

Racial bullying. Minority children often cluster together in groups with those from similar cultures which places them at a higher risk for racial bullying (Coy, 2001). Through the minority student and non-minority teacher interviews and journals I discovered that many student participants experienced racial bullying, most common is name calling. Student 5 spoke of how some students will mock her language and say “stupid Asian” jokes. Student 28 shared how one White boy would talk about how “something needs to be done about the niggers and beaners.” She said, “You always find somebody talking about this stuff.” Student 26 shared how she is bullied in the parking lot after school. She shared how she is called names and does not like it. Student 16 stated, “You hear Mexican everyday.” When Student 17 was asked how racism affected her personally, she expressed a real concern for her family when it came to the name calling. She brought up a suicide that was reported in the news. She declared, “They were bullying him because of his race and he hung himself. And they are doing the same thing to his sister, and I’m kind of afraid that will happen to my family.” She began to cry as she expressed how it makes her mad and afraid.

Several of the students felt that the attitude that name calling is okay comes from the students’ parents. Student 12 stated, “And they just don’t really know, but it’s what they always hear.” Student 15 declared, “Or just because of the way they were brought up. I mean I understand they were brought up that way, cuz some parents are ignorant. That’s all it is ignorance.” Student 23 also felt the racist attitude was coming from home. She argued, “Cuz you know the way you’re brought up is the way that you always are the

way that you learn the way that you'll be. I think that's the main issue here. Like so many people are just like trapped in what used to be, and they're like hindered from moving forward and seeing something better."

Student 9 shared a racial bullying experience she had on the computer with a fellow student. She was on Facebook and posted lyrics to a song in Spanish to her friends. A Caucasian boy replied to her post questioning why she would ever post in Spanish because no one could understand it. She let him know that she was posting to her friends who could speak Spanish. He was very rude and used inappropriate language in his responses. Teacher 2 wrote about the experience in her journal. Teacher 2 is a friend of Student 9 on Facebook. Teacher 2 asked Student 9 about the post the next day at school. Teacher 2 wrote, "She said, Oh, it's just *****. We all know what he is like." It would appear that this type of racial bullying is expected when it comes to certain students. Because today's students live in a more technological world, one can easily reach across borders to communicate. Hence, it is very important that students have an increased understanding and are sensitized to the cultural lives of other students (Traore ,2008) .

While many of the student participants expressed concerns for the name calling, many felt it was there but not an issue. Student 22 stated, "It bothers me, but no matter people are going to say and think what they want. So, there is not much you can say." Student 13 declared, "I mean most of the time its jokes, and everybody is laughing and cutting up with it. So I mean there are even times they will say something and I'm like oh that's funny, so." Student 19 spoke of how it may affect some minorities, but it really shows how the racist has no pride in himself or herself. Student 18 expressed how racism

does not really affect him. He stated, “I mean everybody has their own thoughts. It doesn’t hurt me. I don’t really look into it.” Finally, Student 27 felt that when things are said in a joking manner, he does not take it personally. Teacher 3 spoke of how the racism seems to be an undertone in a lot of things, often overlooked because it seems to be cultural.

The name calling discussion surfaced in the interviews and journals of the participants in more than one way. The terms “rednecks” and “country boys” were used when describing the students who appear to be racist. Student 26 called the boys who mocked her language and called her names in the parking lot rednecks. Student 15 recalled a conflict in a lower grade as the battle between the Hispanics vs. rednecks. When giving an example of racism, Student 9 spoke of the rednecks calling the minorities’ names. Her reason for the name calling is because there is not much diversity at the school. She stated, “Like most of them consider themselves rednecks.” Students 14, 18, and 24 all mentioned the country boys thinking they are better than the Hispanics and African Americans and often participating in name calling. Teacher 2 mentioned, “We have Asian kids, Hispanic kids, Black kids, White kids, um we have the gifted kids joining the um little country kids. We just have all sorts of kids.”

Compare/Contrast Asian, African American, and Hispanic Participants

There are many similarities in the responses given by the student participants. The Asian, African American, and Hispanic students noted that the racial issues at the school under study affect their self-esteem. All three student groups noted name calling being the most common form of racism. All three student participants groups spoke and wrote of discrimination by students and teachers as a concern. Student 8 stated, “like

when a student said something racial inappropriate to another student nothing is ever said to the students who witness the incident and simply laugh.” The Asian, African American, and Hispanic students all noted that nothing is being done to stop racial issue from occurring, and their voices are not being heard. Student 24 spoke of how she told a teacher in middle school of an incident and nothing was done. Therefore, she feels it is pointless to tell someone now. Student 24 also noted that when you call someone the “b” word you get ISS (In-School Suspension), but if you use the “n” word you just get spoken to. Student 6 talked of how in most situations, it is better to just let things go. In the past she told a teacher, and she was told he was talked to but the behaviors never changed. Student 25’s mother came to the school to discuss the racial situations that her child was facing in the school. Student 25 felt her mother was brushed aside and not taken seriously. The students’ feelings seem to coincide with what Teacher 3 stated: “But it just seems like those little factions are not being addressed. Their just like laugh it off, and hope it’ll just go away or deal with itself.” It was also noted by all three student participant groups that the “country boys” or “rednecks” are the ones that instigate racial issues and situations. Student 26 spoke of getting in a verbal altercation with some “redneck” boys in the parking lot.

While the three student participant groups have many similarities in responses, there are also several distinct differences. While the Asian, African American, and Hispanic participants noted that racism is an issue in the school, the African American and Hispanics noted that it is to be expected in a majority White school. Student 12 stated, “Like it’s mostly White people at our school, so they don’t see it as bad.” The Asian and Hispanic participants spoke of language being a catalyst for racial occurrences.

The Asian participants spoke of their language being mocked by others, while the Hispanic participants felt the fact that they speak Spanish is a catalyst for racism against them. The Asian and African American participants noted that they were often subjected to racially motivated jokes. Some of the Hispanic participants spoke of academics and their participation in honors classes shaping their perceptions of racism. Further, the African American and Hispanic students argued about environmental and societal issues influencing the non-minority students. They also noted the ignorance of non-minority parents encouraging racism. Student 15 spoke of parents influencing their children to have prejudices against different races just as the parents do. The African American and Hispanic students expressed a concern for political issues playing a significant part in the non-minority students' perceptions of them. The African American participants stated that when Barack Obama was elected President, the relationships among the African American and Caucasian students changed for the worse. The Hispanic students noted such political issues like border control and immigration laws being topics that disintegrated the relationships between the Hispanics and Caucasians.

The student participants shared many of the experiences and their backgrounds that have shaped their worldviews. It seems that the participants feel helpless to change the racial discrimination they are experiencing. The participants noted the frustration with their voices not being heard. The participants noted that environmental, political, and society issues all play a role in the way they and their non-minority peers perceive racism.

Teacher Portraits

Ninth through twelfth grade teachers were involved in the study. There are 68 teachers employed at the school (male = 39, female = 29). All of the teachers are Caucasian. All of the teachers were given a survey to complete, with 31 of the teachers returning them (male = 17, female = 14). Therefore 46% of the teachers choose to participate in the study. After a review of the survey, it was found that only three teachers (10%) marked five or more answers “disagree” or “no opinion” indicating an impact of racism. These teachers were interviewed and kept a journal, thereby completing all parts of the study. I present the stories of the teacher participants’ captured and developed in this section.

Teacher One.

Theme 1: Participants’ development of racial perceptions through home life and cultural experiences. Teacher 1 is a Caucasian male who has been teaching at the high school for four years. He has 25 years of military service where he and his family lived in many different countries around the world. Teacher 1 is married with four children and one granddaughter. He has an African American daughter in-law and a half African American and half Caucasian granddaughter. Teacher 1 grew up in a small rural area of Georgia. In his early school years, there were African American children in his classes even though it was during the 1960s. The particular area was so small there was no money for separate schools for African Americans. In high school, the first African American boy from across town came to the high school. While many had a hard time adjusting to going to school with the boy, Teacher 1 felt he was just a kid. He expressed witnessing racism first hand. While in the army, he was saved from a gunshot wound by an African American man. He took part in many equal opportunity trainings while

stationed in Germany. His worldview has been shaped by his many experiences in the army and abroad as well as his multicultural family.

Theme 2: Participants' perceived awareness of racism and its frequency.

Teacher 1 feels that racism is a terrible thing. He stated that racism is a choice made by an individual acting on personal prejudices and stereotypes. He spoke of the racial name calling and discrimination that went on against minorities in the army. Teacher 1 spoke of how as a leader in the army he was expected to handle racial incidences that occurred within his group of men. He compared his military experiences with his classroom experiences that he deals with today. He stated, "She called a young Black girl in my class, and used the n word on her, and called her porch monkey." His journal writing supported the incident when he wrote, "I continued moving my student away from any confrontation." Teacher 1 noted that it is his job to always be alert and openly discuss with students how to handle racial situations that occur. He supported this statement by writing in his journal, "I had a discussion in class about personal relationships." He noted that name calling is the most common form of racism that occurs on a fairly regular basis. He spoke of how he had to speak to the students about how to show restraint when someone calls them an inappropriate name. He wrote, "I explain in and to the class the importance of using restraint."

Theme 3: Participants' opinions and observations on peer behaviors and attitudes concerning racism. When asked how his peers perceive racism, Teacher 1 visibly struggled with answering the question. He stated, "You don't want to admit that we have a problem. So, they don't." He expressed how at other schools where he worked there were visible gang signs on the school walls. Even with the gang signs,

there was a level of denial among the faculty and staff. At the school under study he noted that the racism issues are not denied, but simply not spoken about in the school. Teacher 1 stated, “Their afraid that somebody might say why did you say that, because it is. If you don’t have to answer that question, it is easy.” He expressed how no one wants to admit that there is a problem that needs to be addressed. He noted in his journal that the area of racism in the school needs to be discussed by all stakeholders. He wrote in his journal, “Area needs school wide vision and involvement.”

Theme 4: Participants reaction to racism within the study. Racism affects Teacher 1 because of his grandchild and his students. He shared a picture of his multiracial grandchild. He spoke of how he does not want his grandchild to have to deal with the issues that some minority students deal with in the school setting. He also expressed a concern for the racial situations that he helps the students handle in appropriate ways. He stated, “I don’t have a problem putting myself in front of people and between people. Nor do I have a problem, you know, counseling people on the way they want to present themselves.” Teacher 1 noted that the students recognize how nothing ever changes, and the students concerns are not addressed which does not allow for healing when a racial incident occurs in the school. He stated, “We should treat each and every kid as a person, not a color, or a race, or a breed.” Teacher 1 documented in his journal that “students seem to be giving up hope: status quo.” The racism issues in the school make him sad, and how the issues are handled are very discouraging to him. He stated, “Each and every situation is different. Each and every kid comes across different.” He would like to see all situations handled so all students feel “heard and respected”.

Teacher Two.

Theme 1: Participants' Development of Racial Perceptions through Home Life and Cultural Experiences. Teacher 2 is a Caucasian female who teaches at the high school. She has been teaching at the school for 12 years. She grew up in a military family and lived in many different countries around the world. Living all around the world allowed her the opportunity to experience many different cultures and traditions. Teacher 2 also enjoys traveling in her spare time to other countries. She speaks Spanish and expressed a strong appreciation for foreign languages. Teacher 2 noted that she gets along well with all her peers. She spoke of spending all her time away from work with her family. She stated, "I'm more into family rather than friends." Her family includes a husband, two grown sons, two daughter in-laws, and four grandchildren. One of her daughters-in-law is Bahamian; therefore, two of her grandchildren are multiracial. She also has two sisters-in-law who are from Mexico. All of these facts and experiences have helped shape her worldview.

Theme 2: Participants' perceived awareness of racism and its frequency.

Teacher 2 expresses that racism is simply acting on prejudices. She noted that name calling is a common form of racism in the school. Teacher 2 wrote in her journal about overhearing a White boy telling another boy a joke using the "N" word. There was much laughter after the telling of the joke by all, except the African Americans in the class. She stated, "But, anyway um I hear students call each other bad names." Teacher 2 expressed how not understanding differences between cultures is a common form of racism in the school. For example, calling all Hispanic children Mexicans or all Asian children Chinese shows a lack of understanding. She shared that when she explains the

differences among cultures students appear not to care. She stated, “They say it doesn’t matter. They are all the same.” Teacher 2 wrote in her journal about a situation where a Caucasian girl shared with her how she does not like a girl in her science class who speaks Spanish and is hard to understand. Teacher 2 wrote, “I know N****, and told the girl that if she would listen to N**** and try to talk to her that she could understand her. She speaks English quite well.”

Theme 3: Participants’ opinions and observations on peer behaviors and attitudes concerning racism. Teacher 2 discussed the two groups within the school when discussing peer reaction to racism. There is one group that knows racism is an issue and tries to protect the students while the other group feels there is no racism problem. Racism does not affect Teacher 2 personally except for the fact that she has to help the students deal with racial incidences that occur. She noted that her students are not perfect. She explained, “Their um quite capable of returning slurs and um they of course have prejudices too. They are human.” She went on to speak of teaching tolerances to all the students. She noted, “I think basically as long as we just try to promote tolerance as best we can.”

Theme 4: Participants’ reactions to racism within the study. Teacher 2 does not want her multiracial grandchildren to have to go through what some minorities go through in school. She expressed, “So we just have to promote that hey it’s okay.” She must teach children tolerance, and it is okay for everyone to be different. She is sad and angry by the racism that occurs in the school and feels that racist incidences are handled very lightly. She wrote in her journal, “Student wrote KKK on one of my tables. Not sure who. Nothing was done.” During the interview Teacher 2 explained, “But, the

problem is, part of the problem is, it's kind of excused and nothing is really done.” She spoke of how often she gets asked if students are legal. She expressed how upsetting it is for her peers to ask those kinds of questions. Teacher 2 stated, “The school system is becoming more diverse and experiencing growing pains. Unfortunately growing pains sometimes hurt children.”

Teacher Three.

Theme 1: Participants’ development of racial perceptions through home life and cultural experiences. Teacher 3 is a Caucasian female who teaches at the high school. She is not native to Georgia but has lived here for about seven years. Her father was in the military, so she grew up living in many different places around the world. She explained, “We moved every three to four years of my life.” She changed schools 11 times before graduating high school. Teacher 3 feels that moving around so much has given her the gift of adaptation and blending in, which she feels has helped her late in life. She speaks Chinese, which she learned while teaching English overseas. Teacher 3 enjoys traveling, and she takes a trip to a different country at least once a year. She stated, “I was in Australia this past summer, and Vietnam the summer before that.” She expressed how visiting other countries allow opportunities to see and experience other cultures firsthand. All of her past life experiences and background has created her worldview.

Theme 2: Participants’ perceived awareness of racism and its frequency.

Teacher 3 noted that racism is stereotyping somebody because of color, culture, and heritage. She does not consider racism to be very common. However, she feels that racism is an undertone in a lot of things. Little comments seem to be made, but it appears

to be cultural so not many people notice. Comments seem to be made sporadically. For example, calling all Asian students Japanese or Chinese without realizing that there are many significant differences within cultures is a form of racism. She expressed, “And that is offensive um to some.” She noted that living in other countries has allowed her to recognize differences between cultures. She explained, “So I think that has kind of helped in my whole appreciation of things.”

Theme 3: Participants’ opinions and observations on peer behaviors and attitudes concerning racism. Teacher 3 described two dynamics when discussing how her peers perceive racism. There seems to be those who seem to see racism as a problem. Those teachers make efforts to avoid any intentional language that could be offensive. The other group simply shrugs racism off. She stated, “But it is a big deal, and it really bothers me.” Teacher 3 noted that some peers may not be saying comments but are “being neutral” and not saying that racism is inappropriate. This idea of being neutral is supported by an incident she shared in her journal. A male Caucasian student was asked to move seats in the computer lab. His new seat was next to a multiracial girl. He made a racial comment towards her when he was asked to move. Teacher 3 explained to the male Caucasian student that his comment was inappropriate. When teacher 3 shared the situation with the site coordinator it was dismissed. She wrote, “The attitude was brushed aside and given an excuse as to why they didn’t mean it as a racial comment.”

Theme 4: Participants’ reactions to racism within the study. Teacher 3 is very sad about the racism that does happen in the school. She often feels that she is “swimming upstream” when it comes to making positive changes. Teacher 3 noted that it is not the whole population that adheres to racist values, but just the little factions. She

noted there are a lot of positive things going on at the school as well. However, she expressed frustration with how the incidences that do occur are not dealt with and addressed. Teacher 3 wrote about an incident where three African American girls were very upset by the name calling that was being directed at them. Teacher 3 saw the three girls crying in the office. One of the girls was ready to quit school because she was tired of putting up with the name calling. When she talked to the girls later, she found out that the parents of the girl who wants to drop out went through the civil rights movement and quit school. Her parents are encouraging her to stay in school. Teacher 3 wrote, “These students are visibly disturbed and broken over the incident.”

Compare/Contrast Teacher Participants

The three teacher participants had numerous characteristics in common. All of the teacher participants have a military background. Teacher 1 is in the military, while the fathers of teachers 2 and 3 were in the military. The teachers’ military backgrounds allowed them to live in many different countries and experience different cultures. Teacher 3 stated, “I changed schools 11 times before I graduated high school.” The experience of witnessing and often participating in different cultures has given the teachers a real appreciation for all races, ethnicities, and cultures. When speaking of her experiences living in different countries Teacher 3 stated, “And I experienced a lot that I think has helped me later in life.” All three teachers spoke of the ignorance and lack of action taken when racial issues occur. Teacher 1 stated, “Each and every kid is different. Each and every kid comes across different.” The participants noted that racial issues need to be dealt with in the school. Teacher 2 explained, “Nobody really gets in trouble for doing anything or saying anything.” The teachers’ backgrounds have allowed them to

recognize when racial incidences are occurring and the need for the incidences to be addressed in the school. Teacher 3 spoke of Americans often not recognizing the subcultures within cultures which can lead to racial incidences. The teachers also noted that it is the educators' job to teach tolerance and understanding to the students. Teacher 2 noted, "You know we don't want to have race wars and things like that. And so, yea as teachers we have to promote being different."

There are several differences between the teachers' life experiences and perceptions of issues in the school. Teachers 2 and 3 both speak languages besides English; Teacher 2 speaks Spanish and Teacher 3 speaks Chinese. Teachers 2 and 3 also noted that there is a lack of understanding the significant differences within cultures. Teacher 3 noted that speaking Chinese has allowed her to hear the differences in many Asian dialects. She also noted that she can recognize the physical variations between the different Asian ethnic groups. Teacher 3 stated, "I can see the subcultures, and I can hear the difference in the language." She noted when one does not understand the differences among cultures it can often encourage racial behaviors. Teachers 1 and 2 are part of multicultural families made up of many different races and ethnicities. The two teachers have a desire for racism to be erased from the schools because of grandchildren. All of the teachers agreed that name calling is a prominent form of racism in the school. When the teacher participants were asked about peers' perception of racism, Teacher 1 stated, "You don't want to admit that we have a problem. So, they don't." Teachers 2 and 3 spoke of the faculty and staff being divided into two groups. One group that knows racism is a problem, and the other not recognizing racism.

The three teacher participants all have similar backgrounds in relation to the military and traveling and living abroad. Teacher 1 stated, "Twenty- five years in the military." "I am a military brat," laughed Teacher 2. Teacher 3 explained, "I grew up in the military, and so I've lived and traveled throughout the country and throughout the world." The teachers' appreciation for cultures and awareness of racism leads me to believe that their backgrounds have shaped their worldviews. Hence, their worldviews have played a significant role in them wanting to participate in this study on perceptions of racism. Teacher 2 explained, "Well, the big thing is um I think that when we do have instances, well that the office really needs to crack down on it." The frustration caused from a lack of action by the faculty and staff for racial incidents appears to be another reason for the teachers' desire to participate in the study.

Compare/Contrast Student and Teacher Participants

Theme 1 was participants' development of racial perceptions through his or her home life and cultural experiences. The students and teachers have different backgrounds, but their similar worldviews help to shape their perceptions on racism. Many of the participants expressed being very close to their families. Student 24 expressed, "I have a good family." Student 27 noted, "I have a great family. Uh, we all get along good. We're always you know helping each other." Student 1 spoke of her family being very close and sharing everything with each other. She stated, "And you know we tell each other everything." Student 7 noted, "I have a loving family." Student 18 noted that his family is a very good family. He expressed, "We are very polite to people no matter how they treat us." Teacher 2 spoke of spending time with her family more than friends. Teacher 2 stated, "I'm just more family-oriented." Teacher 3 noted,

“My family was everything because we moved so much.” Many of the student participants spoke of relating better to their own race, while others expressed how important it is to get along with everyone. Student 3 stated, “I have relationships better with my own race cuz the people around me are basically aren’t our culture. Student 4 explained, “I talk to some people, like especially the same of my own race.” Student 25 declared, “Um, I guess I hang out mostly with my own kind than others. But I do like to communicate with them, but not as much.” Student 1 spoke of not having many friends. She stated, “But the ones that I do they are mostly Hispanic people, because I relate to them more.” Some participants noted that they get along with everyone. Student 2 noted, “I get along pretty much with everybody.” Student 14 expressed, “Well, I get along with everybody.” Student 15 expressed, “I guess you could say I’m very neutral with everybody.” Student 8 stated, “Well, I have a lot of friends here, and I get along with everybody.” Student 18 noted, “I’m friends with everybody. You know every race.” Student 12 stated, “I don’t think I have a problem with anybody in school.” All three teacher participants expressed the importance of all students getting along and appreciating differences. Teacher 2 stated, “And the sense that being different does not mean we can’t be friends.” Teacher 1 spoke of how all students should be treated the same.

Theme 2 was the participants’ perceived awareness of racism and its frequency. The participants had many perceptions of racism. Some of the student participants spoke of racism being when one race thinks it is superior to another race. Student 1 stated, “Um, when somebody thinks that their race is a little superior that you’re inferior to them.” Student 2 declared, “That one race thinks their better than another.” Student 3

noted, “Racism is when somebody sees me as a different color and I assume they think I am less than they are.” Student 18 stated, “Like one certain ethnicity thinks they are better than another one.” Three student participants and one teacher shared that they felt racism is a form of stereotyping. Student 8 declared, “It could be verbal, like um calling somebody, looking at somebody by their skin color or race.” Student 9 stated, “They put down people based on their race or religion. Student 12 noted, “To me it’s when the person judges you based on your color or your appearance when they don’t know you.” Teacher 3 stated, “I’d say racism would be stereotyping somebody based off of skin color, culture, or heritage anything making some sort of assumption that is not actually based on fact.” The sense that racism is stereotyping is supported in her journal when she wrote about a student asking if Mexico was as dirty as people say. Teacher 3 wrote, “We discussed stereotypes and the fact that every country has dangerous or dirty places, as well as safe and beautiful locations.” The remaining student and teacher participants stated that racism is disrespecting, discriminating, and showing prejudices towards another race. Student 5 stated, “I would think it is kind of like discriminating.” Student 4 noted, “To like or not liking another race because how they are.” Student 24 stated, “I think to be racist is when you judge somebody by their color.” Teacher 2 explained, “My feeling is that racism is um actually acting on prejudices that a person may have.” The participants had many views on frequency of racism. Teachers 1 and 2 noted that racism is very common in the school. Teacher 2 stated, “Very common.” Many of the student participants noted that racism is very common as well. Student 18 noted, “Pretty much like every day.” Student 22 explained, “It’s common, but it is not to the point of being dangerous.” Student 10 noted, “Um, it’s very common. Like they’ll say like when

you're all alone or something like that's when they'll start saying racist stuff." Student 12 stated, "I think it comes more from students. Like from the larger groups, than from actual teachers and administration." Teacher 3 noted that racism seems to simply be an undertone in the school, while many student participants feel that racism is not common at all. Student 7 stated, "It's just not common, but it's just you hear little side comments or something between people. And it's just every now and again." Student 8 noted, "It's not regularly." Student 21 explained, "Uh, it's not very common, but uh once in a while I hear it in class."

Theme three was the participants' opinions and observations on peer behaviors and attitudes concerning racism. Students 8 and 27 spoke of how there is no problem among their peers, while students 12 and 24 noted how the Caucasians do not see racism as a problem at all. Student 24 stated, "Only people that ever say something about it is the Black people and colored people that's it. The White people don't really say much about it. I mean they don't care." The rest of the student participants expressed that their peers did not like racism and would often stand up for them. Student 18 expressed, "Like the ones that don't believe in it think the people are you know stupid for believing in that because everybody is equal." Student 17 noted, "They don't like it, because they just want for all of us to get along and not argue or fight about racism." Student 1 stated, "Well, they don't like it cuz you know they think we should be fair to everybody." Student 7 explained, "Well my friends and I don't like it you know. When we hear jokes they will come tell me, and we will just be like no they didn't." All three teacher participants spoke of there being two groups of people among their peers. The teacher participants noted there is one group that recognizes racism and tries to address racial

occurrences, and the other group does not think there is a racism issue or shrugs racial incidences off.

Theme four was participants' reactions to racism within the school under study. All of the participants noted feelings of anger, sadness, and just feeling bad, except for Students 9, 13, 14, 18, and 27 who do not think racism affects them at all. Student 13 stated, "I mean I know that it is there, but I don't really pay any attention to it." Student 8 stated, "It kind of makes me mad." Student 1 noted, "It kind of hurts a little bit, but you kind of get over it. You know you try for that not to get to you." Student 7 explained, "Personally I guess it would hurt my feelings, because you know their going by stereotypes and it just you know makes me feel, it makes me feel upset that they think just cuz we are black we got to be this or that. I guess it does hurt my feelings." Teacher 3 stated, "I think more than anything it just makes me um makes me sad." All the participants noted some level of frustration with the lack of action taken in regards to racial incidences. The students feel that their voices are not heard, while the teachers feel helpless in how to alleviate the problem of racism. Teacher 1 wrote in his journal, "Students are feeling like they have been let down." Another student wrote about a fight that happened between an African American boy and a Caucasian boy. Student 24 wrote, "They both got equal punishment but no action on how it got started was really addressed." According to the student and teacher participants the lack of support and action taken by faculty and staff contribute to the three factors uncovered during the data analysis. The factors are racial bullying, academics, and self-esteem. The analysis of data supports the implications that educators and students must taken active roles in the training, understanding, education, and program implementation to help alleviate racism.

The understanding and commonalities between the student and teacher perceptions show the importance of working together to create an environment where all feel accepted and safe.

Research Questions

Research question 1.

What are the 9th-12th grade minority students' perceptions of racism? The minority students expressed that racism is present in the school under study. While many of the minority students stated that racism is discrimination and prejudices, others consider racism holding stereotypes. While some of the minority students feel it is very common, others noted it is not that common in the school. Name-calling appears to be the most common form of racial bullying that takes place in the school. Student 21 wrote in his journal, "When class started someone was heard saying go back to the cotton fields. Then some Blacks walked in saying trash back." Some of the minority students expressed how racism certainly affects their self-esteem and academic performance, and others noted that they do not let racism affect them. While some are able to avoid racism's affect, it still makes them angry and mad. All of the minority students expressed racism making them sad, angry, let down, and or mad. The minority students noted a need for stronger action to be taken by the faculty and staff when a racial incident occurs in the school.

Research question 2.

What are the perceptions 9th-12th grade teachers have about racism? The teacher participants all noted that racism is in the school under study. Teachers 1 and 2 noted that racism is when someone acts on their prejudices, while teacher 3 stated that

racism is when someone acts out behaviors and attitudes based on stereotyping others. Teachers 1 and 2 expressed that racism is very common, while Teacher 3 finds that racism is an “undertone in a lot of things.” All three teacher participants noted that name calling is the most common form of racial bullying within the school under study. The teacher participants stated that racism affects the minority students’ self-esteem, as well as, taking away from their academics. Teacher 3 wrote in her journal about a girl who had to go home because she was so upset by a racial incidence. Teacher 1 shared about a student concentrating more on getting back at a student for racial name-calling than her studies. Teacher 1 wrote, “My student tried to get at female from alternative school when they came in to use the restrooms.” Teacher participants expressed that the racism that takes place in the school makes them sad, angry, and leaves them with a feeling of helplessness. The teacher participants all noted a desire for consistent action to be taken by the faculty and staff when racial incidences arise in the school under study.

Research question 3.

How do the 9th-12th grade minority students and 9th-12th grade teachers’ perceptions of racism compare and contrast? The student and teacher participants shared that racism is in the school. Many of the student and teacher participants noted being very close with their families. Some of the student participants expressed getting along only with their own race, while some noted getting along with everyone. All the teacher participants shared the idea that educators should teach tolerance and understanding to all students. The participants noted that racism is discrimination, prejudices, feeling superior to another race, and stereotyping. Some of the student participants shared that racism is common, while others noted it is not common.

However, the teacher participants noted that racism is common, and an undercurrent at the school. Teacher participants and some student participants stated that racism is a problem, while a few student participants stated it is not a problem. All the participants shared that racism makes them angry, mad, and sad. The lack of action taken by the faculty and staff to stop racial incidences greatly upsets and concerns all the participants.

Summary

This chapter introduced the 28 wonderful minority students who chose to share their stories in order for me to understand their perceptions of racism. Three educators willingly revealed their experiences, stories, and perceptions of racism. Analysis of the data revealed perceptions participants have of racism. Perceptions were shared in student portraits grouped by race and then gender. Student participants were grouped by race because I looked at the data through the lens of the Social Identity Theory. Gender was considered because there was a significant difference between female and male student participants. Four prominent themes emerged through the data analysis process. The first theme was the participants' development of racial perceptions through home life and cultural experiences, which contributed to their worldview. The second theme was the participants' perceived awareness of racism and its frequency. The third theme was the participants' opinions and observations on peer behaviors and attitudes concerning racism. The final theme that emerged was the participants' reactions to racism within the study. Self esteem, academics, and racial bullying are the three factors that surfaced from the themes which impact education. The final chapter will uncover conclusions, implications for educators and students, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Race is an ever present reality. Racism can be defined as beliefs and an enactment of beliefs that a set of characteristics is in some way superior to another set (Singleton & Linton, 2006). Racism is certainly not a new notion (Sowell, 1993). Talking about race and racism is not very often encouraged and literally can be dangerous (Jacobs, 1999). Jacobs (1999) stated, “Our country is consuming itself in racial rage” (p. 1). Often times in different arenas, race makes people uncomfortable and unable to accomplish the task at hand. Wessler (2003) stated,

Our task—as administrators, as teachers, as counselors, as coaches, as parents, and as friends to young people—is to model the confidence and courage to stand up for civility and respect and to provide the time and the resources to allow our young people to develop that courage that exists within all of us. (p. 122)

Most educators want to alleviate racism in the classrooms and schools and feel racism is morally wrong. The challenge is to battle racism in professional practices and personal relationships (Singleton & Linton, 2006). Even with the desire of most educators to battle racism, it remains a problem in our schools (Asante, 2003). Because the literature shows that racism is still a problem in schools today, I chose to investigate the perceptions of racism held by 9th-12th grade minority students and 9th-12th grade teachers at a rural Georgia public high school. Public schools still remain to be the “one best system” (pp. 290-291) because the schools serve all students regardless of race, academic needs, poverty level, or language (Tyack, 1980).

Forty four out of the 103 minority students agreed to participate in this study at a rural Georgia high school. Therefore, 43% of the minority students agreed to participate. That means that 57% of the minority students did not agree to participate in the study. Of the 68 teachers at the school 31 agreed to participate. Therefore, a percentage of 46% of teachers agreed to participate. That left 54% of teachers choosing not to participate in the study. Out of the 44 minority students who agreed to participate, only 28 had been impacted by racism according to survey answers. Out of the 31 teachers who choose to participate, only 3 proved to have something to share about racism. Therefore 10% of the educators had something to share about racism. If the participants marked five or more “disagree” or “no opinion” answers on the survey, then he or she must have something to share about racism and were invited to participate in the interview and journaling. The percentage of minority students and teachers who did not feel compelled to participate speaks volumes for the racism issue at the high school in the study. While it is not known the exact reason why each nonparticipant choose not to contribute, the fact still remains that he or she did not take part in the study. While this is a small number of participants affected by racism, as educators my colleagues and I must address the issue of racism in our schools. It is the educators’ job to make sure all students are given an equal opportunity at learning. Singleton and Linton (2006) declared, “We believe that race—and thus racism, in both individual and institutional forms, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged—plays a primary role in students’ struggle to achieve at high levels” (p.2).

The purpose of this study was to discover the perceptions the participants (students = 28, teachers = 3) held about racism in a rural Georgia high school. The

participants were minority students and non-minority teachers. The following research questions were answered in the study:

1. What are the perceptions that 9th-12th grade minority students have about racism? The minority students stated that racism is present in the school under study. Some noted that it is common, while others stated that it is not common. The minority students stated that their voices are not heard, and racial issues need to be addressed by the faculty and staff in the school under study.
2. What are the perceptions 9th-12th grade teachers have about racism? The teacher participants stated that racism is common in the school under study. Teacher participants noted that name calling is the most common form of racism. The teacher participants noted that teaching tolerance and understanding should be taught by all in the school under study. The teachers shared extreme frustration by the lack of action taken by the faculty and staff when racial incidences occur in the school.
3. How do 9th-12th grade minority students and 9th-12th grade teachers' perceptions of racism compare and contrast? The participants noted that racism is in the school under study, and name calling is the most common form of racism. The minority student participants expressed concern that their voices are not heard and racial issues are not addressed by the faculty and staff, while teacher participants shared feeling helpless to do anything to alleviate the problem.

Four themes emerged when analyzing the data. The four themes were the participants' development of racial perceptions through home life and cultural experiences, participants' perceived awareness of racism and its frequency, participants' opinions and observations on peer behaviors and attitudes concerning racism, and participants' reactions to racism within the study. The data revealed that from the four themes several factors impact education in relation to the perceptions of racism. The factors are self-esteem, academics, and racial bullying. From the themes and factors, implications for students and educators are elicited, and the need for further research is determined.

Impact on Education

Self-esteem. In the school under study, 87% majority and 13% minority students were enrolled. The faculty is 100% Caucasian (non-minority). Bankston and Zhou (2002) stated, "It has frequently been suggested that the academic achievement of minority students may be hindered by low self-esteem in a white-dominated society" (p. 389). Several studies have indicated that students who are members of the lower status minority group have a lower self-esteem than their counterparts in the higher status Caucasian group (Melry, 1968, Parsons, 1965, Stephan & Rosenfield, 1979). Research supports the feelings of low self-esteem expressed by the participants. Beswick (1990) stated, "Racism in any measure undermines children's self-esteem and erodes the educational process" (p. 1). The participants noted having feelings of being discouraged and despondent with the way things are at the high school under study. They find it difficult to concentrate on the academics at hand because of racial situations. According to SIT, when one's social identity is threatened, in-group members (ones' own group)

will attempt to maintain positive self-esteem by showing favorable feelings towards in-group members and negative feelings towards out-group members (Maltby & Day, 2003).

Academics. Beswick (1990) stated, “Restrictions on minorities’ opportunity to succeed are often racially determined” (p. 2). Often, race is taken to mean at-risk even when the ethnic students are not at-risk (O’Conner, Hill, & Robinson, 2009). Some of the minority students expressed concern about being one of only a few minority students in a small honors class. The students expressed sadness over missing their friends and often feeling ignored in those settings. Being in honors classes give the students a sense of pride; however, it appears to create stress in their lives. According to SIT, a student who values independence will experience stress when he or she perceives that a membership in a group gets in the way of academic commitments (Prentice, Trail, & Cantor, 2004).

Racial bullying. A study done by the National Institutes of Health released in the Journal of the American Medical Association shows that about a third of 6th through 10th graders have experienced at least one form of bullying (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, & Scheidt, 2001). Olweus, a noted bullying researcher, defines bullying as repeatedly inflicting negative actions towards one or more students (Olweus, 1993). Bullying can come in the form of verbal, physical, or psychological. Minorities are often at a high risk for racial bullying (Coy, 2001). In the school where the study took place, it appears that name calling is the most prevalent form of racial bullying. When name calling is accepted or not addressed, it can go unchanged. Students often hear name calling at home, and therefore do not see it as an issue. Many of the students feel that the non-minority students have gotten their racial attitudes from home. The data showed that

many minority students felt parents play a role in how children perceive racism. Positive or negative racial attitudes come from the parents at an early age (Savard & Aragon, 1989).

Little comments seem to be made but often go unnoticed because it seems to be cultural. SIT finds that negative identity can be created when one consistently hears and then believes negative stereotypes in relation to one's group (Shinnar, 2008). It appears from the data that all students are grouped based on some distinctive difference. Whether the minority students act upon his or her prejudices cannot be determined by the interviews and journals. However, it is apparent that the participants' behaviors correlate with the SIT. SIT notes that one looks at his or her group through a somewhat distorted lens by which the groups' negative qualities are minimized (Hornsey, 2006). Hornsey (2006) stated,

First, a high identifier is less likely to notice the negative aspects of their culture, because they see the group through an identity-enhancing lens.

Second, even if they were to identify problematic aspects of the group's culture, they would be less likely to articulate these concerns, mindful as they are of maintaining the reputation of the group in the eyes of others.

(p.78)

Implications

For students. Many of the students at the school where the study took place do not feel his or her voices are heard. They have become discouraged by the lack of action taken by the educators in the schools. Community attitude about racism has an influence on people in the community. Communities and schools that address the racial issues up

front are more likely to have an atmosphere where all feel welcome (Coy, 2001). Parent advisory and student advisory boards should be put in place in the schools, as well as peer counseling to ensure students' voices are heard when it comes to racial issues (Beswick, 1990). The school where the study took place has a School Senate of elected students. The senate should be used to share advice and support with the educators and leaders in the building to promote cultural awareness and reduce racism. Educators are not the only ones who should be trained on the racial bullying policies, but students should as well. Students need to know that racial bullying is a violation of student rights (Coy, 2001). There are many intervention programs available. The leadership committee, parent advisory board, and student senate should meet to discuss program options to help alleviate racism in the school. Coy (2001) stated, "The school should provide training for students in problem solving approaches, which include conflict resolution training, conflict management and quality circles (p. 4).

For educators. Based on the data that was collected, racism exists in the high school under study. While racial issues are not the norm for most in the high school, it certainly affects some of the population. Teacher 1 wrote in the journal, "Area needs school wide vision and involvement." Teacher 2 expressed how the county is experiencing growing pains because of the increasing diversity and is worried that race wars will become a reality if the educators do not deal with the racial issues. Teacher 3 spoke about how so many remain neutral when it comes to racial issues. Teacher 3 stated, "Because it's maybe you are not making the comment, but you are also not setting the precedent to say you know what that's not appropriate." Singleton and Linton (2006) stated, "Educators typically have not examined and discussed race in their schools

because they have feared not knowing how to go about this process correctly (p. 21). Teacher 2 noted that racial issues are handled very lightly at the school with nothing more than a slap on the wrist. Teacher 1 wrote, “Students see nothing changes, everything remains the same.” Schools need to have anti-harassment or non-bullying policies in place that exhibit clear guidelines, reporting procedures, consequences, and a support system (Wessler, 2003). The leadership committees or other leaders in the school and system need to come together to have discussions about how to improve the program that is in place to combat racism and racial bullying. All educators need to incorporate and follow the guidelines consistently that are in place in the school. Team meetings should include discussions on racial issues that take place at the school. Often educators devalue minority students’ perspectives without awareness because of the difference in cultural experiences (Brooks & Thompson, 2005). Educators should be given in-service opportunities from professionals in the world of racial education. Parents should also be included in the discussions on racial issues in order to investigate observations, behavior patterns, and critiques to promote positive change (Hein, 2004).

The school where the study took place has a handbook that outlines behavior that will result in disciplinary actions. The behavior that relates to racial issues reads:

Any behavior based on a student’s race, national origin, sex, or disability that is unwelcome, unwanted, and/or uninvited by the recipient is prohibited, including verbal or non-verbal taunting, physical contact, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature.

Consequences: ISS to referral to disciplinary tribunal. The handbook describes bullying behavior as the following:

1)Any willful attempt to threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or 2) any intentional display of force which would give the victim reason to fear or to expect immediate bodily harm.

Consequences: Detention to referral to disciplinary tribunal. Georgia law mandates that upon finding that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, the student shall be assigned to alternative school. Even with all of the above policies written in the handbook, some students are still affected by racial comments on a regular basis according to the data. Educators need to be clear about expectations in regard to racism and the consequences for violation (Beswick, 1990).

In 1999, the Georgia General Assembly endorsed a bullying legislation for grades 6th through 12th that defined bullying and required each school system to have bullying policies in place and have the policies included in the student code of conduct. In 2010, The Georgia General Assembly revisited and modified the existing law on bullying. The law includes updated definition, parent notification, and includes all grade levels. School systems must implement the changes by August 1, 2011. The law also requires the Georgia Department of Education to develop a model bullying policy no later than January 1, 2011(GaDoe, 2010).

It is the educators' job to not only enforce the policies in place to combat racism but to teach tolerance among the students of all ethnic backgrounds. Many of the students spoke of racial slurs or name calling entering the classrooms when topics such as immigration and Obama care were discussed. Students have strong opinions about the issues. Graseck (2009) stated, "As educators, it is our job to awaken student voice and to

enable students to enter the public dialogue on important policy decisions about immigration, economic policy, environmental stewardship, or war and peace” (p. 49). It is also the job of the educators to encourage the students to live together peacefully and productively, while reducing distrust and fear among students who are different (Zhao, 2009).

Suggestions for Future Research

The completed study on perceptions of racism held by 9th-12th grade minority students and 9th-12th grade teachers focused on only the above two populations. A future study where the majority students participate would be greatly beneficial to educators. While it was enlightening to capture the voice of the minority students, it also could give a complete picture of the racial issues at the high school under study by including the majority population in a future study. Increasing the number of high schools under study could allow for more participants of different ethnic groups. While much of the literature showed that self-esteem and academics are affected by racial discrimination, grades were not considered in the study. A future study that certainly could benefit educators would be to investigate the correlation between participants’ grades and perceptions of racism. When determining the language proficiency level of the participants, I chose to not allow anyone below level 4 because that is the level where someone is considered to be English proficient according to the WIDA Consortium (Gottlieb, Cranley, & Cammilleri, 2007). In future studies, it would make an even clearer picture of racism in a school to include students of all English proficiency levels. This would require an interpreter, but one would see how someone with little English experiences racism. In the school under study, there was only one student who was not allowed to participate because of low

English language proficiency, but in a school with a larger minority population, this inclusion could be beneficial. SIT is clear that the stronger one identifies with his or her group, the more racial discrimination is experienced (Tajfel, 1978).

In analyzing the data, it was clear that some specific guidelines, strategies, and programs need to be in place to help combat racism in the school. While racism clearly affects some at the high school, the percentage is small. However, as the county grows more diverse, racism can become an even bigger issue. It would be beneficial to do a study on programs, interventions, and strategies educators and students can use to help alleviate racism. The available programs are varied and should be researched and evaluated by the educators and student leaders within the school to determine what fits with the school. Educators can utilize several different strategic and motivational programs, strategies, and interventions that will aid in changing racist behavior (Beswick, 1990).

When analyzing the data, it became apparent that there was a large discrepancy between the number of male and female participants. While gender was discussed in the findings, due to this discrepancy further research could be done on the implications of gender in relation to perceptions of racism. The data showed 22% more females than males chose to participate in the study, and 36% more females than males had something to say about racism. Also, the biggest discrepancy came with African Americans. Sixty percent more African American females chose to participate than males and 70% more African American females than males had something to say about racism according to the data. Central to numerous social psychological analyses of gender stereotypes, it is presumed that men have elevated status and more power than women (Eagly, 1987).

Based on the findings, it is clear that it would be beneficial for educators and students for further research to be done on perceptions of racism with a focus on gender.

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations of a study are not considered flaws or weaknesses within the study. Delimitations are simply the boundaries of the study that are set by the researcher (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005). The study was conducted at a rural high school in Georgia. The high school has a minority population of 103 (22 Asians, 28 African Americans, 50 Hispanics, 0 American Indian/ Alaskan Native, and 3 Multi-racial) (Powerschool, 2010). Since the study was done at only one high school, the number of minority students could influence the study. I chose to focus only on the minority students' perceptions of racism. A phenomenological study describes meaning that several individuals or a group has about a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). I wanted to focus on racism from persons who may have experienced it. The Caucasian students are the majority and were therefore not included in the study. The participants of the study were selected from the minority population of students and the high school teachers.

All Georgia schools are members of the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. WIDA developed standards, performance indicators, and assessments for all members to follow. The WIDA Performance Definitions (see Appendix A) provide definitions of how students' process, understand, produce, and use English (Gottlieb, Cranley, & Cammilleri, 2007). The WIDA Performance Definitions was used to determine English proficiency in order to eliminate language barriers. Only ethnic minority students who are proficient in English were included in the study. The ACCESS tests are given yearly to all ELL students to determine English language

proficiency. In order to eliminate significant language barriers, ELL students scoring below a Tier 4 on the ACCESS test did not participate in the study

The study also focused on the teachers' perception of racism. Therefore, one must consider the ethnic diversity of the faculty and staff. The faculty and staff are all Caucasians, which could have affected the results of the study (A. Hopkins, personal communication, August 25, 2010). I am a non-minority Caucasian female which could have impacted the study. SIT supports the idea that being a non-minority Caucasian female could have affected the results in the study. SIT states that a person favors and identifies more with his or her group (Haslam, 2001). Therefore, the participants outside of my race may not identify with me and be comfortable to share freely. The study gave educators in the high school an understanding of how the minority students perceive racism. Much needed discussion about racism between educators was achieved.

Limitations are conditions that restrict the scope of the study or may affect the results and cannot be controlled by the researcher (Fontana & Frey, 2000). The limitations for this study included the number of ethnic minority students. There were 103 ethnic minority students at the rural Georgia high school (Powerschool, 2010). The number of teachers at the high school was 68 with all of them being Caucasian (A. Hopkins, personal communication, August 25, 2010). The number and ethnicity of the participants certainly limited the study. In the rural Georgia high school where the study took place, there were 743 Caucasian students (A. Hopkins, personal communication, August 25, 2010). The relationship between the number of Caucasian students and ethnic minority students could have affected the outcome of the study. Future research with

more participants of different ethnic background is needed by possibly increasing the number of high schools included in the study.

Furthermore, I am a Caucasian female who interviewed minority students, some who are male, and therefore the results of the study may have been influenced by this limitation. Another possible limitation is that I am a teacher, so there could have been a possible intimidation or uneasiness between the teacher and students, which could have been a barrier.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to determine the perceptions 9th-12th grade minority students and 9th-12th grade teachers have about racism in a rural Georgia high school. This study was needed because the literature demonstrates that racism is still prevalent in schools today. In order to uncover the perceptions held by the participants, I used surveys, interviews, and journaling in my data collection. Forty four minority students and 31 teachers agreed to complete the survey and 28 minority students and three teachers participated in the interviewing and journals. In the data analysis process, interviews were transcribed and read repeatedly in order to determine emerging themes. Memoing, open coding, rich data, feedback, and member checking were all utilized in order to ensure that the data was accurate and credible. The following questions guided this research study:

1. What are the perceptions that 9th-12th grade minority students have about racism?
2. What are the perceptions that 9th-12th grade teachers have about racism?

3. How do the 9th-12th grade minority students and 9th-12th grade teachers' perceptions of racism compare and contrast?

This study demonstrates the need for educators to have a plan in place to help other educators and students deal with racism and to encourage continued discussions about racism. My goal is that the study will help educators recognize when racism occurs and how to help students who are experiencing it. I hope the study will be used to improve the quality of education at the school of study. The credibility of the study was improved by the rigor of the qualitative research design and data collection methods. I chose to view this study through the lens of the Social Identity Theory (SIT). SIT was developed to gain understanding of intergroup discrimination. SIT attempted to explain why a person would discriminate in favor of his or her group and discriminate against another group (Haslam, 2001). James 2:4 states, "Have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?" (New Century Version). Since the study was to gain the participants perceptions of racism, SIT clearly asserts that the more a person identifies with a group (in-group), the more his or her behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions are governed by the group (Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, Christ, & Tissington, 2006). Therefore, a persons' personal identity is linked to his or her social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

The minority population made up 13% (103) of the population. The study showed that 27% (28) of the minority students were impacted by racism. Thirty one (46%) teachers participated in the study. However, only 10% (3) of the teachers surveyed felt that racism was an issue in the school. The above numbers prove there is a discrepancy between minority student and teacher perception of racism. The perceptions

of the participants were categorized according to the group he or she belonged because of SIT. The results of this study seem to be congruent with previous research on racism. Racism is still alive and well in most schools. Any person who feels the impact of racism is one person to many. Therefore, schools must do everything within its power to help alleviate racism. Educators must take on the task of teaching tolerance and understanding for all ethnic groups. School leaders, educators, parents, and students should put programs in place in schools that will help combat racism. Coy (2001) stated, "A number of intervention programs are available for schools to utilize" (p. 4). There should be training starting with the board of education all the way down to the students in order to have a consistent understanding of expectations for all. The whole school should have a racism policy that specifically details the rules and consequences for racial issues. Communities need to be involved in the process in order for everyone to have a better understanding of expectations when it comes to racism. Coy (2001) mentioned, "Greater awareness of the issue and a community-wide focus on prevention can begin to secure that our schools are safer environments" (p. 4). Everyone needs to stand up and work together in order to make changes for the betterment of all students. Zhao (2009) declared, "The task is not easy, but the stakes are high. The survival of the human race hinges on the degree to which we can learn to live together harmoniously in this tiny village where resources are limited and unequally distributed (p. 64).

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Appendix A: WIDA Performance Definitions

WIDA Performance Definitions

At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce or use:

6- Reaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specialized or technical language reflective of the content areas at grade level a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level oral or written communication in English comparable to English-proficient peers
5- Bridging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specialized or technical language of the content areas a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays or reports oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English-proficient peers when presented with grade level material
4- Expanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specific and some technical language of the content areas a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related sentences or paragraphs oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic or interactive support
3- Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general and some specific language of the content areas expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs oral or written language with phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning, when presented with oral or written, narrative or expository descriptions with sensory, graphic or interactive support
2- Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general language related to the content areas phrases or short sentences oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one- to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support
1- Entering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas words, phrases or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-, choice or yes/no questions, or statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support oral language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede meaning when presented with basic oral commands, direct questions, or simple statements with sensory, graphic or interactive support

Appendix B: Census 2010

United States
**Census
2010**

This is the official form for all the people at this address.
It is quick and easy, and your answers are protected by law.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Use a blue or black pen.

Start here

The Census must count every person living in the United States on April 1, 2010.

Before you answer Question 1, count the people living in this house, apartment, or mobile home using our guidelines.

- Count all people, including babies, who live and sleep here most of the time.

The Census Bureau also conducts counts in institutions and other places, so:

- Do not count anyone living away either at college or in the Armed Forces.
- Do not count anyone in a nursing home, jail, prison, detention facility, etc., on April 1, 2010.
- Leave these people off your form, even if they will return to live here after they leave college, the nursing home, the military, jail, etc. Otherwise, they may be counted twice.

The Census must also include people without a permanent place to stay, so:

- If someone who has no permanent place to stay is staying here on April 1, 2010, count that person. Otherwise, he or she may be missed in the census.

1. How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2010?

Number of people =

2. Were there any additional people staying here April 1, 2010 that you did not include in Question 1?
Mark *X* all that apply.

☐ Children, such as newborn babies or foster children

☐ Relatives, such as adult children, cousins, or in-laws

☐ Nonrelatives, such as roommates or live-in baby sitters

☐ People staying here temporarily

☐ No additional people

3. Is this house, apartment, or mobile home —
Mark *X* ONE box.

☐ Owned by you or someone in this household with a mortgage or loan? *Include home equity loans.*

☐ Owned by you or someone in this household free and clear (without a mortgage or loan)?

☐ Rented?

☐ Occupied without payment of rent?

4. What is your telephone number? We may call if we don't understand an answer.
Area Code + Number

- -

5. Please provide information for each person living here. Start with a person living here who owns or rents this house, apartment, or mobile home. If the owner or renter lives somewhere else, start with any adult living here. This will be Person 1.
What is Person 1's name? *Print name below.*

Last Name

First Name MI

6. What is Person 1's sex? Mark *X* ONE box.

☐ Male ☐ Female

7. What is Person 1's age and what is Person 1's date of birth?
Please report babies as age 0 when the child is less than 1 year old. Print numbers in boxes.

Age on April 1, 2010 Month Day Year of birth

→ **NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 8 about Hispanic origin and Question 9 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not race.**

8. Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

☐ No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano

☐ Yes, Puerto Rican

☐ Yes, Cuban

☐ Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — *Print origin, for example, Argentinian, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.* ↴

9. What is Person 1's race? Mark *X* one or more boxes.

☐ White

☐ Black, African Am., or Negro

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native — *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.*

☐ Asian Indian

☐ Chinese

☐ Filipino

☐ Other Asian — *Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.* ↴

☐ Japanese

☐ Korean

☐ Vietnamese

☐ Native Hawaiian

☐ Guamanian or Chamorro

☐ Samoan

☐ Other Pacific Islander — *Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.* ↴

☐ Some other race — *Print race.* ↴

10. Does Person 1 sometimes live or stay somewhere else?

☐ No ☐ Yes — Mark *X* all that apply.

☐ In college housing

☐ In the military

☐ At a seasonal or second residence

☐ For child custody

☐ In jail or prison

☐ In a nursing home

☐ For another reason

→ If more people were counted in Question 1, continue with Person 2.

OMB No. 0607-0919-C: Approval Expires 12/31/2011.

Form **D-1** (12-5-2008)

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

Appendix C: PowerSchool Documentation

School System Mail - reminder -

Mail | Calendar | Documents | Sites | Groups | more ▾

Settings | Help | Sign out

Search Mail | Search the Web | [Show search options](#)
[Create a filter](#)

Web Clip < >

Compose Mail

Inbox (28)

Starred

Sent Mail

Drafts (40)

Calendar

Follow up

Migrated (33)

Misc

Notes

Priority

4 more ▾

Contacts

Tasks

Chat

Search, add, or invite

Set status here

Options

Add contact

About Today - 5 Ways to Help With Homework

Back to inbox

Archive

Report spam

Delete

Move to

Labels

More actions

reminder

Inbox X

Aug 27 (3 days ago)

show details Aug 27 (3 days ago)

Reply

as of 8/27/2010 (F)

Grade Level	TOTAL IN GRADE	Asian	Black	Hispanic	American Indian/Alaska Native	Multi-Racial	White	Unclassified
9	238 124 / 114	4 3 / 1	9 5 / 4	15 7 / 8	0 0 / 0	2 1 / 1	207 107 / 100	1 1 / 0
10	207 111 / 96	5 3 / 2	5 4 / 1	14 7 / 7	0 0 / 0	0 0 / 0	182 96 / 86	1 1 / 0
11	198 110 / 88	3 2 / 1	6 1 / 5	8 7 / 1	0 0 / 0	1 0 / 1	179 89 / 90	1 1 / 0
12	205 110 / 95	10 6 / 4	8 5 / 3	13 6 / 7	0 0 / 0	0 0 / 0	175 84 / 91	0 0 / 0
TOTAL	849 455 / 394	22 13 / 9	28 15 / 13	50 27 / 23	0 0 / 0	3 1 / 2	743 396 / 347	3 3 / 0

Pink is girl and blue is boy. Let me know if this is not what you need. Thank you

Show quoted text

Reply

Forward

is not available to chat

Back to inbox

Archive

Report spam

Delete

Move to

Labels

More actions

Newer 9 of 202 Older

Import contacts from Yahoo, Outlook, and others into your School System Mail contact list. [Learn more](#)

You are currently using 172 MB (2%) of your 7489 MB.

Last account activity: 14 minutes ago at IP 166.137.15.157. [Details](#)

County School System Mail view: standard | [turn off chat](#) | [older version](#) | [basic HTML](#) | [Learn more](#)

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of 1

8/30/2010 1:03 PM

Appendix D: Student Survey

Please respond by circling the appropriate responses. Note: Please answer according to your opinion, not others.

Vocabulary: Racism is a belief that one race is superior (better) than another race.

1. My school is welcoming and secure to all.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
2. In situations such as name calling, racial slurs, and jokes, the faculty and staff respond appropriately.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
3. I am comfortable telling a teacher if a racial conflict occurs at school.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
4. I have not had to tell a teacher about a racial issue in my high school.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
5. Racism is discussed openly in class.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
6. All students receive equal attention from faculty regardless of race.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
7. There is no stereotyping of other students based on his or her race at my school.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
8. In our school all races relate well together.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
9. I feel free to ask people who are using discriminatory language and behaviors to stop.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
10. Multicultural visuals are displayed at my school.
Agree Disagree No Opinion

Appendix E: Teacher Survey

Please respond by circling the appropriate responses. Note: Please answer according to your opinion, not others.

Vocabulary: Racism is a belief that one race is superior (better) than another race.

1. My school feels welcoming and secure to all.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
2. Students are made to feel respected by having incidents such as name calling, racial slurs, and jokes dealt with seriously.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
3. I demonstrate knowledge and awareness of the issues of racism.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
4. I continually educate myself about racism and multicultural issues.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
5. I can identify racism when it is occurring.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
6. I feel students receive equal attention by faculty and other students regardless of race.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
7. I avoid stereotyping a student based on his or her race.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
8. In our school all races relate well together.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
9. Staff members consistently use non-discriminatory language and behavior towards ethnic students.
Agree Disagree No Opinion
10. I pay attention to ethnic minority students so I can understand his or her needs.
Agree Disagree No Opinion

Appendix F: Interview Questions

A Phenomenological Exploration of Perceptions of Those Experiencing Racism

1. Tell me about yourself and your family.
2. What do you like to do in your spare time?
3. What can you tell me about your friendships and your relationships with those in the school?
4. What is your understanding of the term racism?
5. What are some examples of racism currently occurring at your school?
6. How common is racism at your school?
7. How do your peers perceive racism?
8. How does racism affect you personally?
9. Is there any more insight you can share that will help me understand the issue of racism at your school?

Appendix G: IRB Approval Documentation



The Graduate School at Liberty University

October 12, 2010

Paige Boomer

IRB Approval 998.101210: Perceptions of High School Minority Students and High School Teachers Regarding Racism: A Phenomenological Study

Dear Paige,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "F. Garzon".

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.

IRB Chair, Associate Professor

Center for Counseling & Family Studies

(434) 592-5054



40 Years of Training Champions for Christ: 1971-2011

Appendix H: Superintendent Approval Letter



[REDACTED] County School System

Phone: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

[REDACTED]
Superintendent

Ms. Paige Boomer
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

August 4, 2010

Ms. Boomer,

I applaud your efforts for continuing your education and working on your doctorate degree. Dr. Hopkins and I have reviewed your information for conducting your research proposal, *Perceptions of High School Minority Students and High School Teachers Regarding Racism: A Phenomenological Study*, and your request to conduct the study using students and teachers at [REDACTED] High School as participants. Please note that as long as you are able to abide by the plans in your proposal to keep student and teacher names confidential, permission is granted for you to conduct your research study during the 2010-2011 school year. Should you need additional time to gather data regarding specific students and teachers beyond the 2010-2011 school, we will review your plans at such time. I look forward to reading your finished product.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Arthur B. E.", written over a blacked-out rectangular area.

[REDACTED] Superintendent

Appendix I: Student Informed Consent Form

Dear Student,

My name is Paige Boomer and I am the English Language Learner teacher at the primary school. I am also a graduate student in the Educational Leadership Program at Liberty University conducting a dissertation study. The study is about how ethnic minority students and high school teachers feel about racism. Although literature shows that much progress has been made to alleviate racism in school, discrimination in education still exists and is one of the most pervasive forms of racism. Racial slurs, bullying, and violence are often forms of racism displayed in schools today. Poor grades and low self-esteem can often be the result of racism. You will be asked to complete a survey and questions about how you feel about racism in your school. This survey can help teachers recognize if racism is occurring and how to help students who are experiencing it. Below is an explanation of the research. If at any time you need further explanation please feel free to contact me.

This study will take place during school hours but will not impact your academic time. I will give you a checklist to complete with questions about racism. I may also interview you individually to discover how you feel about racism. Notes will be taken during the meetings to be reviewed later. Audio tapes will also be taken to review later. I will write up an account of the findings after all interviews are complete. Your name or any other identifiable information will not be included in the report. This report will be presented to Liberty University where the faculty and other doctoral students may view the report. The results of this study could be used to gain knowledge and understanding of racism in order to inform and encourage educators to work to erase racism in schools. The results can be used to improve the quality of education for ethnic minority students. The risks of the study are small. We will simply talk about your experiences with racism. Your experiences will not be reported to school officials or anyone else without your permission unless the information given proves to be harmful to yourself or others. I am required by law to help you if you or someone else can be hurt from a particular situation. The study will focus on positive aspects on how to deal with racism. If at any time you should become distressed and need to speak with someone other than me there are two counseling centers listed below you may contact. The only documents that will have your name on them are checklist and the consent form. The documents will be locked safely in a file cabinet. Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide at any time to stop participating in the study all of your data will be destroyed and removed from the results. If you would like to discuss your experience in the research study you may contact me, my research committee chair, or the IRB at irb@liberty.edu or call (434) 592-4054.

Contact Information:

Paige Boomer
pBoomer@liberty.edu
706-677-2355 (work)
770-364-0876 (cell)

Dr. Connie McDonald (Committee Chair)
cmcdonald2@liberty.edu
434-592-4365 (work)

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign below.

Name _____

Date _____

Investigator's Signature _____

Date _____

Counseling Services: Avita Community Partners-Habersham Mental Health
196 Scoggins Drive Demorest, Ga. 30535
(706) 894-3700

Centerpoint Counseling Services
215 Washington St. Clarkesville, Ga. 30523
(706) 754-8319

Appendix J: Informed Teacher Consent Form

Dear Teacher,

My name is Paige Boomer and I am the English Language Learner teacher at the primary school. I am also a graduate student in the Educational Leadership Program at Liberty University conducting a dissertation study. The study is about how ethnic minority students and high school teachers feel about racism. Although literature shows that much progress has been made to alleviate racism in school, discrimination in education still exist and is one of the most pervasive forms of racism. Racial slurs, bullying, and violence are often forms of racism displayed in schools today. Poor grades and low self-esteem can often be the result of racism. You will be asked to complete a survey and questions about how you feel about racism in your school to help educators recognize if racism is occurring and ways to help students who might be experiencing it. Below is an account of the research. If at any time you need further explanation please feel free to contact me. This study will take place during school hours but will not impact your instructional time. I will give you a checklist to complete with questions about racism. I may also interview you individually to discover how you feel about racism. Notes will be taken during the meetings to be reviewed later. Audio tapes will also be taken to review later. I will write up an account of the findings after all interviews are complete. Your name and other identifiable information will not be included in the report. This report will be presented to Liberty University where the faculty and other doctoral students may view the report.

The results of this study could be used to gain knowledge and understanding of racism in order to inform and encourage educators to work to erase racism in schools. The results can be used to improve the quality of education for ethnic minority students. The risks of the study are small. We will simply talk about your experiences with racism. The study will focus on positive aspects on how to deal with racism. If at any time you become distressed and need to speak with someone other than me there are two counseling centers listed below you may contact. The only documents that will have your name on them are checklist and the consent form. The documents will be locked safely in a file cabinet. Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide at any time to stop participating in the study all of your data will be destroyed and removed from the results. If you would like to discuss your experience in the research study you may contact me, my research committee chair, or the IRB at irb@liberty.edu or call (434) 592-4054.

Contact Information:

Paige Boomer
pBoomer@liberty.edu
706-677-2355 (work)
770-364-0876 (cell)

Dr. Connie McDonald (Committee Chair)
cmcdonald2@liberty.edu
434-592-4365 (work)

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign below.

Name _____ Date _____

Investigator's Signature _____

Date _____

Counseling Services: Avita Community Partners-Habersham Mental Health
196 Scoggins Drive
Demorest, Ga. 30535
(706) 894-3700

Centerpoint Counseling Service
215 Washington St.
Clarksville, Ga. 30523
(706) 754-8319

Appendix K: Parent Informed Consent

Dear Parents,

My name is Paige Boomer and I am the English Language Learner teacher at the primary school. I am also a graduate student in the Educational Leadership Program at Liberty University conducting a dissertation study. The study is about how ethnic minority students and high school teachers feel about racism. Although literature shows that much progress has been made to alleviate racism in school, discrimination in education still exist and is one of the most pervasive forms of racism. Racial slurs, bullying, and violence are often forms of racism displayed in schools today. Poor grades and low self-esteem can often be the result of racism. Your child will be asked to complete a survey and questions about how they feel about racism in their school to help teachers recognize if racism is occurring and how to help students who might be experiencing it. Below is an explanation of the research. If at any time you need further explanation please feel free to contact me.

This study will take place during school hours, but will not impact your child's academic time. I will give your child a checklist to complete with questions about racism. I may also interview your child individually to discover how they feel about racism. Notes will be taken during the meetings to be reviewed later. Audio tapes will also be taken to review later. I will write up an account of the findings after all interviews are complete. Your child's name or any other identifiable information will not be included in the report. This report will be presented to Liberty University where the faculty and other doctoral students may view the report. The results of this study could be used to gain knowledge and understanding of racism in order to inform and encourage educators to work to erase racism in schools. The results can be used to improve the quality of education for ethnic minority students. The risks of the study are small. We will simply talk about their experiences with racism. Your experiences will not be reported to school officials or anyone else without your permission unless the information given proves to be harmful to yourselves or others. I am required by law to help you if you or someone else can be hurt from a particular situation. The study will focus on positive aspects on how to deal with racism. If at any time your child becomes distressed and needs to speak with someone other than me there are two counseling centers listed below you may contact. The only documents that will have your child's name on them are a checklist and the consent form. The documents will be locked safely in a file cabinet. Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide at any time to stop participating in the study all of your child's data will be destroyed and removed from the results. If you would like to discuss your experience in the research study you may contact me, my research committee chair, or the IRB at irb@liberty.edu or call (434) 592-4054.

Contact Information:

Paige Boomer
pBoomer@liberty.edu
706-677-2355 (work)
770-364-0876 (cell)

Dr. Connie McDonald (Committee Chair)
cmcdonald2@liberty.edu
434-592-4365 (work)

If you agree to have your child participate in this study, please sign below.

Child's Name _____ Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's Signature _____ Date _____

Counseling Services: Avita Community Partners-Habersham Mental Health
196 Scoggins Drive Demorest, Ga. 30535
(706) 894-3700

Centerpoint Counseling Services
215 Washington St. Clarkesville, Ga. 30523
(706) 754-8319

Appendix L: Informed Parent Consent (Spanish)

Queridos padres,

Mi nombre es Paige Boomer y yo soy el profesor de la comunidad de aprendizaje de idioma inglés en la escuela primaria. Yo también soy un estudiante graduado en el programa de liderazgo en la educación en la Universidad de la libertad llevando a cabo un estudio de la disertación. El estudio es acerca de cómo étnicas estudiantes pertenecientes a minorías y escuela secundaria profesores sentir sobre el racismo. Aunque la literatura muestra que se ha avanzado mucho para aliviar el racismo en la escuela, discriminación en la educación todavía existe y es una de las formas más generalizadas de racismo. Calumnias raciales, la intimidación y la violencia son a menudo las formas de racismo que se muestran en las escuelas de hoy. Los grados pobres y baja autoestima a menudo pueden ser el resultado del racismo. Su hijo le pedirá que complete una encuesta y preguntas acerca de cómo se sienten acerca de racismo en su escuela para ayudar a los maestros a reconocer si se está produciendo racismo y cómo ayudar a los estudiantes que podrían estar experimentando. A continuación se presenta una explicación de la investigación. Si en cualquier momento que usted necesita mayor explicación no dude en contactar conmigo.

Este estudio llevará a cabo durante el horario escolar, pero no tendrán un impacto académico de tiempo su hijo. Se dan a su hijo una lista de comprobación para completar con preguntas sobre el racismo. También puedo de entrevistar a su hijo individualmente para descubrir cómo se sienten acerca de racismo. Notas se tomarán durante las reuniones que se revise más tarde. También se tendrán cintas de audio para revisar más tarde. Será escribir a una cuenta de las conclusiones, una vez finalizadas todas las entrevistas. Nombre de su hijo o cualquier otra información de identificación no se incluirá en el informe. Este informe será presentado a la Universidad de la libertad, donde la facultad y otros estudiantes de doctorado podrán ver el informe. Los resultados de este estudio podrían utilizarse para obtener el conocimiento y la comprensión del racismo en el fin de informar y alentar a los educadores a trabajar para borrar el racismo en las escuelas. Los resultados pueden utilizarse para mejorar la calidad de la educación para estudiantes de minorías étnicas. Los riesgos del estudio son pequeños. Simplemente, hablaremos acerca de sus experiencias con el racismo. Sus experiencias no se informó a los funcionarios de la escuela o cualquier otra persona sin su autorización a menos que la información dada resulta ser perjudicial para usted o para otros. Estoy obligado por ley a ayudar si usted o alguien más puede ser herido de una situación particular. Si en algún momento su hijo se angustia y necesita hablar con alguien que no soy yo, hay dos centros de orientación se indican a continuación puede ponerse en contacto. El estudio se centrará en aspectos positivos sobre cómo lidiar con el racismo. Los únicos documentos que tendrán el nombre de su hijo en ellos son una lista de comprobación y el formulario de consentimiento. Los documentos se bloqueará en forma segura en un archivador. La participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Si usted decide en cualquier momento para dejar de participar en el estudio todos los datos de su hijo serán destruidos y eliminados de los resultados. Si desea hablar de su experiencia en el estudio de investigación que pueden ponerse en contacto conmigo, mi presidente da la comisión de investigación, o la IRB en irb@liberty.edu o llame al (434) 592-4054.

Información de contacto:

Paige Boomer pBoomer@liberty.edu
706-677-2355 (trabajo) 770-364-0876 (célula)

Dr. Connie McDonald (Presidente del Comité) cmcdonald2@liberty.edu
434-592-4365 (trabajo)

Si está de acuerdo que su niño participar en este estudio, inicie sesión a continuación.

Fecha de nombre del niño _____ Fecha de firma de padres _____ Fecha de firma del investigador _____

Centros de Consejería: Avita Community Partners-Habersham Mental Health
196 Scoggins Drive
Demorest, Ga. 30535
(706) 894-3700

Centerpoint Counseling Services
215 Washington St.
Clarksville, Ga. 30523
(706) 754-8319

Appendix M: Child/Minor Assent Form

I, _____, understand that my parents have given me permission to participate in a study about my feelings on racism in school. I am participating because I want to. I have been told that I can stop at any time and nothing will happen to me.

Signature

Date

Investigator's Signature

Date