

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

The United States still wrestles with the issue of racism, as seen in intragroup discrimination within African-American adolescent communities. Discriminatory behaviour arises from perceptions of differences in mindset, gender, age, and even interests. Stereotypes against African-American individuals, firmly established in American society, act as unspoken norms for the African-American community. This experience can be a daunting specter for African-American teenagers aspiring to lead a different quality of life. Additionally, societal standards exist to determine one's inclusion in the African-American community for fair treatment among its members.

The development of group dynamics among African-American teenagers is based on their living environment, shared interests, and how they perceive life. Consequently, they may be categorized into new groups. For those inclined toward a specific culture and diligent in their studies, they are often labelled as “Geek”. This classification is also rooted in stereotypes that have developed within the African-American community itself. As individuals who differ from the typical characteristics of African-American teenagers, geek teenagers often struggle to find friends and become targets of discrimination by their fellow African-American peers. This life cycle is adopted within the African-American society in the United States.

Intragroup discrimination is related to the classification of social identity. Anyone who chooses to deviate from the existing social structure is often considered an outsider. Intragroup discrimination frequently intersects with racism because discrimination is often perceived as a direct result of the objective social situation, which may or may not facilitate the expression of prejudiced attitudes. Prejudiced attitudes can be socially learned or arise from tendencies to conform, but they do not always efficiently predict discriminatory behavior (Judd et al., 2005:681). Furthermore, intragroup discrimination occurs irrespective of the composition of the “ingroup” and the “outgroup,” which are perceived as somehow different. Racial identity, then, plays a role in establishing superiority and inferiority. It coexists with many other facets of self-concept, such as ego extensions and personal characteristics, so its relative impact on self-esteem is relatively minor (Cross, 1991:96).

Intragroup dynamics persist and develop in areas that reinforce the division between African-American people based on black skin and African-American people perceived as white skin. Rooted in the historical legacy of slavery that nurture stereotypes and prejudices against African-Americans, they are indoctrinated to conform to these societal stereotypes, which have become unwritten rules. Similar environments and adopted cultural differences are the primary factors contributing to this intragroup conflict. Groups like these strive to uphold their self-esteem through an African-American identity, often imposing the belief that all African-American should accept the notion that they are African-American, which is invariably associated with unfavorable circumstances.

The phenomenon of intragroup discrimination is also reflected in American movies. One of the movies that highlights this issue is the American movie entitled *Dope* (2015). *Dope* (2015) tells the story of an African-American teenager labelled as a geek, Malcolm, along with his two friends, who embark on a journey to discover their true identities. Together, they often face unfair and discriminatory treatment from fellow African-Americans, including from other teenage groups and even social institutions. The socio-cultural conditions also influence the discriminatory treatment faced by Malcolm in Inglewood, an area marked by the dominance of street gang culture. Despite these challenges, they continue to grow and pursue their dreams of attending Harvard and changing their future, while resisting personal pressures and the social expectations upon their community.

This research thesis is significant for several reasons. First, it reveals the social complexity that exists within marginalized groups, particularly among African-American teenagers. Second, it contributes to both film and sociological studies by examining how social structures and psychological processes operate within a community. Third, it raises awareness of the subtle forms of discrimination that can occur within the same racial group and emphasizes the importance of authentic and diverse representations of minority youth. The *Dope* (2015) movie serves as a reflection of real social issues faced by young people in their communities. This research thesis focuses on analyzing the cause of intragroup discrimination and the influence of intragroup discrimination experienced by African-American teenagers as depicted in the movie *Dope* (2015).

1.2 Research Questions

1. What is the cause of intragroup discrimination among African-American teenagers in *Dope* (2015)?
2. What is the influence of intragroup discrimination among African-American teenagers in *Dope* (2015)?

1.3 Aims of The Study

1. To analyze the causes of intragroup discrimination among African-American teenagers in *Dope* (2015)
2. To analyze the influence of intragroup discrimination among African-American teenagers in *Dope* (2015)

1.4 Scope of The Study

The scope of this research thesis is limited to characters, dialogues, and scenes, focusing on the phenomenon of intragroup discrimination as portrayed in the movie *Dope* (2015). For the intrinsic analysis, the focus will be on the main characters who experience intragroup discrimination, as well as the conditions represented through setting and conflict. Meanwhile, this research thesis discussion covers the cause, and the influence of intragroup discrimination as portrayed in the movie *Dope* (2015).

1.5 Previous Studies

This research thesis is not the first to examine the film *Dope* (2015), but previous studies discussed different issues. The comparison helps highlight the originality and focus of the writer's research thesis. The writer has found two previous studies related to the author's research thesis. The first previous study is an international journal article entitled *Race in the Age of Tribeless Youth Culture*:

Rick Famuyiwa's Dope (2015) and Current Shifts in African-American Pop Culture

by Jeeshan Gazi (2017). The article's discussion focuses on shifts in AfricanAmerican pop culture. This article argues that racial barriers are very influential in today's largely ethnically less youth culture. In addition, it is said in this article that the movement of young people reflects new media strategies taken by AfricanAmerican artists which speaks to a broader cultural movement, such as a circuit between texts, cultural creators, and society that creates an intensity of place.

The second previous study is an international journal article titled *U, (New) Black (?) Maybe: Nostalgia and Amnesia in Dope* by Augustus Durham (2017).

This article discusses the movie *Dope* as a cinematic interpretation of Pharrell Williams's concept of the new black. It highlights how the movie employs hip-hop aesthetics as a form of nostalgia while portraying the protagonist's desire as a symbol of cultural amnesia. It said that in the article, the title of the song "U, Black Maybe" raises questions about identity, with maybe suggesting uncertainty, and its lyrics addressing mental struggles that align with the themes explored in *Dope*, particularly the evolving nature of black identity.

This research thesis is very different from any previous studies because there has yet no previous research on the writer's chosen topic. Firstly, the existing research explores broader themes, such as shifts in African-American pop culture or symbolic representations, while this research concentrates on intragroup discrimination. Secondly, the previous studies adopt cultural or media studies approaches, this research thesis offers a sociological lens. Thirdly, this research thesis closely examines narrative elements that shape identity formation and social interaction. In this research thesis, the writer will examine how intragroup

discrimination experienced by the main characters in *Dope* (2015) intersects with their efforts to navigate identity, resist societal pressures, and assert their place within their community.

1.6 Research Method

1.6.1 Data and The Sources of Data

The writer uses qualitative research in this study to assist in processing data and information from the object and subject of the research. The writer uses library research related to the subject matter being analyzed. According to George (2008:6), identifying and searching for sources that provide factual information or personal opinion/expertise on research questions has become a characteristic of library research methods. Related to the library research, there are primary and secondary data. According to Ajayi (2017:2), primary data refers to information that is directly collected by the researcher through their efforts, whereas secondary data consists of information that has been previously gathered or generated by other individuals or sources. The primary data of this research thesis is the American movie entitled *Dope* (2015). Meanwhile, the secondary data of this research thesis is from other analyses, papers, books, or journals that explain intragroup discrimination, history of African-American community, and *Dope* (2015).

1.6.2 Method of Collecting Data

The writer observed the *Dope* (2015) movie to collect the data for this study. First, the writer watches the movie several times and notes important points that are relevant to the research. Second, the writer classifies the collected data. Finally, the classified data serve as the primary source for further analysis by applying relevant theories. In addition, the writer conducts library research to obtain secondary data.

This method involves understanding and interpreting information from books, journals, and scholarly articles related to the primary data.

1.6.3 Method of Approach

The writer applies an iconic approach developed by Stephen Prince in *Film Quarterly* (1993) to analyze the data. This approach views film images as closely reflecting real-life visual experiences, allowing viewers to understand the story through natural perception and reasoning (Prince, 1993:22). Iconic approach emphasizes how audiences actively experience and interpret the film, as meaning is communicated through visual elements such as facial expressions, gestures, and camera work, which viewers can easily recognize and understand. Based on the background that highlights the phenomenon of intragroup discrimination in *Dope* (2015), this research employs a sociological approach grounded in social psychology, as formulated by Michael Hogg and Dominic Abrams in *Social Identifications* (1998). Hogg and Abrams define social psychology as a scientific discipline that explores human social behavior, focusing on how identity, perception, and actions are formed and shaped through social interaction, symbolic meaning, and group relations (1998:9). This approach views social groups as inevitable and functional, as they fulfil the human need for order and predictability. Applying this approach, the research thesis focuses on the social realities faced by African-American teenagers and analyzes the dynamics of intragroup discrimination as depicted in *Dope* (2015).

1.7 Organization of The Writing

This thesis is organized into five chapters:

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the background of the study, research question, scope of the study, aims of the study, previous studies, research method, and organization of the study.

CHAPTER II INTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This chapter presents a review of the relevant literature, including theories, definitions, and concepts related to character and characterization, setting, and conflict, which are used to analyze the movie's intrinsic elements.

CHAPTER III EXTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This chapter presents a review of the relevant literature, including theories, definitions, and concepts related to the history of the African-American community, forms of discrimination in the United States, and social identification, all of which are used to analyze the movie's extrinsic elements.

CHAPTER IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter is the core of the thesis. This chapter contains an analysis of the movie's intrinsic elements, including characters, setting, and conflict as well as an analysis of the extrinsic elements, such as the causes and influence of intragroup discrimination and the social interactions within the African-American community.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

This chapter contains the conclusion of the study.