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feel and do

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Opinium

Black History Month - Education and Black History Month Report



Key findings

16 December 2020

Project details

PROJECT NUMBER	OP15584
PROJECT NAME	Black History Month - Education and Black History Month Report
CLIENT COMPANY NAME	Opinium
SAMPLE	2,000 nationally representative UK adults (18+) 750 nationally representative ethnic minorities (18+)
FIELDWORK DATES	16th - 21st of October 2020

Introduction

During Black History Month 2020, Opinium launched a study asking questions on the following four broad subject areas to the British public:

1. **Attitudes towards Black History Month and teaching about Black History in schools.**
2. Perceptions of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) UK movement.
3. Understanding contemporary takes on patriotism, and what it means to be a patriot in 2020.
4. Discussing the legacy of the slave trade in UK cities, with a particular focus on statues.

This report will speak about Black History Month and teaching about Black British History in schools.

The study was asked to a nationally representative audience of 2,000 UK adults.

The study was also asked to a nationally representative sample of 750 ethnic minorities to ensure we have robust numbers of responses from ethnic minority groups to compare and contrast with the national level data.

Both the nationally representative data and the specific ethnic minority data will be used in this report.

Summary of key findings

- Only two in five (**41%**) Brits think it is important to mark Black History month, rising to **87%** of Black people
 - Three in five (**60%**) Brits have seen some kind of Black History month content in October, mostly through TV shows (**30%**) and on the news (**26%**)
 - For just over a third (**35%**) of Brits, Black History month represents an opportunity to highlight the contributions of black people throughout history, which are often forgotten
 - Only one in ten (**9%**) Brits learned about Black British history in school
 - Over half of ethnic minorities (**53%**) believe we do a 'poor job' on teaching about racism in UK schools, rising to **70%** of black people
 - Only a third (**32%**) of Brits at total level think we do a 'good job' on teaching about racism in UK schools
 - Half (**50%**) of Brits have never heard of the Bristol Bus Boycotts, while **46%** were not aware of the role Mary Seacole played in the Crimean war

Black History Month

Only two in five Brits think it is important to mark Black History month

Only two in five (41%) Brits think it is important to have a month where, as a nation, we remember notable black figures in British history, for example, through Black History month.

This feeling of importance is felt much stronger with younger age groups, with 64% of 18-24s believing it's important to mark Black History month, compared to 39% of 45-54s and only 27% of those aged 65-74. It is also felt more strongly by ethnic minority groups, where three in five (62%) believe it is important, rising to 87% of black respondents.

Other groups more likely to believe it is important to mark Black History month are those in the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) community (54% LGB Vs 40% for heterosexuals), those who voted Remain in the 2016 EU referendum (55% Remain Vs 22% Leave), those who are more highly educated (50% of those degree educated Vs 36% of those without a degree) and finally, Labour and Liberal Democrat voters (60% of Labour voters, 51% of Liberal Democrat voters, compared to 23% of Conservative voters).

Three in five Brits have seen some kind of Black History month content this October

Over the course of October, three in five (60%) Brits say they have seen some sort of Black History month content, rising to 84% of black respondents.

This is primarily through coverage on TV shows (30%), coverage on the news (26%) and via posts on social media (24%). Just under one in ten Brits (8%) were aware that some letter boxes were painted black in some UK cities by the government in celebration of Black History month.

For a third of Brits, Black History month represents an opportunity to highlight the contributions of black people throughout history, which are often forgotten

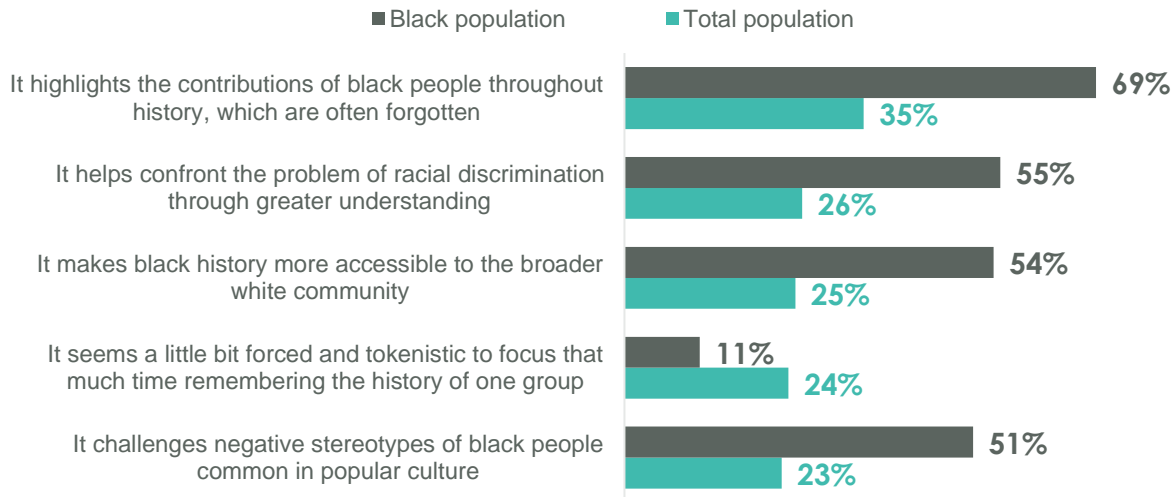
We then asked people what Black History month represents for them. For just over a third (35%) of Brits, Black History month represents an opportunity to highlight the contributions of black people throughout history, which are often forgotten. This rises to over two thirds (69%) for black people.

On the other hand, some have a more negative view on what Black History month represents. A quarter (24%) of Brits say Black History month appears a little bit forced and tokenistic to focus that

much time remembering the history of one group, while for just under one in five (18%) it doesn't represent much at all.

The top five answers explaining what Black History month means for people is displayed in the chart:

What does Black History month represent for you?



Base: all respondents (n=2,000), all black respondents (n=180)

Black British History in schools

Only one in ten Brits learned about Black British history in schools

Only one in ten Brits (9%) learned about Black British history in schools, and this falls to 1% in Northern Ireland, 3% in Scotland and 4% in the North of England.

Rather than learning about Black British history in schools, the most common way to learn about Black British history in the UK is through more self-guided mediums, through TV/films/documentaries (44%), through social media/the news (44%) or through the reading and internet searches motivated by the individual (39%).

Just over one in five (22%) say they haven't learned about Black British history at all through any medium, not through discussions with family and friends, not through TV/film/documentaries nor through social media/the news. This rises to 28% of Conservative voters and 41% of those with no formal qualifications.

Less than a third of Brits are learning about the slave trade, cultures and practices around the world and racism at school

We asked Brits if they were taught about several subjects during their schooling years, and while the majority can recall learning about Tudor history (58%) and the Ancient Greeks (39%), only three in ten (30%) can recall learning about the Slave Trade, while even less (22%) learned about cultures and practices from around the world, and under one in seven (13%) were taught about racism.

We then listed 10 notable events and figures in Black British history to people and asked them how familiar or unfamiliar they are with them. Levels of awareness are highest for the five events listed below:

Top 5 answers for awareness of events/notable people in Black British history:

1. The Murder of Stephen Lawrence and the MacPherson report (91%)
2. 1948 Empire Windrush landing (83%)
3. 1833 Slavery Abolition Act (83%)
4. First four Black members of parliament elected in 1987 (Dianne Abbott, Bernie Grant, Paul Boateng, Keith Vaz) (77%)
5. The 1965 Race relations act (71%)

Conversely, half of Brits (50%) had never heard of the Bristol Bus boycott, 46% were unaware of the role Mary Seacole played in the Crimean war and 43% had never heard of the British Black Panthers – all of which are re-counted commonly when speaking about Black British history today.

Reflection on the UK school curriculum on race

Only a third of Brits think the UK school curriculum does a good job on teaching about racism in the UK

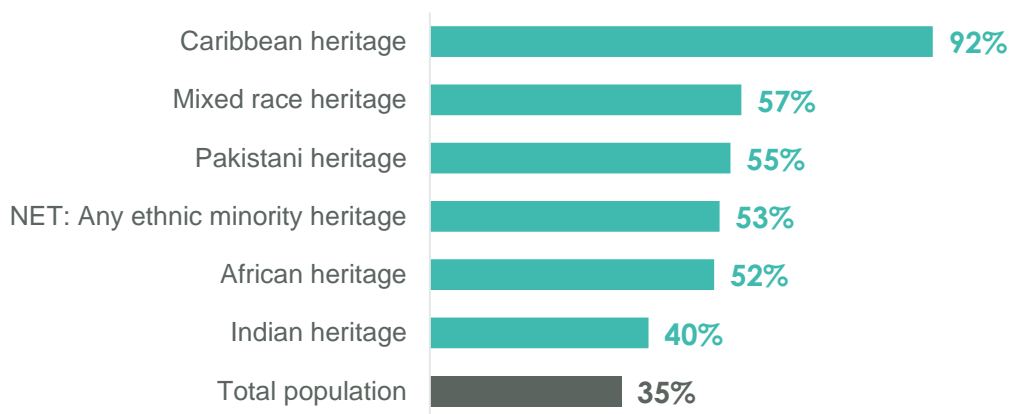
When thinking about the UK school curriculum, only a third (32%) of Brits think we do a 'good job' on teaching about racism, while a slightly higher proportion (35%) believe we do a 'poor job', and just as many people say they don't know (33%).

Interestingly, Conservative voters are much more likely to believe we’re doing a ‘good job’ teaching about racism in schools than Labour voters (38% Conservative voters Vs 20% Labour voters).

Looking specifically at ethnic minority groups, only a quarter (23%) of Black respondents say the curriculum does a ‘good job’, while a significant seven in ten (70%) say it does a ‘poor job’.

The chart below shows to what extent different subgroups believe the school curriculum does a ‘poor job’ teaching about racism:

Those who believe the UK school curriculum does a ‘poor job’ teaching about racism



Base: all respondents educated in the UK (n=1,892), any ethnic minority heritage (n=612), all Indian (n=132), all Pakistani (n=105), all African (n=87), all Caribbean (n=63), all mixed race (n=54)

All ethnic minority sub groups are more likely to think the UK school curriculum does a ‘poor job’ teaching about racism than at total population level, although those of Caribbean origin are most likely to think this, at 92%.

We then asked Brits how important it is that racism, the British Empire/Colonialism and Black British history is taught in schools. Seven in ten Brits said it’s important to teach about racism (72%) and the British Empire/Colonialism (68%) in school, although only 56% in comparison said it’s important to teach about Black British history in school.

The importance of teaching about British black history in schools is felt more strongly among ethnic minority groups (72%), in particular those from a black (89%) and mixed race backgrounds (77%).

About Opinium

OPINIUM is an award winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on pulse of what people **think, feel** and **do**. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter. We work with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. We use the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.

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