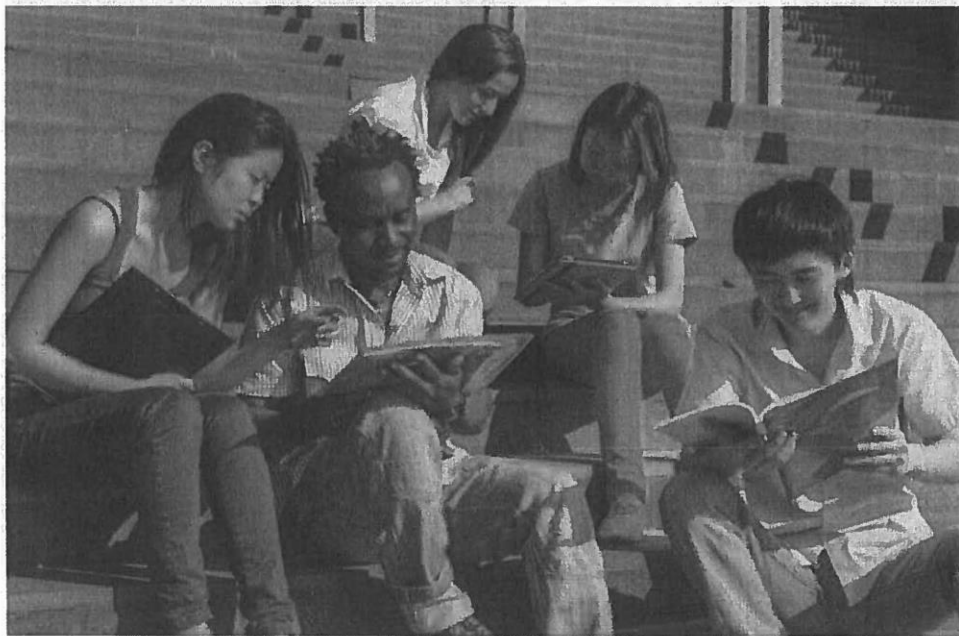


# Candidate 3 evidence

## Sociology Assignment

Word count: 2249



**HYPOTHESIS** – Ethnic Minority groups have more disadvantages than white students, this therefore leads to ethnic minorities underachieving more in secondary school.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The social issue which is being discussed within this essay is ethnicity and education. The topic I am focusing on is if people with an ethnic minority background have disadvantages compared to white students within school, and how this leads to ethnic minorities underachieving. During 2018 the department of education released statistics based on grades from all types of ethnicities. It provided evidence that Black Caribbean children in England were underachieving by around 7% when sitting GCSES in England, however if you compare this with White, Pakistani, and Black African children they all achieve results close to the national average which is an average of 46.5%, whereas Black Caribbean children are underachieving by a percentage of around 39%. An article from the guardian which was wrote in 2021 states that Black Caribbean children are excluded up to six times higher than white children in school. Within this article there are many stories which point towards racism being a key factor as to why grades are significantly lower in schools compared to their white peers. One student was referred to as a 'gorilla' by a teacher in school. Poverty can also be linked as to why this ethnic group are underachieving within schools as white children are more likely to not live in an extreme poverty as some ethnic minority groups.

A common sense viewpoint regarding why certain ethnic minority groups don't do as well as White students when performing in their GCSE exams would be certain ethnic minority groups such as Black Caribbean students would labelled as lazy compared to White students who aren't labelled as this and it would be said that Black Caribbean students would have to work harder to achieve better grades. However, a sociological explanation would differ on this. A sociologist would therefore research this topic at hand and conclude that ethnic minority groups are living in poverty in the UK, therefore this means that these students are at a disadvantage as they may not be able to afford the necessities such as books to learn or pencils.

## **SECONDARY RESEARCH (1<sup>ST</sup> FINDING)**

My first example of research for this Assignment is the Tony Sewell study on Black Caribbean boys within education. Tony Sewell's study took place in 1997, he studied black Caribbean boys and their relationship between family life, who they are as a person, culture on the street and their education. Sewell based this on Black Caribbean boys from the age of 11-16 in a school that was an only boy's school, he wanted to discover if this was the reason as to why Black Caribbean boys weren't doing well regarding attainment.

## **FINDINGS**

Tony Sewell's research revealed many things. It revealed that 57 per cent of Black Caribbean boys were raised by a mother only compared to whiter families who stood at 25 per cent with a mother only, therefore this means that these boys lack a role model that is a fatherly figure. Sewell claimed this meant that boys would be more exposed to peer pressure.

Sewell's research also found that young boys are dragged into certain gangs that place great emphasis towards a violent, macho form of masculinity. This therefore means that if you are part of a gang you change as a person, these members think they deserve respect off high authority figures such as the police or their teachers this means that they will not give these people respect. This black masculinity is targeted by the media and is emphasised as black street crime and gun culture.

Sewell stated that this subculture of black masculinity for Black Caribbean boys supplies a safe place for a lot of Black Caribbean boys. These boys feel accepted in this subculture, and they also feel a sense of support from their peers in this subculture, this therefore repays the feeling of rejection by their fathers and the education system that they study within that they feel is racist.

### **EVALUATION**

Tony Sewell's research on Black Caribbean boys within education has advantages and disadvantages regarding the research process. The method Tony Sewell used in order to gather evidence was participant observation. This method means that the researcher becomes a part of the group that he is researching, he will join in with their activities, therefore he will witness their natural behaviour.

An advantage of this research method being used by Tony Sewell is It gives an in-depth picture of the group's behaviour, this can be done as Tony Sewell is part of the group therefore, he is treated like one of the boys, this means that the validity is high as well.

However, there are disadvantages to the method Tony Sewell used. One of the disadvantages being the research method used is very costly to do and the method is very time consuming, this is because the researcher must be with the group at all times.

Another disadvantage regarding this research method is the researcher will be out of place within the group being studied, although the researcher is joining in with the activities and trying to look as normal as possible this still might not be the case for the group. This therefore means that the behaviour of the group might be changed, this therefore makes the research invalid as it is not true behaviour.

### **ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

A theory which can be linked to Tony Sewell's study on black Caribbean boys within education is Marxism. Marxism is known as the Karl Marx theory, Marxism believes that to survive in society we join relationships to allow production. Marx states there are two classes in society, the Bourgeoisie who own the means of production and the other class being the Proletariat this is the working class. In schools a lot of Black Caribbean boys are ignored and do not receive enough help because they are part of the Proletariat class. However, if you compare this to white students within school they are looked to as a higher class because of their skin colour, this therefore means there is a bias regarding help for ethnic minorities in school, therefore ethnic minorities are at a disadvantage regarding exams.

### **SECONDARY RESEARCH (2<sup>ND</sup> FINDING)**

The second example of research for this assignment is a study conducted by Heidi Safia Mirza the study is called Young, Female and Black, this research took place in 1992. This study is based around 198 younger men and women, this included around 62 black women from the ages of 15-19, the black women were the centre of attention within this study. These students attended two different high schools in the south London area. Mirza used a variety of different methods to gather data for her study this included observation, questionnaires to gain basic data and informal interviews with

members who took part of the study and with parents as well. Mirza had the use of second-hand sources and she also carried out case studies with specifically 3 black women.

### **FINDINGS**

Heidi Merza's research revealed many things regarding the research she did within these two schools. Mirza described a few teachers as 'overt racists'. She found that one of the teachers used the word 'wog' to one of the girls at the school, when Mirza researched into this more the girls at the school would try and avoid these specific 3 teachers at the school as they didn't want to face the negativity, they got because of their skin colour.

Mirza also found a group of teachers who were described as 'the Christians', this was the group of teachers that looked at every student the same and didn't look at them differently because of their ethnic group, because of this, teachers failed to push black students hard enough for them to achieve the best exam results possible. Mirza found that black girls were getting reports that were really good even though their achievements were not as good, this left black girls at a disadvantage because they couldn't identify what they had to work on.

Mirza also found that a group of teachers wanted to help black students a lot, but this help was patronising and often in effective. Mirza said that the teachers of this group thought they understood their problems and knew what was best for them. An example of this was a teacher stopping a black girl from sitting all her exams because she thought it was too much of a workload, the teacher believed she was overworked at home with chores, however this was not the case she was trying to achieve enough qualifications to enter a social work course.

### **EVALUATION**

Mirza's study on the 198 students within the high schools has advantages and disadvantages regarding the research methods she used. Mirza used a variety of methods to gain information for her research which included observation, questionnaires, informal interviews and second hand information for example records from the school offices and exam results.

As Mirza used the method questionnaires to gain basic data for the research this came with many advantages. Another advantage being questionnaires can be sent out to a large population of people, this therefore means that a lot of data is being gathered creating a lot of evidence for the study.

Another advantage to Mirza's study is the method of questionnaires is very simple. For example, you can create a questionnaire based on what you want to find out, after doing this it requires minimum involvement from the researcher, all you need to do is ask people to fill out the questionnaire, therefore this means that it is not time consuming.

However, this research method has disadvantages as well, one of the disadvantages is the response you might get is poor. Examples of this could be the respondents with the questionnaire might not fill in the questionnaire and ignore it, they might fill out the questionnaire, but they may not fill it out truthfully and instead will give socially acceptable answers, therefore this means that the research might become invalid.

### **ANALYSIS**

A theory which can be linked to Safia Mirza's study on comprehensive students in South London can be Interactionism. This theory looks at daily interactions that happen within school each day and it analyses the classroom in schools from a macroscopic level. The main features of this theory include the study of education through smaller groups, it places emphasis on the individual to control their own environment, and it outlines the importance of interactions, for example being labelled and how this could affect the way students perform in exams. Mirza found labelling when conducting her research, she found that a girl was labelled as a 'wog', this is a major problem as being labelled with a racist word like this can have a massive effect on someone. This can be linked to self-fulfilling prophecy, this is where a label attached to a student regardless of how true it is will come true. Labelling like this can affect the student's performance in exams as they might not get on with the teacher, therefore this means that they cannot get help etc... leading them to underachieve in exams.

### **CONCLUSION**

Overall, I conclude that the research hypothesis has been accepted as the findings of the research clearly state the disadvantages ethnic minorities have attaining good grades.

I believe that Marxism offers the best explanation for this research. I believe this because a lot of children from ethnic minority groups come from backgrounds which are not as wealthy as white ethnic group families, this then means that they are stereotyped to do not as well as others, therefore do not have the funds for a private school, study materials etc... this therefore leads to ethnic minority groups being discriminated in school.

I believe that Interactionism does not offer as good an opinion as Marxism does regarding the issues with ethnicity in the education sector, I believe this because it looks at small groups instead of looking at the bigger picture, this therefore means that you cannot extract enough information from smaller groups to make a judgement regarding ethnic minorities being disadvantaged within education.

The government has attempted to tackle ethnicity problems, by putting guidelines in place regarding racism. Guidelines such as using content such as videos, books etc.... that show diversity and teacher tool kits on how to be as diverse as possible when teaching.

Another suggestion as to what can be done in schools by the government is it could be talked more in teacher meetings, stating that racial stereotyping should not be happening, and every person should be treated as an equal. Overall, more awareness should be raised in schools to shut down racism and stop it becoming a constant problem.



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