Chapter 10
Mass Media's Negative Narratives:
Secondary Psycho-Sociological Trauma on Students' Self-Identity and Academic Success

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the secondary psycho-sociological trauma like school shootings on students' self-identity and academic success. School shootings' endless highlight reels challenge critical analysis skills for validated information, proper context, and navigating societal ills. Students' social concepts and social engagement contend for proper development with the plethora of unsubstantiated mass media news stories. This chapter establishes a conceptual framework toward teacher counternarrative social capital shaping student resiliency as students deal with mass media's psycho-sociological secondary trauma through the lens of young Black males. These findings have implications for how researchers approach the impact that mass media depictions of school shootings can have on students. This chapter concludes with a discussion of how educators should respond to mass media negative narratives like school shootings to support social-identity development and proper perspectives of societal ills.

INTRODUCTION

From television news, blogs, and digital resources to social media, mass media is an effective communicator of information. Unfortunately, the unfiltered dissemination of negative news dominates the proliferation of un-vetted stories, half-truths, and early-to-market allegations supported by the prevailing access to instant video footage. Students' constant viewing of social injustice, gun violence, school shootings, and persistent negative portrayals of race groups can cause psycho-sociological traumas impacting their proper social engagement at school and their academic success. Mass media's negative narratives can captivate their attention, portraying disproportionate racial bias, propaganda, and violence (Sun, 2018), resulting in the preoccupation with societal-ills that deteriorate their academic prowess and self-identity development. The preponderance of school shootings in the media reduces the idea of schools as safe havens. When educators understand the impact of mass media's negative narratives on students' self-identity and academic success, preparation to prevent and thwart school shootings is part of the built-in stewardship, empowering students through social connection to take ownership of ensuring a safe school environment. Educators must consider how the proliferation of negative mass media stories, including those concerning school shootings, can affect their students' development of social norms, hypervigilance, and derail feelings of safety and inclusivity in the classroom (Batra, 2013; Baldasty, 2018 & Wilson et al., 2012). Educators that counter mass media's negative narratives with positive narratives, inclusivity, and responsible media literacy, enhance students' critical analysis skills.

Students are subject to traversing the news and inevitably subjecting themselves to continual images of violence and division, further exacerbated by the notion of fake news. According to Baldasty (2018), fake news weakens a student's ability to identify real problems and the governments' ability to create the necessary policies to address those problems. Baldasty (2018) highlights the importance of educators teaching students critical analytical skills to combat mass media's fake news. The barrage of mass media far exceeds the student's ability to rightly divide truth from fiction without intervention (Batra, 2013; Happer & Philo, 2013; Pittaro, 2019). When educators incorporate critical analysis of mass media resources as part of the implemented curriculum, students' properly developing self-identity and academic success remain viable.

At the crucible of education in this hour is educators' reliance on digital learning management systems and virtual classrooms, highlighting a default conjecture of mass media's culture as viable, valid, and educator-approved. The dichotomy of misapplied mass media resources, prevailing stereotypical violence reporting, and the presumed acceptance of negative narratives call for educators' due diligence to understand their students' perceptions, desensitization, and secondary psycho-

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