

Inside The Double Bind: A Synthesis of Empirical Research on Undergraduate and Graduate Women of Color in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

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Summary

In this article, Maria Ong, Carol Wright, Lorelle Espinosa, and Gary Orfield review nearly forty years of scholarship on the postsecondary educational experiences of women of color in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Their synthesis of 116 works of scholarship provides insight into the factors that influence the retention, persistence, and achievement of women of color in STEM fields. They argue that the current underrepresentation of women of color in STEM fields represents an unconscionable underutilization of our nation's human capital and raises concerns of equity in the U.S. educational and employment systems. They refute the pervasive myth that underrepresented minority women are less interested in pursuing STEM fields and then present a complex portrait of the myriad factors that influence the undergraduate and graduate experiences of women of color in STEM fields. Finally, the authors discuss the policy implications of their findings and highlight gaps in the literature where further research is needed, providing a knowledge base for educators, policy makers, and researchers to continue the mission of advancing the status of women of color in STEM.

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