

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

Racial discrimination in the United States remains a widespread problem that manifests itself in various forms of harassment. Despite the multilateral agreement that banned racial discrimination in 1965, the government still allows and perpetuates racism, often justifying individual acts of racism as commonplace (Bradley, 2019). Racial discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favorably or not given the same opportunities as others in a similar situation because of their race, country of birth, ethnic origin, and skin color (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2001).

Hidden Figures is a movie that tells the story of people who work at NASA and get racial discrimination from people around them. The film was adapted from a *Hidden Figures* book by Margot Lee. In this film racial discrimination occurs a lot by Negroes, for example, at 00:39:22-00:39:48 in the film, there is a division that is visible between Black and White people.



Scene 1: Coffee area

In this scene, one day when Katherine is going to get coffee in the Coffee area, there are two pots, one of which is labeled "colored", specially made for Katherine because she is the only Black person there.

This movie is interesting to analyze because, even though it was released in 2016, it remains highly popular today. Recently, *Hidden figures* became one of the top 5 Black history movies in 2023 according to Hush Harbor Media. In addition, in 2017, *Hidden Figures* was voted third by the National Board of Review, and Spencer was nominated for three Academy Awards at the 89th

Academy Awards: Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Picture, and Best Supporting Actress. The film also won four awards from the African American Film Critics Association. Nevertheless, the film was nominated for six awards at the 2017 Black Reel Awards. At the same time, the script by Schroeder and Melfi was nominated for the 70th British Academy Film Awards. The film was nominated for four categories at the 48th NAACP Image Awards, including Best Picture. The script by Schroeder and Melfi was nominated for the USC Scripter Award and the Writers Guild of America Award for Best Adapted Screenplay. At the 22nd Critics' Choice Awards in 2016, *Hidden Figures* was nominated for Best Ensemble Performance, Adapted Screenplay, and Supporting Actress. *Hidden Figures* was designated as one of the 10 Best Movies. Finally, the movie was designated as one of the 10 Best Movies. Throughout *Hidden Figures*, racial discrimination is a dominant issue that appears in many key scenes.

Hidden figures addresses the issue of racial discrimination, which is still common, especially in the United States. In 1961, which is the background of this movie, the African-American Civil Rights Movement of 1955-1968 refers to movements in the United States aimed at prohibiting racial discrimination against African Americans and restoring their voting rights (Monica, 2018). However, racial discrimination still occurs today. For example, in 2020, George Perry Floyd Jr., a Black man in Minneapolis, was sadistically murdered by Derek Chauvin, a White police officer, by crushing Floyd's neck with his knee for about nine minutes. Floyd's death sparked a nationwide outcry against American police brutality that emphasized severe police violence in dealing with negro and the deep racial and ethnic inequalities that directly result from structural racism. (Mourad, 2022).

Several previous studies have analyzed this movie extensively, the first Bertha Uli Fransiska Pasaribu (2019). Its title is "The Struggles Against Multiple Discrimination in *Hidden Figures*." Fransiska reviewed her analysis by applying two theories: 1). character and characterizations by Abrams 2). the Black feminism theory by bell hooks. In her analysis, she identified Multiple discrimination, including domestic discrimination. Another study that used

Hidden Figures as its research object was conducted by Tiara Ika Christianingrum (2018) titled "The Struggle of African American Women Against The Double Discrimination Revealed in *Hidden Figures*." The research was done by using intrinsic and extrinsic theories. And the last writer Salma Azizah (2020), analyzed *Hidden Figures* titled "Black Women's Struggle In Facing Workplace Discrimination In Theodore Melfi's *Hidden Figures*." As part of her research, Aziza conducted a library search to gather data to support the arguments in the research. She analyzed internal and external aspects to reveal the double discrimination experienced by the characters.

In *Hidden Figures* movie, racial discrimination becomes a dominating issue from beginning to end. So, this research focused on analyzing the acts of racial discrimination depicted by the main characters in the *Hidden Figures* movie. This study used Pettigrew theory of discrimination and Theodorson & Theodorson theory of Racial discrimination with the title "Representation of Racial Discrimination Experienced by The Main characters in *Hidden Figures* Movie."

1.2. Statements of the problem

Based on the above background, this research was conducted to answer the following problems as the focus of the study. They:

1. What are racial discriminations experienced by the main characters as depicted in *Hidden Figures* film?
2. How do the main characters deal with racial discrimination?

1.3. Objectives of the problem

Identifying the problems above can provide an overview of the objectives of this research. This study aims to:

1. Identifying racial discrimination experienced by the main characters as depicted in the *Hidden Figures* film.
2. Explaining how the main characters deal with racial discrimination.



1.4. Significance of the study

This research is expected to provide lessons for readers about the impact of racial discrimination and foster a sense of tolerance for others; we must be able to treat people without racial discrimination because all humans are the same. In addition, this research can be used as a reference for readers who want to learn about racial discrimination.

1.5. Scopes and limitations

In analyzing racial discrimination, this study uses the film object *Hidden Figures*. The stories that tell of the struggles of the Black race in the United States.

To limit the scope of the study, the writer does not analyze all the characters in the film but only the main characters. They are Katherine G. Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson. These three main characters get the most racial discrimination from those around them.

1.6. Research Method

1.6.1. Research Design

This study used Pettigrew theory of discrimination and Theodorson & Theodorson theory of racial discrimination. The racial discrimination concept is used to describe the main characters experiences relate to discrimination as reflected in the *Hidden Figures* movie 2016. It described how they deal with the racial discrimination. It will see in the scenes and interactions of each character. The findings of this research will be a conclusion to answer the problem statement.

1.6.2. Data and Source of Data

1.6.2.1 Data

The data analyzed in this study are scenes that contain racial discrimination actions experienced by the main characters and some of the data supported by scripts. Regarding the data collection process, the author carefully selects the data needed from the 2016 *Hidden Figure* movie.

1.6.2.2 Source of Data

The data source used in this study was the 2016 *Hidden Figures* film downloaded from this link: <http://51.222.99.97/hidden-figures-2016/> and script as a supporter of the film downloaded from this link: <https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/script-pdf/hidden-figures-script-pdf.pdf>.

1.6.3. Step of Data Collection

1. Downloading the movies and the subtitles of *Hidden Figures* movie
2. Downloading the script of the *Hidden Figures* movie
3. Watching the movie
4. Capturing the scenes that show racial discrimination that occurs to the main characters in the *Hidden Figures* movie
5. Listing the scenes which portrayed racial discrimination of the main characters.
6. Giving code for each data:

01 = number of the data

HFM = *Hidden Figures Movie*

RD = Racial Discrimination

DRD = Direct racial discrimination

IRD = Indirect racial discrimination

KGJ = Katherine Goble Johnson

DV = Dorothy Vaughan

MJ = Mary Jackson

1.6.4. Step of Data Analysis

1. Watching the *Hidden Figures* movie and read the script.
2. Identifying the racial discrimination that occurs in the main characters in the *Hidden Figures* movie.
3. Explaining how the main characters can deal with the racial discrimination.
4. Making a conclusion.





1.7. Definition of The Key Terms

1. **Discrimination:** the unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on something, usually something definite, such as based on race, ethnicity, religion, or social class. (Theodorson & Theodorson: 1979).
2. **Racial discrimination:** when a person is treated less favorably or not given the same opportunities as others in a similar situation because of their race, country of birth, ethnic origin, and skin color (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2001).
3. **Hidden Figures 2016:** a movie that tells about discrimination that occurred against Black characters working at NASA.

1.8. Organization of The Study

This research consists of five chapters. Chapter one of this research describes the background of the study, the statement of the study, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the research method, the definition of the key terms, organization of the study. Chapter two describes the theory that is used in this research, and the previous studies. Chapter three is an analysis. The last chapter is the conclusion and suggestion.