

PSYCHOLOGY LITERATURE REVIEW



Literature Review

Writing Service

Prejudice and Discrimination

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Prejudice and Discrimination

Prejudice and discrimination are major social problems in society today. Many people are discriminated against based on their color, nationality, social status, sexual orientation, and religious affiliations. Strategies need to be put in place to mitigate this issue following its adverse impacts on the affected. Racism is one of the common types of prejudice and discrimination in society today, where people are discriminated against based on their color and cultural backgrounds. Discrimination based on sexual orientation is becoming more prominent today following a civilization from rapidly changing technology which stands as one of the major causes of behavioral change. This paper will scrutinize prejudice and discrimination in society. The origin, causes, and effects of prejudice and discrimination in society will be discussed in this paper. This paper involves a review of literature on prejudice and discrimination issues; thus, credible and first-hand information will be needed. For this reason, primary sources of data will be utilized for well-examined and evaluated data concerning the research topic.

Prejudice and Discrimination

As defined by Di Stasio and Larsen (2020), prejudice is the biasing of a particular group of people based on their membership in social settings. Prejudice also refers to the dislike of an individual or a group of individuals without a logical idea. It is usually a belief that a certain group of people is more advantaged than others, which results in this social problem. Similarly, Krosch et al. (2017) defined discrimination as the unjust treatment of people based on their sex, age, color, and cultural backgrounds. Discrimination cases in society are increasing rapidly following civilization, mainly leading to changes in gender identity, gender impression, and sexual orientation.

Origin of Prejudice and Discrimination

Prejudice and discrimination are integral parts of human experiences, which manifest in different ways in our daily lives. This is a common universal social issue evident in societies following its major impacts on the affected. According to Krosch et al. (2017), prejudice and discrimination have their roots in genetic or evolutionary heritage, highly influenced by individual and cultural factors. Historical factors also play a role in the origin of prejudice and discrimination in society today. Many people from different cultural backgrounds have made culture inevitable is the main origin of this social problem. Prejudice and discrimination origin is based on an evolutionary basis,

like human subsistence groups. Culture assigns different values to the society in which all individuals are supposed to live to their standards, of which those that do not are observed as outcasts.

The evolution model for the origin and development can be used for an extensive understanding of the roots of prejudice and discrimination (Veit et al., 2021). The model bases its arguments on genes, anatomy, behavior, and social and physical aspects of directing the psychological development of this social issue. The model states that genes and culture co-evolve over time which is sustainable over generations. Genes and culture influence how prejudice and discrimination originated as an initial case and will continue recurring over generations. As genes and culture evolve, unjust treatment will also be passed from one social group to another, creating a spiral problem that keeps repeating itself.

Similarly, group norm theory can be used to illustrate the origin of prejudice and discrimination. Veit et al. (2021) observed that prejudice also developed due to group formation, identification, and continuous interaction. Every group has its cultural practices and norms, and one group views its practice as superior and better than the other groups. In this case, the group will convince the other group to conform to their traditions. Those who fail to conform to these traditions and norms from the superior community will not be treated with justice, thus the emergence of prejudice and discrimination.

Causes of Prejudice and Discrimination

Prejudice and discrimination are common social problems in our society today, and it has a range of causes, ranging from sociological and psychological causes. Some of the main causes of prejudice and discrimination include authoritarian personality, Social status and ethnocentrism, threats and fear, and economic competition. The authoritarian personality is one of the major factors towards the origin and cause of prejudice and discrimination in society. The authoritarian mentality is where a particular group is perceived as superiors while the others are viewed as inferiors. Authoritarians have some attributes, which include rigid beliefs, holding on to the beliefs and values of society, they do not tolerate any weakness in society, having strict forms of punishment, and respect the rule of law. According to Krosch et al. (2017), authoritarians have a greater desire for conformity of their values with other minority groups and fear diversity. This is why they cause prejudice and discrimination in society to restrict their rule and

avoid diversity. On the same note, American Psychological Association (APA) (2016) highlighted that authoritarians are also at high risk for prejudice and discrimination as people fear frustrations from their rule and their belief in harsh and strict punishment when in power.

Moreover, social status and ethnocentrism is also a major cause of prejudice and discrimination. The need to maintain or increase one social status in society is a major social cause of prejudice and discrimination in society. In most cases, the minorities in society are the ones that are at high risk of prejudice and discrimination from the majority groups. Also, people with low or declining social status are more likely to face prejudice and discrimination. Veit et al. (2021) noted that people with low social class include those with low education and income levels in society. This group of people is discriminated against in the provision of public services, including education, which is major empowerment for people in the current society.

Threats and fear play a role in prejudice and discrimination in society. Threats range from physical fear to loss of material wealth or financial freedom. Threats may be directed at immigrants or the minority group in a society with high competition for jobs (Francioli & North, 2021). Immigrants or minorities will have more qualifications for the jobs and thus take more jobs than the locals or the majority groups, which is a major threat to the local population. The majority group will then use threats and fears, including negative media portrayals of the group and issuing criminal penalties without wrongs done to intimidate them, which lowers competition in society. Threats and fears cause physical and mental harm to the affected individuals resulting in psychological victimization (Francioli & North, 2021).

Economic competition in society can also result in prejudice and discrimination. From the findings, Veit et al. (2021) highlighted that economic factors play a major role in prejudice and discrimination in society. People use economic competition for personal gains to ensure that they remain dominant in society. A perfect example is an economic competition causing prejudice and discrimination against Britain's economic dominance to colonize different continents. Britain colonized major parts of Africa, India, Asia, Australia, and North America from its powerful nature created by economic dominance. Britain benefited from cheap labor from these continents through prejudice and racial dominance. Britain used racial dominance to maintain and elevate their economic dominance and thus prevent others from having economic

benefits (Krosch et al., 2017).

Effects of Prejudice and Discrimination

As observed by Forscher et al. (2015), the effects of prejudice and discrimination are closely related to the affected group's physical, financial, and health well-being. These effects include reduced opportunities, poor health outcomes, and loss of self-worth and self-esteem. From the APA (2016) research, one of the major causes of prejudice and discrimination is economic dominance in society. Those with financial welfare in society are perceived as superiors, while those with low financial freedom as inferiors. For this reason, the economic benefit is one of the reasons in which prejudice and discrimination occur, which impacts how opportunities are shared in social settings. Prejudiced individuals or groups will have lower chances or rather financial opportunities as most will be issued to economically dominant individuals or groups. The long-term effect of limited opportunities results in low-income levels providing for families. Lack of income impacts the nutrition of a family where a low-income earning family will not be able to provide a balanced diet for the family daily, thus resulting in malnutrition and other health problems (American Psychological Association, 2016).

Besides, poor health outcomes are also related to prejudice and discrimination. According to Di-Stasio and Larsen (2020), discrimination affects the mental well-being of the affected individuals. Prejudice and discrimination result in anxiety, stress, and depression, major factors in mental illnesses. More people who have mental illnesses due to prejudice and discrimination fear seeking health care following stigma, which worsens their mental illnesses. This restricts people from participating in various community activities and increases the chances that the affected group will not receive equal education opportunities compared to those with no mental illness. According to the research by Krosch et al. (2017), mental health problems may have lower access to health care which has adverse impacts on the deterioration of their health. This may result in severe mental illnesses whose long-term effect is death if appropriate care is not offered.

Moreover, people who are prejudiced and discriminated against in society have a high chance of losing self-worth and self-esteem. Forscher et al. (2015) studied the impact of prejudice and discriminated and found out that prejudice has the potential to cause stigma, which may be internalized by the impacted individuals having serious problems on issues to do with their

self-esteem. In the research, the author noted that self-esteem was closely related to a lack of self-worth before accessing health care services. This impacts their health outcomes following depression from the negative self-identity and lack of self-worth. Those experiencing prejudice and discrimination should be treated with care and offered greater access to healthcare services to reduce their health outcomes. Cases of prejudice and discrimination should be reduced significantly in society to reduce the stigma, which has severe impacts if not treated appropriately (Viet et al., 2021).

In conclusion, prejudice and discrimination are still major social problems in today's society. Discrimination based on color, age, sexual orientation, and social status is how prejudice and discrimination manifest in society. Origin, causes, and impacts are some of the questions answered in this paper. Prejudice and discrimination were closely related to genetic or evolutionary heritages in which genes co-evolve with culture. This results in the passing of unjust practices from one generation to the other. On the causes, prejudice and discrimination include authoritarian personality, social status and ethnocentrism, threats and fear, and economic competition were found to be some of the causes of prejudice and discrimination. Authoritarians were at high risk for discrimination and unjust treatment in society, following their harsh and strict punishment during leadership. Some people also tend to take advantage of social status in society to exploit and discriminate against others. People with high social status view those with low or declining social class as minorities and thus treated without justice. Some effects of prejudice and discrimination were reduced opportunities, poor health outcomes, and loss of self-worth and self-esteem.

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