American Dream or American Myth? A Linear Regression Analysis of American Attitudes as a Factor of Race and Ideology

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As coined by historian James Truslow Adams in 1931, the American Dream is the belief that any American can achieve their desired successes. What has upheld this distorted understanding of social mobility is the American perception gap. The purpose of this study was to explore how Americans differed in their perceptions of racial inequity and the limits to life, livelihood, and community that exist by factors of race. I hypothesized that perceptions of race and society, racial progress, race and college admissions, and racial experiences would all differ as a factor of different demographics, race being the largest determinant. Using existing survey data from the Pew Research Center, I modeled correlations between race, political ideology, and American social perceptions in IBM SPSS V. 25 using linear regressions. The data consisted of answers from over 6000 American participants who answered 98 questions about race in America. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$ and Beta values produced from the regressions demonstrated that responses varied largely as a factor of ideology. Results suggested that moderate Americans held the most left-leaning perceptions of race, Hispanics have ascribed to conservative views concurrent with their growing White identification, Asian-Americans valued race-conscious college admissions, and white fragility persisted in race-related conversations amongst Whites. Future studies should implement social studies coursework that highlights the intersection of race and law and record its retention and effects on student attitudes toward race as a social construct. Education is an important institution in forming politcal attitudes.

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