The Importance of Viewing a Racially Marginalized Role Model for Racially Marginalized Women Students in Video Media

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The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For the full text, please visit https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/undergraduate_honors_theses/9k41zg029 or scan the QR code.

Abstract

The current study was in hopes of expanding research to lessen the gap of racially marginalized women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics). I analyzed students' inspiration to pursue STEM interests, careers, and/or environments after watching the documentary *Picture a Scientist*, which featured women scientists, including a racially marginalized women scientist. I specifically analyzed whether students from marginalized racial groups were inspired by the Black woman scientist (and potential role model), in comparison to the two White women scientists, and whether feeling inspired by the scientists in the film influenced viewers' career aspirations in STEM. To answer my research questions, I analyzed data from a large survey completed by viewers of *Picture a Scientist*. Viewers completed the first survey immediately after viewing the film (time 1, n = 814) and a follow-up survey six weeks later (time 2, n = 453). For my analyses, I specifically focused on the film's impact on students' level of inspiration to pursue STEM. I found that Black/Latine/Indigenous students (i.e., students with racially minoritized identities) were more inspired by the Black women scientist compared to the two White scientists featured in the film. Moreover, women students were generally more inspired by the scientists than men students. Finally, feeling inspired by the scientists at time 1 predicted changes in STEM career aspirations at time 2. The current research provides initial evidence for the effectiveness of using video media to introduce racially marginalized women students to the most beneficial role models to increase their representation in STEM.