

Racial Justice Climate Survey Proposal

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SWK 558: Research Methods

Alliance University

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Introduction

According to Pew Research,” 65% of Black Americans say the increased national attention on racial inequality has not led to changes that improved their lives. Moreover, 44% say equality for Black people in the United States is not likely to be achieved as of October 2021. During the 2015–2016 school year, Black students represented only 15% of total US student enrollment, but 35% of students were suspended once, 44% of students were suspended more than once, and 36% of students were expelled. The US Department of Education concluded that this disparity is “not explained by more frequent or more serious misbehavior by students of color.”(*School Climate and Safety*). By 2036, more than 50 percent of US high school graduates will be people of color. What are the possibilities that people of color will encounter racism and discrimination? We already know that systemic inequalities exist in our society. Whether racial, gender, economic, or social.

We must first consider what social work is and the reasoning behind Social Work. According to IFSW, Social Work is based on respect for equality for all, the value of people, and their dignity. It focuses on meeting the needs of the people and developing their potential through motivation and social justice. The Social Work “profession strives to alleviate poverty and liberate vulnerable and oppressed people to promote social inclusion” (IFSW, 2000).

The following definitions of critical terms provide the conceptual framework for this study (Racial Equity Tools, 2020).

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Racism: One group can carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and procedures. Implicit bias: Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically without conscious awareness.

Problem Statement

The problem we will seek to address or focus on is racial inequality within the higher learning system of Alliance University. Inequality occurs in many forms, such as Income-based inequality of subgroups which is racial inequality. Racial injustice and biases may affect student enrollment, morale, and completion of a higher education degree. Both explicit and implicit biases may further cause an impact on higher education, from college hazing to campus crime and even discriminatory practices throughout the college experience. Implicit biases within the higher learning system may result in low enrollment and succession. Looking at how we change these disparities in the social justice climate system is essential. When we assess injustices experienced by those under-represented or overrepresented in the social justice system, we address the issues contributing to these disparities. Although we might be able to confirm that support for anti-discrimination is growing, we are still a long way from eradicating it. Thus, this research study will seek to expose the racial injustice occurring within Alliance University and humbly offer safe and healthy suggestions to eliminate racial injustice gradually.

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Significance of Study

With the high visibility of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in the media today and racism and discrimination, social and racial justice has become an ongoing serious issue. According to the Oxford dictionary, the definition of CRT “is a set of ideas holding that racial bias is inherent in many parts of western society, especially in its legal and social institutions, based on having been primarily designed for and implemented by white people.”

This proposal suggests expanding on the Racial Climate Survey Proposal previously conducted at Alliance University (Barker, S, 2001). This research proposal will further dissect how racial justice, implicit and explicit biases, and other discriminatory behavior continue to be issued within higher education learning systems. Utilizing the previous framework provided by the initial racial climate survey task force, we will look at the current racial justice climate and formulate proposals for improvement. For this study, however, we are focusing on the same situation of Racial Justice concerns, broadening our scope of work to include the whole institution of Alliance University and its students. The prior study was only the social work Undergraduate and Graduates students. This was a smaller sample size than the one we are trying to see now with the entire University.

As an institution that serves a diverse group of students, the quality of students' experiences is of concern to faculty and students alike. The value of learning comes at a price where our perceptions of inclusion may be a doorway or a barrier in the higher learning journey. We seek to keep equity in the minds of the faculty and students as part of the campus culture

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while earning a higher education degree. With racial justice, we should understand how racism can affect a student's mental and physical health.

Literature Review

History of Racial Injustice

Perceptions of Racism in Educational Settings

Racism in the 21st century has been a hot-button issue. Systemic racism in higher education and perceived racism in education settings has been around for years. This study aims to understand the perceptions of racism and its effect on the Alliance University community. Perceived racism can affect a person's mental and physical well-being as well as performance in educational settings. Racism is a risk factor for academic excellence throughout the learning process. Higher education was initially designed to serve the white majority and prepare white men for societal leadership roles (Karabel, 2005; Thelin, 2011). Perceptions of racism through higher education have been seen at a policy level at the Federal and institutionalized levels. We know that racism may be perceived differently by different ethnic groups (White, Black, etc.). Seeming how perceptions of racism are made through policies though well-meaning, such as the GI Bill or affirmative action on the federal level, are ways that you can expand educational equity for all students.

Understanding your own biases and creating the link between unbiased and biased thought processes may seem like an easy task; however, when looked at intensely, it begins to

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paint a bigger picture. According to (Bartlett, 2017), “the idea that unacknowledged prejudices often lurk just below society’s surface” may reiterate that while our biases are prevalent, they are sometimes hidden until provoked. It is unconscious until it becomes relevant and conscious. According to Bartlett, research was done for over twenty years studying examinations.

Explicit and Implicit Biases in Educational Settings

According to google.com, Implicit Bias is actions based on prejudice and stereotypes without intending to do so. Therefore this is an unconscious thought process or act which we tend not to recognize or acknowledge. Explicit bias, on the other hand, is the actions based on prejudice and stereotypes from our thoughts. Research on implicit bias has identified several conditions in which individuals are most likely to rely on their unconsciousness in different situations (Staats, 2016). For example, an educator's perception of the student they are teaching without fully understanding that student’s struggle, if any, to get where they are today. Staats (2016, wanted to shed light on implicit bias with a view of the educator and ways they can mitigate the effects of their biases.

Other Forms of Discrimination in Educational Settings

In the previous racial climate survey report, it was stated that they conducted a review in a related study; 98.8% of respondents (minority students) reported having experienced microaggressions, and 24.8% of those respondents were social work students (Lilly, Owens, Bailey, Ramirez, Brown, Clawson, & Vidal, 2018). This brought about a generalization as to

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how social work programs should be working to address this discrimination in the educational setting. Continuation of studies will gear towards becoming racially just and sensitive to the concerns being brought forward.

Mental Illness and racial justice

Research indicates that mental illness has contributed to social issues in society. We have witnessed first-hand the havoc and impacting effects of untreated mental illness on society. People with mental illness or disorders face stigmas and misconceptions associated with the illness and are often excluded. According to Ventriglio and Bhugra (2015), social justice and dignity go hand in hand. Despite one's mental status, they are afforded the right to higher education and, therefore, should feel included. d according to it is imperative to ensure clients and families receive appropriate treatment and raise awareness to avoid discrimination in the social, economic, and health arenas. There is a significant amount of people diagnosed with mental illnesses and able to function in an education s setting with adequate support fully.

How we have been dealing with Racial Injustice

Research Question

- 1) What are the student perceptions of racism, implicit bias, and other forms of discrimination [racial injustice] within Alliance University?
- 2) What are the University's strengths and areas of improvement related to student perceptions of racism, implicit bias, and other forms of discrimination [racial justice]?

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Research Method

Research Design:

The current research study employed a mixed-method research design to learn about the perspectives of those experiencing racial injustices, biases (both implicit and explicit), and other forms of discrimination. According to Yegidis et al. (2012), qualitative research provides insight into how an individual feel about a situation; their perspective on a given issue. The current study seeks to identify the experiences of individuals through an exploratory approach that may be conducive to our research to explore the perspective of students, faculty, and alums at Alliance University and not just BSW/ MSW students.

Sampling Plan:

The survey sample will include students, faculty, and alumni that are or were enrolled in programs at Alliance University. Participants are consenting adults who range in age, gender, and race/ethnicity. These demographics will be collected as part of the survey. We would like the sample size to be at least 500 out of the 1,000+ people at Alliance University. We will be using

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availability sampling to complete the research. Due to the virtual nature of the survey, participants have a choice to complete the survey.

We would like the sample size to be at least 500 out of the 1,000+ people at Alliance University. Although risks are low, there is always the possibility that participants reflecting on their experiences with racism and discrimination could be triggering to some degree. Participants can stop taking the survey at any time, and none of the questions on the survey are 'required,' so participants do not have to answer anything they do not want to answer. We will encourage participation as an incentive by offering a chance to win a gift card.

Data Collection :

Data collected will be in the form of a Survey. Data collected will include basic demographics of age, gender, racial/ethnic identity, and how the participant is linked to Alliance University. The survey includes several close-ended questions about participants' experiences with racism while part of the school's programs; these questions ask participants to answer based on a Likert-type scale. The survey also asks two open-ended questions that allow participants to expand on their answers in the close-ended portion. Participants will be recruited via an email page where the survey link will be available.

The survey included the following:

- Demographic questions: race/ethnicity; gender; program and status; age.
- Several closed-ended questions using a 5-point Likert-type scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree.'

Example

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- Racism is a problem at Alliance University
- Discrimination is a problem at Alliance University.
- Have you ever felt on campus being targeted because of your race?
- How Culturally Sensitive is Alliance University?

The research is taking place via a virtual link that will be provided through email and social media. The data will be collected anonymously.

Data Analysis Plan:

The data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis of the open-ended questions. We operationalize the study by using the experiences of racial injustice as the key terms; then, we will use a survey to measure the participants' experiences. For will use a sample t-test and the responses from participants from the open-ended questions

Conclusion

In this proposal, we have brought forth the concerns surrounding racial injustice at Alliance University. We have outlined harmful biased practices which have contributed in part or as a whole to the misconception that implicit and explicit biases and other forms of discrimination are the actions of an individual. We have noted that it is not a simple fix or a rare, isolated event incorporated by individual attitudes and actions. We argue that racism is ongoing, progressive, and intensifying as society changes. Systematic advantages by white

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people and disadvantaged minorities of different ethnic groups in education remain a concern. We seek to offer standard recommendations for how Alliance University students, faculty, and alumni can help overcome these harmful and ongoing racial, biased, and discriminatory practices.

The findings in this study can better inform practice so that all can be aware of their own biases when engaging with each other during their time at Alliance University. Within the current climate, students, faculty, and alumni tend to have biases regarding the University programs, curriculum, and practices and may or may not be treated differently if their opinions are voiced by not understanding or due to a lack of knowledge of the concern each would need to be aware of their own biases which may surface.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY

The Racial Justice Climate Survey of Alliance University

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

Alliance University students, faculty, alumni

PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY

To See where Alliance University stands with Racial Justice/

STUDY PROCEDURES (What we will do)

Survey sample question:

- Racism is a problem at Alliance University
- Discrimination is a problem at Alliance University.

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- Have you ever felt on campus being targeted because of your race?
- How Culturally Sensitive is Alliance University?

RISKS

There are no risks involved in this research study.

BENEFITS

The benefits of this study will benefit the culture of Alliance University

There are no direct benefits of the study to the participants. We hope the findings will help improve the culture at Alliance University.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All responses received will be completely anonymous.

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VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

CONSENT

DESCRIPTION OF RECRUITMENT AND PROCEDURES

- Participants will be recruited via email (current students and faculty at Alliance University) and via the Alliance University Facebook page (mainly targeting alumni), where the link to the survey will be available there.
- We would like the sample size to be at least 500
- The research is taking place virtually.

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CONFIDENTIALITY PROCEDURES

- Surveys are submitted anonymously, and all findings will be reported in aggregate. Suppose direct quotes are used as part of the thematic analysis of the open-ended questions. In that case, care will be given to removing anything from a quote that could identify an individual participant.
- The data will be collected anonymously.
- Coding and data material will be stored electronically, with access to files given only to those who are part of the research team.

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH RISKS & BENEFITS

Although risks are low, there is the potential that asking participants to reflect on their experiences with racism and discrimination could cause some psychological distress. Participants can stop taking the survey at any time, and none of the questions on the survey are ‘required,’ so participants do not have to answer anything they do not want to answer. There are no direct benefits of the study to the subjects. We hope the findings will help improve the social work programs at Alliance University.

INFORMED CONSENT PROCEDURES

Since this research survey will be done electronically, a short description of the purpose of the survey and a request to participate will be sent as a ‘cover letter’ with the survey link. By clicking on the link, participants are consenting to participate. It would follow the format below or similar.

Dear Students, faculty, and Alumni,

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The Racial Justice Task Force is interested in understanding your experiences of racism, implicit bias, and other forms of discrimination within the confines of Alliance University. We hope to use this information to make decisions concerning curriculum, policy, and practices that are racially just. We know that you are very busy, particularly at this time in the semester, but please know that your input is valuable. The survey is anonymous, and we will only report aggregate findings. If you would like to participate, please access the survey using this link:

Alliance University Racial Climate Survey Link:

- <https://forms.gle/AL4HdL6hzATDCHKn9>

Sincerely,

Racial Justice Task Force