

Press Outlets, Including New York Times, Suppress Findings of Study Suggesting That DEI Training Amplifies Hostility Instead of Reducing It **Researchers with the Network Contagion Research Institute say ‘anti-racist’ and ‘anti-oppressive pedagogy’ actually increase racial tensions.**

[NY Sun](#), by BRADLEY CORTRIGHT, Nov. 25, 2024

Diversity, equity, and inclusion programs are supposed to make workplaces and colleges more hospitable and welcoming to people of diverse backgrounds. However, a study by the Network Contagion Research Institute and the Social Perception Lab at Rutgers University found that DEI programs focused on “anti-racist” and “anti-oppressive” ideology tend to do the exact opposite.

Researchers examined the effects of “diversity training interventions that emphasize awareness of and opposition to ‘systemic oppression.’” The approach of focusing on “systemic oppression” was popularized by the author Ibram X. Kendi in his book, “How to Be an Antiracist,” and it has been widely adopted at colleges and in the healthcare field, the study notes.

To examine the impact of “anti-oppressive pedagogy,” researchers found DEI writings about race, religion, and caste and presented them to various groups to gauge their impact.

“Across all groupings, instead of reducing bias, they engendered a hostile attribution bias,” the NCRI study found. “Amplifying perceptions of prejudicial hostility where none was present, and punitive responses to the imaginary prejudice. These results highlight the complex and often counterproductive impacts of pedagogical elements and themes prevalent in mainstream DEI training.”

Results of the study have not been widely published by mainstream news outlets. The conservative magazine National Review reports that communications from Bloomberg and the New York Times with NCRI about its research indicated both outlets were about to publish articles covering the study’s findings but opted not to in the end.

An NCRI researcher told National Review, “Unfortunately, both publications jumped on the story enthusiastically only for it to be inexplicably pulled at the highest editorial levels. This has never happened to the NCRI in its 5-year history.”

An editor for Bloomberg News’s team meant to “elevate issues of race, gender, diversity, and fairness,” Anna Kitanaka, told NCRI that the story would not be published. However, Ms. Kitanaka did not provide any explanation for the decision.

Meanwhile, a reporter with the Times told the NCRI that the paper would “hold off” on its article about the study because of “some concerns.” However, the reporter said the Times may reconsider an article if the research was peer-reviewed.

An NCRI researcher told National Review, “The piece was reported and ready for publication, but at the eleventh hour, the New York Times insisted the research undergo peer review after discussions with editorial staff — an unprecedented demand for our work.”

“The journalist involved had previously covered far more sensitive NCRI findings, such as our QAnon and January 6th studies, without any such request,” the researcher added.

The managing director for external communications at the Times, Charlie Stadtlander, tells The New York Sun, “Our journalists are always considering potential topics for news coverage, evaluating them for newsworthiness, and often choose not to pursue further reporting for a variety of reasons.”

“Speculative claims from outside parties about The Times’s editorial process are just that. It’s not true that The Times had prepared a story ‘ready for publication’ on this topic,” Mr. Stadtlander said. Bloomberg News did not respond to a request for comment from the Sun.

The NCRI study comes as a survey from Pew Research finds that negative views of DEI programs and policies among Americans have ticked up. The Pew survey found that the number of Americans who say that focusing on DEI is good dropped to 52 percent in October 2024, down from 56 percent in February 2023.

The study by the NCRI presented one group of 423 undergraduate students at Rutgers with a “neutral control essay about U.S. corn production” and another group an essay with “educational texts from prominent DEI scholars” such as Mr. Kendi and Robin DiAngelo.

The NCRI says it chose those two authors in part because they are some of the most prominent DEI writers, but also, after reviewing more than 30 anti-racist policies across various institutions, the researchers found that the “anti-racist, anti-oppressive themes we identified as emblematic in the writing of both Kendi and DiAngelo are widespread among anti-racist diversity offerings.”

After the participants read either the corn production essay or the materials from Mr. Kendi and Ms. DiAngelo, they were asked to “probe the extent to which they perceived racism” in a “racially neutral” example of a “student” being denied admission to an “elite East Coast university” after being interviewed by an admissions officer.

The hypothetical situation did not provide the participants with details about the student's race or that of the admissions officer. Students who were exposed to the anti-racist material were roughly 21 percent more likely to perceive discrimination was involved in the decision. They were also 25 percent more likely to believe the applicant suffered harm, 24 percent more likely to say they were violent, and 35 percent more likely to say the admissions officer committed microaggressions. Additionally, they were 11 percent more likely to say the officer should be suspended and 16 percent more likely to demand a public apology.

In another sample, more than 2,000 participants were asked to evaluate the hypothetical convictions of two men, Ahmed Akhtar and George Green, for identical terrorism charges. The anti-Islamophobia group was shown content from the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, which develops sensitivity training on Islamophobia.

Respondents in the control group said they believed Ahmed's conviction was "just as fair as George's." However, members of the anti-Islamophobia group "rated Ahmed's trial as significantly less fair."

"These results suggest that anti-Islamophobia training inspired by ISPU materials may cause individuals to assume unfair treatment of Muslim people, even when no evidence of bias or unfairness is present," the study said. "This effect highlights a broader issue: DEI narratives that focus heavily on victimization and systemic oppression can foster unwarranted distrust and suspicions of institutions and alter subjective assessments of events."

The NCRI researchers concluded that, "Some anti-oppressive DEI narratives can engender a hostile attribution bias and heighten racial suspicion, prejudicial attitudes, authoritarian policing, and support for punitive behaviors in the absence of evidence for a transgression deserving punishment."

The researchers noted that there are "numerous diversity trainings that do not subscribe to anti-oppressive frames," and the results cannot be "taken as evaluating the efficacy of an entire industry."