

Abstract

This study examined negative Facebook posts about racial minorities. A content analysis was performed on a sample of 10 confessions posted between September 13th 2014 and March 25th 2015. Results showed nine central issues prevalent in the posts. Language, other races being racist, and losing Canadian identity were the most prevalent issues commented on. Additional issues were the over utilization of resources, marrying within your own race, minorities thinking they know everything, bad driving skills, working in the food industry, and feeling outnumbered.

Introduction.

There are approximately 5, 068, 095 visible minorities in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2009). Alongside this ethnic diversity, are stereotyped beliefs about and prejudice attitudes toward socially constructed categories of race. Racism is a system in which one group of people exercise power over another on the basis of skin color; an implicit set of beliefs, erroneous assumptions, and actions based on an ideology of the inherent superiority of one racial group over another, and evident in organizational or institutional structures and programs as well as in individual thought or behavior patterns (Henry & Tator, 2010, p. 383).

There are multiple theories as to why people hold prejudicial values. The just world hypothesis theorizes that people believe that victims of misfortune deserve what happens to them. Another popular theory is the realistic group conflict theory which claims that when different groups are in competition for resources, they tend to close ranks and favor in-group members while discriminating against out-group members (Duff & Peace, 2013, p. 187). These rationales for prejudicial behavior explain why people hold prejudicial values against “out” groups, but little research has been done on the actual content of prejudicial comments against visible minorities. The purpose of the present analysis is to examine issues or problems in posts about race.

Methods

The sample consisted of 30 Facebook posts from “confession” pages at universities that target students (e.g., UAlberta) as well as pages that target a town/city/area in the title (e.g., Calgary Confessions). Both types of pages were included to examine perceptions of students (people with some sort of secondary education) as well as the general public.

Sample Selection

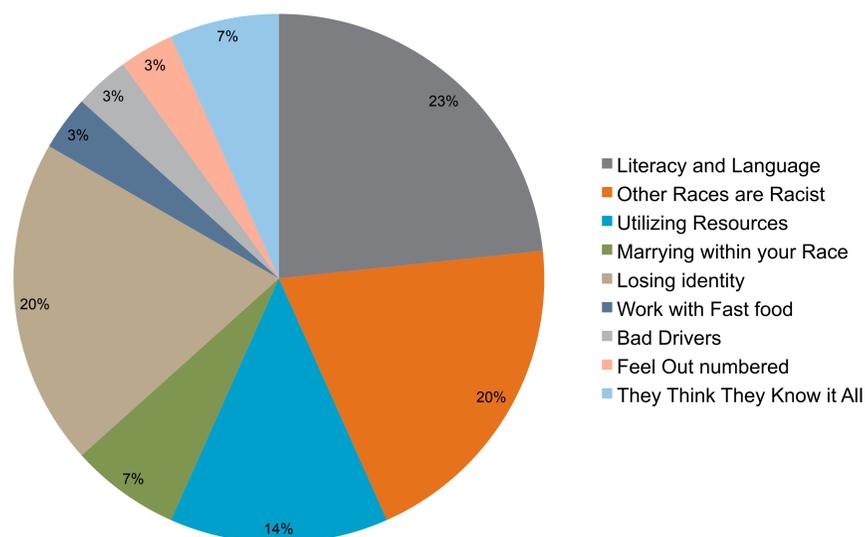
Posts were available for 10 different confession pages across Alberta: Edmonton Confessions, UAlberta confessions, U of C confessions, Lethbridge Confessions 2, Macewan Confessions, Calgary Confessions, Northern Alberta Confessions, Oilfield confessions, U of L Confessions, and St. Albert Confessions. Each post was examined individually, post by post. The word “race” and or “immigrant” was searched into Facebook, and posts that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria were included in the analysis.

Results

There were nine common problems about racism that were found in the 30 confession pages. The first issue that was found was issues about literacy and the English language. The three common themes within this problem were pronunciation and comprehension (posts 2, 4, 8 and 12), not speaking enough English (posts 7 and 16), and using profane and racist language (post 22).

Another issue brought up was the idea that other races are allowed to be racist. The rationale here was that “if other races can get away with racist comments, then I should be able to get away with it too” (posts 27, 28, 29, 30). Another argument is that in other countries we have to follow their traditions, so when minorities come to Canada they should have to follow Canadian traditions (seen in posts 5 and 19). The next most prevalent theme was the issue of minorities using Canadian resources, and taking away Canadian’s jobs. Post 1 speaks of how immigrants are “stealing our jobs”, where as posts the other posts in this category are focusing more on how minorities are getting money from the government (posts 14 and 25), and food stamps (post 15). The next theme identified was people who claim they are: “not racist”, but believe that there is nothing wrong with people who will only date/marry within their own race (posts 20 and 23). Minorities’ being “not welcomed” was seen in posts 9,17, and 24, issues on losing Canadian identity were also mentioned (10, 26) and an emphasis on white pride was revealed in post 21. A theme of minorities working in fast food restaurants was seen in post 6. The problem of immigrants not being able to drive well was seen in post 11. Another issue that was revealed was that white people are starting to feel like a minority and felt outnumbered (post 13). Finally the theme of minorities thinking they “know everything” was seen in posts 3 and 18.

Problems That Canadians Have with Racial Minorities



#1977

It really bothers me, Our city is having problems right now with homelessness and instead of trying to fix it. We build a new arena for a team that never wins anything . we allow these stupid immigrants here. Who have 4-7 kids. Who don't work because our government will help them financially. Canada's full . they need to go to America. And be a drain on their country. I'm really sick of the these things polluting our country. Speak English you retards . or go home.

Like · Comment · Share · 390 167 14

Conclusions

This study examined the content of racist Facebook posts made on confession pages. Results concluded that there were salient issues brought up in the posts; as predicted language was a particularly evident issue. On a whole, there were common stereotypes of minorities (e.g., working in the food industry, being bad drivers, and over utilizing Canadian resources). There was also another common stereotype of the ethnically diverse population adversely changing Canadian identity and “outnumbering” Canadians. In addition, there was the issue of other races “thinking they know everything”, despite their lack of pronunciation and comprehension skills. There were also two unpredicted themes: The idea that other races can be racist, and that races should marry within their own race. The prevalence of racism on the Internet has proven to be apparent, and perhaps the content of these statements can provide insight as to what the general population believes to be pressing issues around race in Canada.

References

- Duff, K., & Peace, K. (2013). *Think social psychology*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Education.
- Henry, F., & Tator, C. (2010). *The colour of democracy: Racism in Canadian society*. Toronto, ON: Nelson Education.
- Statistics Canada. (2006). *Visible minority population, by province and (Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick)*. Retrieved from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/I01/cst01/demo52a-eng.htm>

Acknowledgement: The mentorship of Dr. Diane Symaluk in Sociology 315