

The Negative Impact of Racial Discrimination Experienced by African-American People Reflected in Angie Thomas' *The Hate You Give*

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Abstract

This study analyzes Negative Impact of Racial Discrimination Experienced by African-American People as Reflected in Angie Thomas' The Hate You Give using Racial Discrimination approach. It shows some forms of negative impact from racial discrimination experienced by them. This study used descriptive qualitative method. The data of the study consisted of sentences, prologues, monologues and dialogues that was obtained by reading the novel, identifying, classifying, reducing, analyzing the data as qualitative. The primary data fully dealt with The Hate You Give novel, the secondary data were cited from some sources such as books, journals, and articles. The study results finding, there are health problem, wellbeing problem and influencing emotional reactions.

Keywords: African-American People, Racial Discrimination, Negative Impact.

1. INTRODUCTION

America is multicultural country which embraces multiculturalism understanding. It is done to resolve problems in society life because of different cultural background. One of them is racial discrimination. Blacks experience racial discrimination because of their skin color. Explanation of racial discrimination on *International Convention*:

...mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, [color], descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. (Dimensions of Racism 4)

According to another expert says that "Racial discrimination concerns the unequal treatment of races, whereas racial inequality concerns unequal outcomes (in income, education, health, etc.)" (Clair and Denis 857). From the explanations above it can be concluded that racial discrimination is unfair treatment based on race, color, ethnic, descent or national origin that aims to nullifying the recognition, enjoyment, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the social, political, economic etc. That is doing racial discrimination it is called racist, definition of racist is "A pejorative adjective referring to an attitude of ...discrimination...as manifested by word or deed in

political, economic, social, cultural...” (Hauptfleisch 88). It means that racist is a demeaning adjective which refers to an attitude of discrimination that is done with word or deed. The racial discrimination is very detrimental for the victims because it can bring out some negative impact for them. The purpose of the study explains the negative impacts of racial discrimination experienced by African-American people reflected in Angie Thomas' *The Hate You Give*.

Discrimination is certainly very detrimental to the victims because it can bring out various negative impacts, María José Añón explains that, “The purpose or effect of discriminatory acts is the impairment of the recognition or enjoyment, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms” (233). It shows that discrimination can omit equality between groups. Moreover, discrimination towards a group can improve the threat up for the same individuals or groups as explained by Dovidio and Hebl that “...the impact of discrimination toward groups can pose a threat to individuals and organizations alike...” (qtd. in Goldman et al. 802).

America is a country that upholds human rights as described in *Declaration of independence at July 4, 1776* which states “...that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” (1). Racial discrimination clearly violates the basic human rights because it can omit the rights for the victims. African American people (Blacks) have experienced racial discrimination as explained by Kessler, Mickelson, and Williams that “Research has found that a majority of African Americans have experienced racial discrimination...” (qtd. in Hope, Hoggard, and Thomas 342). Simons et al. also explain that “African American...are also exposed to discrimination through the experiences of others in their family, peer group, and communities” (qtd. in Phillips 6). The source above becomes evidence that almost all African American people have experienced the racial discrimination either directly or indirectly.

Some sources explain about the negative impacts that appears from racial discrimination. As which is explained by Settles, Buchanan, and Yap on their book that “Racial discrimination has serious consequences, including negatively impacting psychological, physical and work outcomes” (2). Another sources from *Victorian Health Promotion Foundation* also explains that “There is strong evidence that race-based discrimination is associated with poor mental health and wellbeing, including anxiety, depression, stress and poor quality of life” (VicHealth, 8). For more details, the following is going to be explained some of the negative impacts from racial discrimination:

First, it is health problem. Racial discrimination certainly has some negative impacts on health as which are explained by Ahmed, Mohammed and Williams on their article that “Racial discrimination exerts deleterious effects on health through multiple mechanisms” (326). The driving mechanism for the health problems are the experience of acute and chronic stress caused by racial discrimination. Spence et al. explain that “One mechanism driving the adverse effect of racial discrimination on health is the experience of acute and chronic stress” (299). Racial discrimination indeed can make stressed. This is explanation about:

Self-reported experiences of racial discrimination have been the subject of greatest study in racism research, with members of racialized groups aware of at least some of the experiences of discrimination, resulting in elevated stress levels. The traumatic experience of racial discrimination can have long-lasting effects over time (Spence et al. 301).

Aside from the traumatic of racial discrimination experience it has a long-term effect. It also can weaken the victims. It is explained by Jernigan and Daniel on their journal that "...physiological impact of trauma is often experienced as debilitating for victims" (126).

In addition, there is a source which explains that "...repeated exposure to...racial discrimination can cause illness after a time" (Rollins 213) because "...exposure to racial discrimination, directly and indirectly, can reinforce feelings of injustice, powerlessness, and victimization." (Phillips 13). It means that the victims who are several times exposed to the racial discrimination directly or indirectly, can cause illness after some time later. It happens because racial discrimination is a fundamental determinant of health as explained by Spence et al. that "Racial discrimination is...fundamental determinant of health, causing proximate health risk factors, health ailments, and diseases, across time..." (299). Furthermore, racial discrimination has impact for the children and young people, Priest et al. explain that, "Children and young people may also suffer the health impacts of direct exposure to discrimination" (qtd. in VicHealth 17).

Negative impact of racial discrimination can interfere mental health and life chances throughout life, it is like explained by Moore that, "Adverse experiences in childhood and adolescence can have a negative impact on mental health and life chances throughout the life course" (qtd. in VicHealth 17). In addition, exposure to racial discrimination it can also increase depression and anxiety as it is explained by Clark et al. that "...exposure to racial discrimination increases the likelihood of depression and anxiety..." (qtd. in Gaylord-Harden and Cunningham 534). It happens because of high level of psychological distress which is caused by racial discrimination, it is as explained by Brown et al. that "...experiences of racial discrimination contribute to high levels of psychological distress..." (126). The explanation of depression is "...a common mental disorder that presents with depression mood, loss of interest or pleasure, decreased energy, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, and poor concentration..." (Marcus, et al. 6). From some explanations above can draw conclusion that racial discrimination can influence health to the victims for a long time because the health problem is that appears usually attacking psychology of the victims so it takes a long times to the cure.

Second is wellbeing problem. Apart from the racial discrimination it has some negative impacts on the health problems. The racial discrimination also has negative impact on wellbeing problem. It is explained in a journal *Social Science & Medicine* said that:

Racial discrimination can affect health and wellbeing...restricted access to social resources such as employment, housing and education and/or increased exposure to risk factors (such as unnecessary contact with the criminal justice system)...direct physical injury caused by racist violence. (Priest et al. 2)

One of the causes of Blacks cannot get wellbeing because they have difficulties in getting proper education so they cannot compete to get job. Finally, they cannot get out from poverty. According to Ghandnoosh and Lewis that “most Blacks just don’t have the chance for education that it takes to rise out of poverty” (30). It is reason why Blacks cannot get wellbeing on their live.

Until right now racial discrimination is still a social and an economic gap factor in people's lives. It is as explained by Pager and Shepherd on their article that, “...the problem of racial discrimination remains an important factor in shaping contemporary [the latest] patterns of social and economic inequality” (200). This happens because racial discrimination is as the driving factor for these inequalities (Harris et al. 1429).

Blacks find difficulty to get work because of the impact of racial discrimination that they have experienced for a long time. They cannot compete with others to get jobs because of the lack of education their obtained. It is explained in a source entitled *Dimensions of Racism* that “They have endured racial discrimination for such a long time that today they are unable to compete as equals with those who, in the past, benefited from those practices” (55). Therefore, the victims of racial discrimination have no chance to enter the labor market. *Dimensions of Racism* also says that, “...victims of racial discrimination live in conditions of extreme poverty without hope of obtaining qualifications and, therefore, no opportunity of entering the formal [labor] market” (6). In addition, Blacks have lack of opportunities to get a job because they have less likely to get callback.

Even though the victims of racial discrimination get a job, they will still find difficulty to overcome the work obstacles that arise. *Dimensions of Racism* explains that “...victims of discrimination find it so difficult to overcome employment barriers” (57). Job barriers are related to racial discrimination in a book entitled *Race discrimination in the workplace* that:

...racial discrimination is associated with limited career advancement and less development of workplace skills, less effective work relationships with colleagues and supervisors, increased work tension, and decreased job satisfaction, initiative, and organizational commitment (i.e., increased likelihood of changing jobs...(Settles, Buchanan, and Yap 15).

Those are some obstacles that are difficult to overcome by the victims of racial discrimination in world of work. All the explanations above, it tells that racial discrimination can avoid the victims and the members of the same group to get wellbeing in live. It happens because there are limited education and barrier job that they experience, which causes poorness and finally they cannot get the wellbeing in their live.

Third is influencing emotional reactions. The victims of racial discrimination usually cannot control their emotion. A journal entitled *The Effect of Perceived Racial Discrimination on Aggression* explains that “...individuals who experienced racial discrimination tend to have higher levels of anger and hostility” (Chang and Tan 467). It explains that people who experiences racial discrimination tends to have higher levels of anger and hostility, in other words they are easier angry or offended to eventually lead to hostility. According to Sanders-Phillips et al. it happens because “Exposure to racial

discrimination at this point can increase self-consciousness; decrease self-esteem and self-efficacy; and foster anger, depression, and anxiety symptoms...These experiences can have enduring effects on mental and physical functioning...” (S178). It is the reason why racial discrimination can influence emotional reactions.

In conclusion, racial discrimination has many negative impacts for the victims and members of the same group. Negative impact of racial discrimination can bring up health problems (stress, depression and anxiety), wellbeing problem (limited access to social resources like education and job), and influence emotional reactions (higher level of anger and hostility).

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study basically uses descriptive qualitative research type which means that the process of gathering the data are done qualitatively and reporting of them are done descriptively. Nurizka, Kartono, and Zuber explain that descriptive qualitative research obtains “...data or material needed was obtained from...observation and based on literature study on journals, document, electronic media and mass media with descriptive analysis” (189). Chisnall says that “Qualitative research aims to gather an in-depth understanding of human [behavior] and the reasons that govern such behavior” (qtd. in Chimucheka 10391). According to Taylor-Powell and Renner that, “[q]ualitative data consist of words and observations, not numbers” (par. 1.1). So, qualitative data that has been obtained from observation and literature study will be delivered in form of sentences descriptively because descriptive qualitative research is a method of research that explains or describes an analysis from the research. Strauss explains that “...descriptive qualitative method refers to a research explaining the analysis or a hypothesis of a research” (qtd. in Herman 21).

In organizing the data, this study uses four steps, they are: reading the novel, identifying the data, classifying the data and reducing the data. The novel is entitled *The Hate You Give* was reading to get whole deep understanding. Identifying the data is done to find parts of the novel that are going to be analyzed. The third step is classifying the data. It is required for making the analysis which is appropriate in answering problem formulation. The last step is reducing the data. Where the data that do not have correlation with the object of the study those are not used or analyzed in this study. Analyzing the data is the last part that is explained in this chapter. This part consists of analyzing and reporting data. The reasons choose the selected data because data supports the determination of problems. The results of the complete analysis from this study are reported in parts of result and discussion.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The characters of *The Hate You Give* novel are originated from Black, they often experience racial discrimination. Whereas, everyone has the same position without there are more prioritized whether it is Whites or Blacks. A source entitled *Dimensions of Racism* explains about racial discrimination.

...mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, [color], descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. (4)

Racial discrimination is different treatment to a group based on race, descent, color or national origin that can ruin the pleasure, equality, and human rights in the social, economic or other field of public life. In the novel Black characters experience unfair treatment. The following are some negative impacts of racial discrimination which is experienced by Blacks reflected in the novel.

First is health problem. The negative impact of racial discrimination does not only influence for the victim, but it can also influence for people who are exposed to indirect racial discrimination on the same racial group. Dovidio and Hebl explain that "...the impact of discrimination toward groups can pose a threat to individuals and organizations alike..." (qtd. in Goldman et al. 802). It means that the racial discrimination is toward a racial group, it can bring up a threat to individual or group which becomes target of the discrimination.

Starr is character that experiences the negative impact of racial discrimination. It happens because she becomes the witness of unfair treatment experienced by Khalil and Natasha. Racial discrimination is experienced by them, it makes Starr feels the same way as them. Simons et al. explain that "African American...are also exposed to discrimination through the experiences of others in their family, peer group, and communities" (qtd. in Phillips 6). Hence, Starr is as the witness of racial discrimination, she also experiences the negative impact of the unfair treatment. Although, she does not become the victim of racial discrimination directly. It happens because "...exposure to racial discrimination, directly and indirectly, can reinforce feelings of injustice, powerlessness, and victimization." (Phillips 13). It means people who is exposed to racial discrimination directly or indirectly, they will experience an increasingly stronger sense of injustice and powerlessness. Moreover, they will feel victimized so they will suffer both physically and mentally.

Racial discrimination indeed can influence health, it happens because "...repeated exposure to...racial discrimination can cause illness after a time" (Rollins 213). Spence et al. explain that "Racial discrimination is...fundamental determinant of health, causing proximate health risk factors, health ailments, and diseases, across time..." (299). Therefore, the victims and people are exposed indirectly from the same group, they will experience health problems. It is experienced by Starr, she is exposed to racial discrimination through the experience of her two peers. So, she experiences the negative impact of the unfair treatment.

Starr experiences negative impact of racial discrimination where she is anguish due to the incident. It is called depression because it attacks feelings or moods. It is explained by Marcus et al. that "Depression is a common mental disorder that presents with depression mood, loss of interest or pleasure, decreased energy, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, and poor concentration..." (6). Furthermore,

Clark et al. also explain that "...exposure to racial discrimination increases the likelihood of depression and anxiety..." (qtd. in Gaylord-Harden and Cunningham 534). Starr experiences depression and anxiety after the incident. Below there is proof which shows that Starr experiences depression and anxiety.

On Monday, the day I'm crying out of nowhere, hunched over my bed as the iron in my hand spits out steam. Momma takes it before I burn the Williamson crest on my polo...Just thinking about going into that station with all those cops makes me wanna puke. Food would make it worse. (Thomas 70)

The monologue is the evidence that Starr as the witness of the incident experiences depression. She gets loss of appetite and sadness after the incident. It influences her daily activities. Those are depression characteristics because it deals with mood and appetite disorder which experienced by Starr. Furthermore, she is also afraid to meet the police because it will remind her on the incident that is experienced by her and Khalil.

Starr still experiences the depression when she has to tell the incident of Khalil in front of the detectives.

The detective glance at each other. A moment of silent conversation. The walls move in closer. The grip around my lungs returns. I pull my shirt away from my neck. "I think we're done for today," momma says, taking my hand as she starts to stand up. "But Mrs. Carter, we're not finished." "I don't care" "Mom," I say, and she looks down at me, "it's okay. I can do this."... "Okay, Gomez says... What next?" "Khalil opened the driver's side door and" Pow! Pow! Pow! Blood. Tears crawl down my cheeks. I wipe them on my arm. "The officer shot him." "Do you" Gomez start, but Momma holds a finger toward her. "Could you please give her a second," she says. It sounds more like an order than a question. (Thomas 102)

The dialogue happens between Starr and detectives. Starr feels tense because she has to remember and tell again about the incident which afflicts Khalil. It makes her depression until she is crying. It happens because the incident is bad experience for her. The next evidence is when Starr experiences anxiety due to the incident.

My mom and I arrive at the police station at four thirty on the doc...normal stuff, like on Law 7 Order, but my breath catches. I count: one. Two. Three. Four. I lose count around twelve because the guns in their holsters are all I can see. All of them. Two of us. Momma squeezes my hand. "Breathe." I didn't realize I had grabbed hers. I take a deep breath and another, and she nods with each one, saying, "That's it. You're okay. We're okay." Uncle Carlos...and momma lead me to his desk, where I sit down. I feel eyes on me from all around. The grip tightens around my lungs... (Thomas 95)

It tells the moment of Starr and her mother going to police station to meet the detectives. Starr is seen experiencing symptoms of anxiety when she meets many police with weapon in their sheath. It is seen if she forgets the count she is doing. It happens because she is remembered on the White officer who has shot Khalil.

Moments later, Starr conducts interview with the detectives. Her bad experience makes her difficult to tell the incident to others. It happens because trauma can be weaken the victim (Jernigan and Daniel 126). The following is the proof found in the novel telling that Starr has difficulty to tell her experience to detectives.

...can you tell us what happened the night of the incident? ...can you describe what happened next? I don't think I'll ever forget what happened, but saying it out loud, that's different. And hard. My eyes prickle. I blink, staring at the table. Momma rubs my back. "Look up, Starr." (Thomas 100)

The monologue explains about trauma experienced by Starr at that time. So, she is difficult to tell the unfair treatment which is experienced by Khalil. It happens because the incident makes her sad.

It is health problems that is experienced by Starr. It happens because she is exposed to racial discrimination through the experience of her peers. The negative impact of racial discrimination is experienced by her, certainly it can influence her daily activities.

Second is wellbeing problem. Racial discrimination also has negative impact on well-being for victims and members of the same group. It is as explained by Priest et al. that "Racial discrimination can affect health and wellbeing...restricted access to social resources such as employment, housing and education..." (2). Below it is the evidence that explains why many Blacks cannot be prosperous life. So, they become drug dealer to meet the needs of their live.

Daddy: "So, what's the hate they're giving the 'little infants' in today's society?"

Starr: "Racism?"

Daddy: "You gotta get a li'l more detailed than that. Think 'bout Khalil and his whole situation. Before he died."

Starr: "He was a drug dealer." It hurts to say that. "And possibly a gang member."

Daddy: "Why was he a drug dealer? Why are so many people in our neighborhood drug dealers?"

I remember what Khalil said - he got tired of choosing between lights and food.

Starr: "They need money," I say. "And they don't have a lot of other ways to get it."

Daddy: "Right. Lack of opportunities," Daddy says. (Thomas 167)

The dialogue above is the explanation of the reason why many Blacks cannot be prosperous life. Then, they choose to be drug dealer. It happens because of the lack of job opportunities which they get. So, they cannot get money to make their living. Therefore, they cannot live in prosperity. It is also experienced by Khalil as Blacks. He is forced being drug dealer because he is tired to choose between the foods and the lights. Whereas, both of them are primary needs that must be met. It happens because there is racial discrimination in getting the job experienced by them. So it influences well-being of their live.

The conclusion is the racial discrimination in getting job experienced by Blacks. It has negative impact on their well-being. It is also experienced by Khalil as Blacks. He is difficult to meet the needs of his life that is full of deficiencies. Finally, he chooses to be drug dealer.

Third is influencing emotional reactions. Racial discrimination has negative impact for people become the victims and are exposed indirectly. Where they will have higher levels of anger and hostility. It is as explained by Chang and Tan, that "...individuals who experienced racial discrimination tend to have higher levels of anger and hostility" (467). Furthermore, Sanders-Phillips et al. explain that "Exposure to racial discrimination at this point can increase self-consciousness; decrease self-esteem and self-efficacy; and foster anger, depression, and anxiety symptoms...These experiences can have enduring effects on mental and physical functioning..." (S178). Starr is the witness that is exposed to racial discrimination through Khalil and Natasha. She experiences the negative impact due to the exposure, so it can influence her emotion. The following is the evidence which is found in the novel about Starr's emotion.

Water cascades from a hose, making rainbows against the sunlight like it did six years ago, right before bullets took Natasha. I turn to Ms. Ofrah.

Starr: "When I was ten, I saw my other best friend get murdered in a drive-by." Funny how murdered comes out easily now.

Ms. Ofrah: "Oh." Ms Ofrah sinks back. "I didn't – I'm so sorry, Starr."

I stare at my fingers and fumble with them. Tears well in my eyes.

Starr: "I've tried to forget it, but I remember everything. The shots, the look on Natasha's face. They never caught the person who did it. I guess it didn't matter enough. But it did matter. She mattered." I look at Ms. Ofrah, but I can barely see her for all the tears. "And I want everyone to know that Khalil mattered too." (Thomas 215)

It shows how Starr is angry towards the unfair treatment experienced by her friends as Blacks. They do not get the justice for the incident that they have experienced. She explains indirectly that Blacks have the same right to live like the others. So, they have also the right to get the justice. Another evidence is also found when Starr fights with Hailey.

Hailey: "I'm not apologizing because it was only a joke!" she shouts. "It doesn't make me a racist. I'm not letting you guys guilt trip me like this. What's next? You want me to apologize because my ancestors were slave masters or something stupid?"

Starr: "Bitch—"I take a deep breath. Way too many people are watching. I cannot go angry black girl on her. "Your joke was hurtful," I say, as calmly as I can. "If you give a damn about Maya, you'd apologize and at least try to see why it hurt her.

Hailey: "it's not my fault she can't get over a joke from freaking freshman year! Just like it's not my fault you can't get over what happened to Khalil."

Starr: "So I'm supposed to 'get over' the fact he was murdered?"

Hailey: "Yes, get over it! He was probably gonna end up dead anyway."

Maya: "Are you serious?" Maya says.

Hailey: “He was a drug dealer and a gangbanger,” Hailey says. “Somebody was gonna kill him eventually.”

Starr: “Get over it?” I repeat.

She folds her arms and does this little neck movement.

Hailey: “Um, yeah? Isn’t that what I said? The cop probably did everyone a favor. One less drug dealer on the--”

I move Maya out the way and slam my fist against the side of Hailey’s face. It hurts, but damn it feels good. Hailey holds her cheek, her eyes wide and her mouth open for several seconds.

Hailey: “Bitch! She shrieks. She goes straight for my hair like girls usually do, but my ponytail is real. She’s not pulling it out.

I hit at Hailey with my fists, and she slaps and claws me upside my head. I push her off, and she hits the floor...

I’m no longer Williamson Starr or even Garden Heights Starr. I’m pissed. (Thomas 336)

From the evidence above, it is seen that Starr cannot control her emotions, she is angry after hearing Hailey’s statement. She says that Khalil deserves to die. Furthermore, Hailey also appreciates the act that is done by the White officer to Khalil. Therefore, Starr cannot restrain her anger so she punches Hailey. It is the evidence from the negative impact of racial discrimination. It is experienced by people who are exposed to racial discrimination through their peers from the same group. They have a high level of anger towards people who think that their race deserve to be treated differently.

Above is the explanations about some negative impact of racial discrimination. It can cause appearing health problem, well-being problem until influencing emotional reactions people who become the victim or people are exposed indirectly the unfair treatment through their group. Those are experienced by Starr and Khalil because of the racial discrimination.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I am very grateful to Allah SWT who has been giving me mercies so I can finish my study. I am also thankful to my adviser Ms. Diyah Fitri Wulandari who has given everything within the process of this study both advices and supports.

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