Student Perceptions of Teacher Ethnic Bias: A Comparison of Mexican American and Non-Latino White Dropouts and Students
Causes may include
- Nature of school-student relationship
  - School alienation leads to negative feelings toward school
  - Poor relationship with teachers
  - Ultimately cause students to leave school because they don’t like school
STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

- Students feel they are treated different because of their ethnic background-Mexican American especially
- Cause students to feel uncomfortable with school
- These students feel as if they have low academic expectations-Latino students
Purpose of this study is to:

- Address the issue of student perception of teacher ethnic bias in Latino and non-Latino students as well as dropouts and non-dropouts.
- Also addressing students at-risk for dropping out were also considered in this study.
PARTICIPANTS

Sample included three groups of adolescents:
- School dropouts grades 7-12 having not attended school for at least 30 days
- Students at risk of dropping out
- A control group of students

- Participants were Mexican American and non-Latino white adolescents
Drop out students and at-risk students were randomly selected from a group of students from a school generated list.

Control students were also randomly selected.
THE SURVEY

- Field workers employed by the district fluent in Spanish and English contacted potential participants
- Students 18 and older were explained the survey and completed consent forms
- Students under 18 parents were contacted, the project fully explained and written parental consent was obtained
The survey was either completed at school or another public building.
No time limit was put on the questionnaire.
Proctors helped students with reading questions but did not see student responses.
Complete surveys were put in large envelopes and personally sealed.
Complete surveys were either mailed to research office.
Sample questions were similar to the following:

- How much did the teachers at your school like the kids who were Spanish or Mexican American when you were in 7th grade?
- How much did the teachers at your school like the kids who were Anglo or White-American during this last year?
- Response choices were “not at all”, “not much”, “some”, “a lot”
Ethnicity was the only factor which was found statistically significant.

- It was found that ethnic background is the strongest factor influencing perception of bias.

- Mexican-American participants were more likely to perceive bias than non-Latino white participants.

- Males were more likely than females to perceive high bias.
FINDINGS

- The majority of students felt their teachers liked Mexican-American students as well as non-Latino white students.
- Yet, over a quarter of the participants felt that teachers liked students of non-Latino white descent better than Mexican American descent.
RAMIFICATIONS

- School climate is affected by students' perception of bias, whether perceived or actual.
- At times, teachers have lower expectations for Mexican American students compared to non-Latino white students.
- Dropouts perceived high ethnic bias from their teachers compared with students still in school.
Research in this area is very limited and has a continual need for reassessment, as student perceptions have a huge impact on student success.
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