Race-Based Disproportionality of Discipline Referrals and the Relationships With Gender and GPA

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Submitted to the Graduate Department and Faculty of the School of Education of Baker University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

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Date Defended: December 1, 2021

Abstract

This quantitative research study took place in a school district in the Midwest. The data included students enrolled in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. The first purpose of this study was to determine the extent the number of suspension occurrences and the number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline is disproportionate among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. An additional purpose of this study was to determine the extent the disproportionality in the number of occurrences and the number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year was related to the student's gender and academic status. The results of this study revealed disproportionality in the number of days spent outside the classroom and the number of suspension occurrences for African-American, Hispanic, Multiracial, Other race, and White students. African-American, Hispanic, and Multiracial students were overrepresented in the number of days spent outside of the classroom and the number of suspension occurrences. Other race students were underrepresented in the number of days spent outside of the classroom but were overrepresented in the number of suspension occurrences. White students were underrepresented in both the number of days spent outside of the classroom and the number of suspension occurrences. Secondly, the findings revealed disproportionality in the number of days spent outside the classroom and the number of suspension occurrences for African-American, Hispanic, and Multiracial female and male students and Other race female students. Other race male students and White female and male

students were underrepresented in the number of days spent outside the classroom and the number of suspension occurrences. Finally, the findings indicated that grade point average (GPA) was not related to the disproportionality in the number of days spent outside the classroom due to exclusionary discipline but was related to the number of suspension occurrences. There was evidence that African-American and Multi-racial students were overrepresented in all three GPA categories. Hispanic students were overrepresented in two out of the three categories. These findings could aid policymakers and school district leaders in making changes in the educational system and planning professional development to increase learning for all students. Future research studies could include all students in Grades K-12 and expand the study to surrounding school districts and a statewide study. Finally, future research should examine exclusionary consequences for specific discipline referrals.

Dedication

To those who give me strength: God whose grace and love has given me purpose in life; my parents A.B. Rials Sr. (d.2004) and Mary Rials; my siblings- Jai, Louise (d.2005), Loretta, A.B. Jr., Jerry (d.2020), Lea, Linnell, Lisa, Michael Wayne (d.1975), Rita, Clark, and Nicole who individually inspired me in more ways than they will ever know. To my nieces and nephews who bring me joy and to whom I desire to be an inspiration in their lives. And to my Ancestors who gave their lives in the pursuit of justice and who, because of their fight, I can pursue my dreams.

Acknowledgments

My decision to pursue a doctorate was inspired by my niece, Shakiyya Bland, Ed.D., who one day, during the passing period in the halls of the middle school where we both worked, shared with me her dream of pursuing her doctorate and inspired me to do the same. From the moment this dream was conceived, many people made sure the vision would come to life. Your investment in my success inspires me to continue fulfilling my purpose and destiny.

My parents and family are forever an inspiration to me. As a young Black man growing up in the State of Mississippi, my Father, A.B. Rials, Sr., was denied the opportunity for an education. His life was dedicated to working and helping his parents and siblings survive. Despite the fact that he was not formally educated, he held a strong belief that education was a fundamental, civil right. He was wise and instilled in each of his children the importance of education. My Mother, Mary A. Rials, is a pillar of strength who had the fortitude to endure many obstacles in life, demonstrating courage and faith. I recall being younger and telling her that I was not going to college. She vehemently told me that I was going to first try before deciding not to attend. She knew the power of not setting limits on myself and not adhering to others, sometimes teachers, that would tell me college was not for me. She saw greatness in me and encouraged me to chase it. My entire family has been an inspiration. Thank you to my siblings, nieces, and nephews for believing in me and encouraging me that my continued work is relevant for generations to come.

Dr. Susan Rogers, my major advisor, thank you for all your support, guidance, and encouragement; at times, you made me feel as if I was the only student with whom

you were working. Dr. Peg Waterman, research analyst, I admire your love for statistics and your dedication to me as your student. Dr. James Robins, committee member, for the time you took to read my work and provide additional feedback. Dr. Alison Banikowski, committee member, for your help at the beginning of this journey and your agreement to support me in the end.

Finally, to all the students who suffer the consequences of disproportionate discipline practices, your struggle has inspired me to be a better educator. My message to you is, hold on, better days are coming. There are many on this journey to advance racial equity in the classroom and the world. Continue to be inspired and pursue your dreams.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Exclusionary discipline practices that remove students from the classroom for exhibiting undesired behaviors exist in some American schools. The widespread overuse of exclusionary discipline can lead to increased negative student behaviors and future problems such as decreased graduation rates and involvement in the criminal justice system (U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2014). High exclusionary discipline rates can also reduce the overall positive school environment as students might distrust their teachers and the administrative staff. The USDE (2014) has acknowledged that the cost due to excessive exclusionary discipline practices is too high and has encouraged educators to redesign discipline policies that foster supportive and safe school environments and take deliberate steps to create positive school environments.

According to the Center for American Progress (2017), "The mandate of Brown v. Board of Education has yet to be fulfilled" because "Black students are disciplined at disproportionate rates compared with their White counterparts" (p. 1). According to the Center for American Progress (2017), 24% of the students enrolled in American public schools are African-American, yet 48% of the students suspended are African-American, and 49% of the students expelled from public school are African-American. Nguyen, Noguera, Adkins, and Teranishi (2019) found that ethnic disproportionality is not evident when grouping Asian-American and Pacific Islander students. The data reveals that Asian-American students are underrepresented in the discipline data. Pacific Islander students are twice as likely as their White peers to be disciplined when separated from Asian-Americans (Nguyen et al., 2019). Gage, Katsiyannis, Carrero, Miller, and Pico

(2020) found that Hispanic students are issued exclusionary discipline at rates higher than their White counterparts.

According to The Civil Rights Project and the Advancement Project (2000), "In 1998, more than 3.1 million children in America were suspended, and another 87,000 were expelled" from school (p. v). Exclusionary discipline practices cause students to miss instructional time and the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with educators. In their dear colleague letter to issue guidance to assist public elementary and secondary schools in administering student discipline without discriminating based on race, color, or national origin, Lhamon and Samuels (2014) stated that although students of color do not commit more disciplinable infractions than their White peers. African-American, Latino, and Native American students are disciplined at higher rates and receive harsher punishments than their White peers. Lhamon and Samuels (2014), in their review of the data, found that the overrepresentation of students of color in school discipline is not due to the students engaging in more unexpected behaviors but is driven by structural and systemic factors.

Background

This study was conducted in District Midwest (MW), a school district in a Midwestern state. Per their website, District MW offers several programs to support parents and students in the community, including a Parents as Teachers program, a tiny-k program (serving families of infants and toddlers to age three), 14 elementary schools servicing students in Kindergarten to Grade 5, four middle schools servicing students in Grades 6-8, two comprehensive high schools servicing Grades 9-12; a college and career

center, an adult education services diploma-completion, a Graduate Educational Development program, and a K-12 virtual school (District MW, 2020b, p. 1).

The demographic breakdown for students enrolled in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year is detailed in Table 1. District MW's total enrollment was 11,879 students. The total enrollment in Grades 6-12 was 6,667 students, of which 6% were African-American, 68% were White, 10% were Hispanic, 9% were Multi-Ethnic, and 7% were classified as Other race (Asian, American Indian, or Alaska Native), and 68% were White (KSDE, 2020). Because of the low number of American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander students, they are placed in the Other race category were grouped and listed as "other" for this study.

Table 1

District MW Enrollment Information 2019-2020

	Female	Male	Total
African-American	188	244	432
Hispanic	322	345	667
Multiracial	299	292	591
Other[a]	211	232	443
White	2,194	2,340	4,534

Note. Adapted from *Kansas K-12 Report Generator*, by KSDE, 2019. Retrieved October 21, 2020, from https://datacentral.ksde.org/report_gen.aspx

[a]Because of the low number of American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander students, they are placed in the Other category

Per District MW (2020a), the district started focusing on equity work in 1995. In 2009, the Board of Education set goals to increase all students' achievement and close the achievement gaps between students of color and White students. As a part of this

initiative, the district started working with the Pacific Education Group to provide equity training for district staff and community members. In the spring of 2009, the first group of educators, community members, and building and district administrators attended the National Summit for Courageous Conversations. As of the 2021 school year, the district continues to have staff engage in "Beyond Diversity Seminars" led by the Pacific Education Group. Also, in 2009, the district worked with a group of African-American men from the community to start a volunteer group, "Can We Talk," to meet with African-American male students to provide mentorship and a space for these students to voice concerns about their school experience. As of the start of this study, "Can We Talk" continues to be an active group at the high school level but has been extended to all students of color (District MW, 2021).

During the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years, the equity facilitator for District MW worked with building administrators to establish a team of teachers in each building to provide equity training at the building level. The equity work continued during the 2013-2014 school year with the addition of a group led by the district's equity director to conduct action research on equity (District MW, 2021). District MW set a goal to recruit and retain staff of color. As a part of this initiative, District MW established a support group for the staff of color who work in the district During the 2014-2015 school year. District MW established goals to provide professional development to train teachers to implement culturally relevant lesson plans in their classrooms and continued to provide equity training to all staff (District MW, 2021). During the 2017-2018 school year, District MW invited parents of students of color to work with the District Equity Leadership Advisory board. During this same year, the

district directed each building principal to schedule a time and place for parents of students of color to share their experiences, provide feedback and voice their concerns at the building level (District MW, 2021).

In addition to the equity work, District MW established a goal to implement a Comprehensive, Integrated, Three-tiered Model of Prevention (CI3T) at all campuses (District MW, 2016). The district's goal was to shape expected behaviors and reduce unexpected behavior infractions by acknowledging and responding positively to expected behaviors. District MW has since worked to implement CI3T schoolwide. Each school in the district has a school CI3T team that works with the building administrators to ensure a CI3T plan is established and implemented per building goals. With this equity work and the full implementation of the district-wide CI3T plan, there continued to be a disparity in the discipline for students of color in 2017. An equity audit that included the total number of students suspended between the 2014-2017 school years submitted to the school board (District MW, 2017) revealed that over the four years, overall, in-school-suspensions decreased. When disaggregated by race, the audit revealed that, although in-school suspensions decreased, African-American students, Hispanic students, Multiracial students, and Other race students appeared to be disciplined at higher rates than White students. Table 2 displays District MW's in-school suspension data disaggregated by race for the 2014-2017 school.

Table 2

District MW In-School Suspensions Data 2014-2017

	2014		2015		2016		2017	
	%E	%D	%E	%D	%E	%D	%E	%D
African-American	7	15.5	7	13.6	7	12.9	7	12.4
Hispanic	9	9.7	9	9.5	9	10.7	9	10.3
Multiracial	9	12.5	9	11.8	9	13.4	9	12.4
Other[a]	8	8.4	8	6.4	8	9.2	8	7.9
White	67	53.9	67	58.8	67	64.3	67	56.6

Note. %E = % of Enrollment; %D = % of Discipline. Adapted from *District MW's Longitudinal Data report 2014-2017*, by District MW, 2017. Retrieved January 22, 2021, from https://www.usd[redacted].org/cms/lib/KS01906981/Centricity/Domain/2140/Longitudinal%20Trend%20Data%20c11.13%20Rev..pdf

[a]Because of the low number of American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students, are placed in the Other race category

The equity audit also revealed that African-American students, Hispanic students, Multiracial students, and Native-American students were disciplined at higher rates, on average, with out-of-school suspensions than Other race and White students (District MW, 2017). Table 3 displays district MW's out-of-school suspension data disaggregated by race for the 2014-2017 school years.

Table 3

District MW Out-Of-School Suspensions Data 2014-2017

	2014		2015		2016		2017	
	%E	%D	%E	%D	%E	%D	%E	%D
African-American	7	12.7	7	14.3	7	10.1	7	13.8
Hispanic	9	6.4	9	8.6	9	6.1	9	10.4
Multiracial	9	12.3	9	9.4	9	6.6	9	15.8
Other[a]	4	9.1	8	5.2	8	3.7	8	6.4
White	67	59.5	67	62.4	67	44.0	67	53.0

Note. %E = % of Enrollment; %D = % of Discipline. Adapted from *Districts MW's Longitudinal Data report 2014-2017* by District MW 2017. Retrieved January 22, 2021, from https://www.usd[redacted].org/cms/lib/KS01906981/Centricity/Domain/2140/Longitudinal%20Trend%20Data%20c11.13%20Rev.pdf

[a]Because of the low number of American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander students, they are placed in the Other category

During the four years, the most significant decline in out-of-school suspensions was during the 2015-2016 school year. During the 2015-2016 school year, African-American students were the only group of students who received out-of-school suspensions at disproportionate rates (District MW, 2017). During the 2015-2016 school year, African-American students constituted 6.1% of the District's MW enrollment (KSDE, 2020) and 10.1% of the out-of-school suspensions (District MW, 2017). As the district continues its equity work, it must examine where they currently stand to enable them to move forward.

Statement of the Problem

Balfanz, Herzog, and MacIver (2007) found that one of the top indicators to predict if a student will graduate from high school is disciplinary referrals that result in students being excluded from the classroom, such as in-school and out-of-school suspensions. African-American students are referred to the office at a higher percentage rate than their White counterparts; many of the discipline referrals written for White students are due to objective, unbiased reasons with clearly defined actions such as smoking, obscene language, and vandalism (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). In comparison, African-American students are referred to the office for biased behavior "infractions (e.g., loitering, excessive noise) that would seem to require a good deal more subjective judgment on the part of the referring agent" (Skiba et al., 2002, p. 334). Lhamon and Samuels (2014) reflected that, in addition to missed class time, excessive exclusionary discipline negatively impacts the student's classroom engagement and cohesion and increases the likelihood that the student will be retained in a grade, drop out of school, or be placed in the juvenile justice system. Bell and Puckett (2020) found that African-American students who are removed from the classroom due to exclusionary discipline practices miss important assignments and have difficulty completing make-up work. As District MW continues to advance its strategic equity plans, it is essential to collect data, analyze current data, and develop strategies to progress towards identified equity goals. Although the district's current data shows a disparity in how students of color are disciplined, there has not been a research study to formally identify the impact of the district's current discipline practices.

District MW equity facilitator (personal communication, September 2020) stated that the equity work in the district has had little impact at the student level. Although the District MW has engaged in equity work since 1995, the facilitator expressed that there has only been a slight improvement in the disparity in the rates in which students of color and White students are disciplined. In a longitudinal data report presented to the school board in November of 2017, the executive director of data and technology stated that although the data shows a decrease of over 20% in the exclusionary discipline overall, District MW failed to reduce the racial disparities in in-school and out of school suspensions (District MW, 2017).

Purpose of the Study

The focus of this study was to determine the extent to which exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to students enrolled in Grades 6-12 in District MW are disproportional by race and gender. The first purpose of this study was to determine to what extent the number of days spent outside of the classroom and the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline is disproportionate among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. The second purpose of this study was to determine to what extent the disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom and the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student gender. The third purpose of this study was to determine to what extent the disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom and the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary

discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year relate to the student's grade point average (GPA).

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it contributes information on how excessive discipline impacts the disproportionality of the number of days spent outside of the classroom and the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12. The results of this study might provide valuable insight to the board of education and district leadership team in their work to increase student and teacher relationships and decrease the opportunity gap for students of color. The District MW superintendent (personal communication, March 11, 2020) expressed that his goal is for all students who live in the district to graduate from high school and become successful community members. The superintendent acknowledged a concern that a student's skin color might predict success in the classroom. He also stated that, although the staff employed by District MW have engaged in professional development centered around equity and anti-racism work, the work needs to continue until we can no longer predict the success of a student by their gender and skin color (District MW superintendent, personal communication, March 11, 2020). This research is essential because it will help the district's leadership team identify if their current practices in issuing discipline continue to create a racial discipline gap. If so, the district can use the results of this study to strategically plan and develop strategies and goals to close the discipline gaps.

Skiba et al. (2002) found that the systemic bias in the American culture is reflective in the way we discipline students in the public school system. They also suggested that further research be conducted to convince policymakers that the racial disparity in discipline needs to be addressed to ensure equal access to education for all students. Darensbourg, Perez, and Blake (2010) recommend that school districts review their discipline data and work with school-based mental health teams to make informed decisions on what interventions are needed to reduce the overrepresentation of African-American males receiving exclusionary discipline.

Furthermore, Morris and Perry (2017) found that school suspensions accounted for about one-fifth of the gap between the school performance of African-Americans and their White peers. Morris and Perry (2017) posited that although school discipline is a crucial factor in the racial achievement gap, it is also under-researched. Allen (2017) suggested that school districts consider revising and revamping their discipline policies by examining their discipline data for race and gender overrepresentation and providing appropriate interventions. "Statistics alone are dehumanizing…we need leaders who not only recognize and name the racial inequities that plague our school, but who also take action to address them" (Aguilar, 2020, p. 83). This study localizes research to District MW and provides statistical data to examine the impact of discipline on academic achievement. The results of this study could empower the MW district's superintendent to analyze his fear that a student's skin color might predict if they could be successful in the classroom. Finally, the findings of this study might provide District MW with the tools they need to analyze the impact of their discipline practices and use the data to make informed decisions that could lead to improved student outcomes.

Delimitations

Delimitations are self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study." (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 134). For this study, the researcher included the following delimitations:

- The study was conducted in a school district in a Midwest city.
- Participants were students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year.
- This study focuses on the following exclusionary discipline practices: in-school suspension (ISS), out-of-school suspension (OSS), long-term OSS, and long-term school expulsion.
- GPA was divided into three categories (4.00-3.00, 2.99-2.00, and 1.99 and below).

Assumptions

Assumptions are statements and conditions that are believed to be true for the purpose of the research to be completed (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The following assumptions were made concerning this research study:

- All the student discipline data were submitted to the school's information system for tracking student discipline.
- The demographic data detailing student race and gender were accurately maintained.
- The GPA data is accurately entered into the school's information system.

Research Questions

Research questions are essential and help to guide a study (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). Three research questions were developed to examine archived quantitative

discipline data in District MW to determine if students of color were being disciplined at a disproportionate rate, if the students' gender impacted how often they were disciplined, and if there is a relationship between exclusionary discipline and GPA.

RQ1. To what extent is the number of days spent outside of the classroom and suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline disproportionate among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year?

RQ2. To what extent is the disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom and suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year related to student gender?

RQ3. To what extent is the disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom and suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year related to student GPA?

Definition of Terms

It is imperative to define key terms used throughout the dissertation (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). In this section, the key terms used in this study are listed and defined.

Exclusionary discipline. The American Psychological Association (APA, n. d.) indicated that exclusionary discipline includes all school disciplinary action types that remove or exclude students from their scheduled educational setting. Including in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions. Although these practices are typically used to punish undesired behaviors, deter similar behavior by other students, and promote

more appropriate behavior, study results find that exclusionary practices can result in unwanted outcomes for both the student and their community, notably an increased risk for involvement in the criminal justice system (Children's Defense Fund [CDF], 1975).

Grade point average (GPA). District MW (2019) defines the GPA as a numeric average of all grades achieved in classes at a given school. A student's unweighted GPA is calculated as the numeric average of all grades earned by the student. The total number of points earned is calculated using a four-point formula for every grade: A = 4.0, B = 3.0, C = 2.0, D = 1.0, F = 0. A second system, which students may use on college or scholarship applications, uses weighted grades for all advanced placement (AP) classes, where A = 4.5, B = 3.5, C = 2.5, D = 1.0, and F = 0. All other non-AP classes are figured on the traditional 4-point grading system. For this study, the 4-point system of unweighted grades was used. Student GPAs were divided into three categories (4.00-3.00, 2.99-2.00, and 1.99 and below).

Students of color (persons of color, people of color). According to the American Heritage online Dictionary of The English Language (2020), persons of color or students of color are terms used to describe "A person who has a racial identity other than White."

Organization of the Study

Five chapters comprise this study. Chapter 1 included an introduction to the study and the background information on the school district, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, delimitations, assumptions, research questions, and the definition of terms. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature, which includes discipline and American schools; race, ethnicity, and school discipline;

gender and school discipline; and discipline and academic achievement. Chapter 3 includes a description of the methodology used in this study, including the research design, selection of participants, measurement, data collection procedures, data analysis, hypothesis testing, and the limitations. Chapter 4 includes a presentation of the findings of the study, including the results of the hypothesis testing that addressed the three research questions and the additional analyses. Chapter 5 includes a study summary, findings related to the literature, and conclusions.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

This chapter presents the literature and prior studies that research the disparity in discipline for students of color and their White counterparts. The CDF (1975) first focused on students of color being disciplined at higher rates than their White counterparts. In her review of literature, Joseph (2018) found that for the last four decades, students of color, including African-American, Hispanic, and Native-American, have been disproportionately excluded from school, due to exclusionary discipline, compared to their White peers. In this chapter, the literature related to this study is included along with other pertinent research and literature. The chapter is formatted in the following sections: discipline and American schools, race and school discipline, gender and school discipline, and academic achievement and school discipline.

Discipline and American Schools

In his work, Katz (2016) researched the history of school discipline. In the early years of the American school system, school officials used corporal punishment as a form of school discipline. Corporal punishment was ruled as constitutional by the courts and, at the time of this study, remains legal in 19 states. As high school enrollment increased from 1890 to 1918, schools moved from the traditional one-room schoolhouse to multiple classrooms overseen by a principal. With this, the responsibility of discipline moved from the teacher to the principal of the school. In 1975, due to increased violence in schools, the U.S. Supreme ruled that schools need to conduct a hearing before suspending students from school (Katz, 2016). In 1994 the U.S. Congress passed the Gun-Free Schools Act, signed into law by former President Clinton, leading to the beginning of the

"zero tolerance" era in public schools in America. Under the "zero tolerance" laws, students who committed behavior infractions were issued mandatory penalties for their behavior. With encouragement from the federal government, schools are now turning to alternative discipline practices such as restorative practices (Katz, 2016).

Effective educational practices are the most critical solution to discipline problems (CDF, 1975). "Children who are able to read are learning and who feel respected are unlikely to become major discipline problems" (CDF, 1975, p. 93). In their research, the CDF (1975) found that school discipline data showed a disproportionate rate in African-American students' suspensions.

Moles (1989) explained school discipline as a practice that systems use to teach the behaviors they want students to exhibit and correct unwanted behaviors. These practices maintain social order for students to achieve educational success. Vavrus and Cole (2002) purported that disciplinary practices are used when violence is not present, but teachers perceive their authority has been undermined. Furthermore, Vavrus and Cole (2002) found that exclusionary discipline is often a result of a sequence of disruptive acts committed by various students, but the student of color is often 'singled out' and is reported to the office. Vavrus and Cole (2002) argued that the process of singling out students "disproportionately affects students whose race and gender distance them from their teachers, and this subtle, often unconscious process may be one of the reasons why students of color often experience suspension in the absence of violent behavior" (p. 109).

According to the APA Zero Tolerance Task Force (2008), research has consistently indicated that removing students from their learning environments for

disciplinary reasons does not improve student behavior or make schools a safer learning environment for those who remain. Through discipline practices, schools attempt to create and maintain a safe, orderly, and positive learning environment where all students can learn and increase self-discipline (Bear, 2010). School discipline is necessary but must be fair and reasonable with established policies that govern severe and chronic behavior problems (Bear, 2010). The New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU, 2011) data review results provided evidence that the overuse of discipline negatively impacts schools and harms disciplined students. The report reveals that students and educators in schools with high suspension rates view their schools as unwelcoming and ineffective.

Furthermore, schools with zero-tolerance policies have been linked to lower scores on standardized tests (NYCLU, 2011). Losen and Skiba (2012) posited that the overall high rates of suspensions and the disparities in discipline rates by race and gender would not be as concerning if schools achieved their goals of increasing a safe and productive learning environment. Mergler, Vargas, and Caldwell (2014) found that removing a student from the classroom due to misbehavior does not modify the student's behavior. The loss of instruction hinders a student's academic progress (Mergler et al., 2014).

Since the 1970s, the national in-school and out-of-school suspension rates have continued to increase for African-American students (Losen, Hodson, Keith, Morrison, & Belway, 2015). As suspension rates increased for African-American and Hispanic students between the early 1970s and early 2000s, the racial discipline gap between African-American and White students and Hispanic students and White students also widened. Losen et al. (2015) found that the racial discipline gap narrowed slightly

between the 2009-2010 and 2011-2012 school years, but the movement was due to an increase in the suspension rates of White students (Losen et al. 2015).

In their survey on school safety and crime for the USDE, Wang, Chen, Zhang, and Oudekerk (2020) collected school suspension data from the 2003-2004 school year to the 2017-2018 school year. The trend over time in schools that were permitted to use school expulsion of students as a disciplinary action and those that were not was examined. Of the schools that used expulsion, the researchers further examined what percentage expelled students with or without academic tutoring or at-home services. The data were further categorized by the percentage of students of color, including African-American, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native. The authors detailed that there was an overall decrease in the number of expulsions. During the 2013-2014 school year, 62% of public schools in America used expulsion as a form of discipline with continuing services, and 51% used expulsion without services. Over time, these numbers decreased to 46% with services and 35% without services during the 2017-2018 school year. The USDE (2020) report also revealed that of the schools that could expel students with continuing services, there was no significant difference in how often expulsion was used in schools with a low enrollment of students of color and those with a high enrollment of students of color. The report findings revealed a significant difference in the number of students suspended among the schools permitted to expel students without continued academic support. Of the schools with a high population of students of color, 31% used expulsion compared to 12% of the schools with a low student of color enrollment in the 2017-2018 school year (USDE, 2020).

Race and School Discipline

The CDF (1975) completed a mixed-methods study that examined suspension data submitted by 2,862 school districts to the U.S. Office for Civil Rights. The CDF also examined surveys completed by 6,500 families and over 300 school and community leaders in nine states and the District of Columbia. The CDF found that most of the students suspended were White, but African-American suspension rates were much higher. In elementary schools, African-American students were suspended three times as often as their White counterparts. In secondary schools, African-American students were twice as likely to be suspended as their White peers. Of the reporting districts, African-American students accounted for 27.1% of the enrollment and constituted 42.3% of the racially identified suspensions. The CDF also found that schools with a higher population of African-American students tended to have a lower overall suspension rate and a lower disproportion in their suspension rates (CDF, 1975).

The CDF found that of the total students they surveyed, 4.4% had been suspended at least once when isolating race, 7.3% of the African-American students surveyed were suspended at least once. At the secondary level, African-American students surveyed were suspended more than three times as often as their White peers. Results also revealed that African-American students are more likely to be suspended more than once than White students. The CDF found that the reasons for suspensions for all students ranged from excessive attendance problems to drug possession. Over 63% of suspensions were categorized as not dangerous or violent but were due to an infraction to school rules.

The CDF (1975) reported that the student's behavior did not cause an unsafe environment in the school in some cases. In one interview, an African-American student who participated in the bussing system to desegregate schools was suspended for three days because he refused to return to the building after getting into an argument with another student while waiting for their bus. This student was suspended for an additional eight days because his parent did not escort him to school at the end of his suspension. In another case involving a fight between an African-American student and a White student, both students received an office referral; however, the African-American student was suspended out of school. In contrast, the White student was permitted to return to the classroom (CDF, 1975).

Twenty-five years after the CDF's 1975 study, Skiba et al. (2002) found that discipline referrals for male African-American students were written at a higher rate than their White counterparts. They also concluded that discipline referrals are written at the teacher's discretion. Patton (2000) examined discipline data to see if discipline was influenced by a student's gender, race, economic status, or education-related variables such as grade level or cognitive level. The data was collected from a middle school in Jefferson City, Missouri, during the 1997-1998 school year. The student population consisted of 890 students. The number of disciplinary referrals filed during that school year was 2,103. Patton posited that discipline referrals are not just a factor of misbehavior and that students of color received more discipline referrals than White students. Patton (2000) posited that high discipline referrals caused African-American and Hispanic students to feel less of belongingness to a school than White students. Skiba et al. (2002) posited that African-American males are disciplined for behaviors that

are overlooked for their White counterparts. "Overrepresentation of students of color is not a new finding in school research" (Skiba et al., 2000, p. 318).

Ward (2006) completed a quantitative study to examine data from the 2002-2003 school year for five major school districts in Indiana. The data was collected from the Indiana Department of Education. Ward found discrepancies between the rate of suspensions and expulsions between students of color and White students. The data revealed that students of color were suspended and expelled at disproportionate rates. The expected suspension rate for students of color was 55.13% the observed rate was 62.1%. The expected suspension rate for White students was 44.87%, the observed rate for White students was 37.9%. The results also revealed that students of color were overrepresented in expulsions, and White students were underrepresented (Ward, 2006).

In their work, Welch and Payne (2010) found a significant difference in how schoolwide discipline is practiced in schools with a high population of non-White students. Schools with a high population of African-American students are more likely to use exclusionary discipline, including suspensions, in-suspensions, and detentions, instead of using milder forms of punishment such as counselor visits or verbal behavior correction. Welch and Payne (2010) also found that schools with a high percentage of African-American students were more likely to get law enforcement involved when disciplining students instead of using different restorative practices when working with misbehavior. Welch and Payne (2010) also determined that forms of extreme punishment were used in schools with a high enrollment of African-American students, even though the school's data showed low delinquency and drug use levels.

School systems that excessively use exclusionary discipline as punishment for students who act out in the classroom cause students to lose instructional minutes, denying students their right to free and public education. The NYCLU (2011) examined 10 years of discipline data from New York City schools in its research. The data revealed that the total number of suspensions has risen from one out of every 25 students in 1999-2000 to one out of every 14 students in 2008-2009. The data also revealed that suspensions were longer in 1999-2000, 14% of suspensions lasted, on average, more than one week; this number rose to 20% in 2008-2009 (NYCLU, 2011). When disaggregated by race, the data revealed that African-American students comprise 33% of the school population but 53% of the suspensions. Also, 50% of the students with a disability who were suspended were African-American. NYCLU also revealed that African-American students received harsher and longer punishments than their White peers. With the implementation of Zero Tolerance laws and the "Safe Schools Against Violence in Education" (SAVE) Act, school officials are suspending students for lesser offenses and longer periods of time. With the "SAVE" act, a student can be deemed a violent offender for bringing toy guns or knives to school (NYCLU, 2011). An analysis of national suspension rates for middle school students found that although the suspension rates for all students have increased since 1973, the racial discipline gap between African-American and White students has also widened by over 10 percentage points (Losen & Skiba, 2012).

Brown and Tillio (2013) examined the 2010-2011 discipline data collected by the Arizona Department of Education state-level database, AzSAFE. The data for all 589 school districts in Arizona was included. There were 285,329 discipline incidents

reported in the data. For their data review, Brown and Tillio (2013) focused on the discipline data of 116 of the Arizona school districts, which included 886,998 students. The data listed the percentage of referrals by racial category by dividing the number of referrals by the total population of the specific race. When examining discipline areas, African-American students had the highest risk of being referred to the office for disciplinary reasons. The results of the data analysis revealed African-American (2.23%) and Native-American (2.12%) students had over-referral disproportionality ratios, while White (.67%) and Asian (.37%) students had under-referral disproportionality ratios. The rate of office referrals for Hispanic students was proportional to the student population. Brown and Tillio (2013) also found that African-American students were at a higher risk of receiving exclusionary discipline than all other racial groups; American Indians were the second highest at risk.

In their research, Balfanz, Byrnes, and Fox (2014) completed a longitudinal cohort study of Florida ninth-grade students during the 2000-2001 school year. Balfanz et al. (2014) tracked the progress of 181,897 students through 2007-2008, four years past their expected graduation date. Balfanz et al. (2014) found that 27% of the students they were tracking were suspended out-of-school at least once during their ninth-grade year and missed on average seven days of school. When desegregated by race, 39% of the students suspended were African-American, 26% Hispanic, 10% Asian, 25% Multiracial, 22% Native-American, and 22% White.

Goff, Jackson, Di Leone, Culotta, and DiTomasso (2014) researched whether African-American children were afforded fewer of the basic human protections given to their peers. The participants in the study answered two different sets of survey questions.

One set of questions referred to the innocence of children in general without specifying race. The other questions were about the innocence of African-American and White children in general, without specifying race, and the other questioned the innocence of African-American and White children. Goff et al.'s (2014) findings provided evidence that students of color were deemed to be more aware that their unwanted behaviors were inappropriate therefore more responsible for their actions than their White peers. Goff et al. (2014) found that African-American children are perceived as older than their biological age and therefore more responsible for their actions than their White counterparts. African-American children between the ages of 10 and 17 are perceived to be at least 4.53 years older than their biological age or adults, therefore more responsible for their behaviors than White children. "What might be the consequences of this innocence gap in criminal justice contexts, where perceiving someone as not innocent has the most severe consequences?" (Goff et al., 2014, p. 529).

According to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (USDEOCR, 2014), African-Americans receive exclusionary discipline at more than three times the rate of White students. On average, 16% of African-American students were suspended or expelled from school compared to 5% of White students. USDEOCR (2014) also found that although American Indian and Native-Alaskan students make up less than 1% of students enrolled in public school, they represent more than 2% of exclusionary discipline. In their review of national data, Mergler et al. (2014) found that exclusionary discipline practices that align with zero-tolerance have resulted in an increase in school suspensions.

Skiba and Williams (2014) examined 30 years of research that explored the connection between race, poverty, student behavior, and exclusionary discipline. Although lower socioeconomic students are disciplined with in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion, poverty does not account for the racial and ethnic discipline gap. Racial equities in discipline occur at all socioeconomic levels. Furthermore, their review of the literature found no evidence that the disparities in discipline are caused by racial or ethnic differences in behavior. In-school and out-of-school suspensions increased from 1.7 million in 1974 to 3.3 million incidents in 2006.

Porowski, O'Conner, and Passa (2014) examined the discipline data from public schools in Maryland for 2009-2010 through the 2011-2012 school years. Porowski et al. (2014) found that over the three years, school discipline rates dropped from 5.6 to 5.0, African-American students received exclusionary discipline at twice the rate of their White counterparts. The data analysis also provided evidence that African-American students were issued harsher punishments than Hispanic and White students for similar discipline infractions.

Girvan, Gion, McIntosh, and Smolkowski (2016) examined office discipline referrals (ODRs) to determine the extent school discipline disparities could be attributed to racial disparities in subjective versus objective ODRs. Girvan et al. (2016) found that African-American students are referred to the office for behaviors subjectively defined by the educator, such as defiance and class interruption 1.5 times more often than their White peers in high school and three times more often in middle school. Girvan purported that those subtle implicit biases impact the educators' discretionary decisions when referring students to the office for discipline.

In their research, Anderson and Ritter (2017) examined demographic and discipline data from all K-12 schools in Arkansas reported to the Arkansas Department of Education for 2008-2009 through the 2014-2015 school years. Anderson and Ritter (2017) compared students in the same grade with similar numbers of infractions and found that African-American students are 2.4 times more likely than their White peers to be issued in-school or out-of-school suspensions. When comparing discipline data within the same school building, the research results revealed that the racial discipline gap significantly lessened. However, schools with a higher population of students of color also had higher discipline numbers (Anderson & Ritter, 2017).

Ritter and Anderson (2018), using the same data from the Anderson and Ritter (2017) study, examined the data for disparities in the likelihood of students being referred to the office for different infractions types. The data analysis revealed that 80% of infractions committed included nonviolent infractions such as disorderly conduct and insubordination. Ritter and Anderson found that African-American students are 2.338 times as likely as their White peers to be referred to the office for these minor infractions. The researchers also revealed that Hispanic students are more likely to be referred to the office for truancy than their White peers. Ritter and Anderson also determined that African-American students were two times more likely to be issued exclusionary discipline for major nonviolent offenses, truancy, and minor violence/weapons. Overall, African-American students were more than twice as likely as their White peers to be referred to the office for minor, nonviolent behavior infractions. African-American students are 2.5 times as likely as their White peers to be issued in-school or out-of-school suspension due to the office referral.

In their research, Gion, McIntosh, and Smolkowski (2018) examined the office discipline referrals (ODRs) issued during the 2011-2012 school year of 255 elementary, middle, and high schools using the School-Wide Information System. Gion et al. (2018) found that American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) students were underrepresented in the total number of ODRs in elementary school but were over-represented in ODRs in middle and high school. When comparing the number of referrals for AIAN students to their White peers, Gion et al. (2018) revealed that the disproportionality was more evident in high school than middle school or elementary school.

Owens and McLanahan (2018) examined data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, a longitudinal study of 4,898 children born between 1998 and 2000. Owens and McLanahan found three main issues that contribute to the racial disparities in school exclusionary discipline. The first 50% of the racial discipline gap can be attributed to the difference in the treatment of African-American students and White students who exhibit similar unwanted behaviors. The results of Owens and McLanahan's research support that African-American students who attend similar schools are issued harsher punishment for their behaviors than White students. The other two factors can be attributed to the types of school the students attend. A high population of African-American students attends schools that are punitive due to zero-tolerance laws. Although it is not supported by research, behavior can be attributed to a small portion of the discipline gap (Owens & McLanahan, 2018). Owens and McLanahan (2020) indicated that the racial discipline gap is seen in elementary classrooms as early as fourth grade. African-American students are 2.5 times more likely to be suspended or expelled than their White counterparts (Owens & McLanahan, 2020).

In her study, Blakeney (2019) completed a quantitative study to examine out-of-school suspensions data for African-American, Hispanic, and White students in five elementary schools in Missouri for the 2011-2012 school year. Blakeney found that African-American students were suspended at higher rates than White and Hispanic students. When disaggregated by gender, the research revealed that African-American male students were suspended at higher rates than White and Hispanic students; however, there was little difference in the suspension rates for African-American, White, and Hispanic female students.

Per Losen and Martinez (2020), students in the United States lost 11 million days of instruction during 2015-2016 due to being suspended out of school. When looking at race, per every 100 students, African-American students lost, on average, over 80 days more than White students; Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students lost about 60 more days than White students; Native Americans lost over 50 more days than White students. State disparities in loss of days due to discipline consequences tend to be much larger than national gaps. The most significant discipline gaps for grades K-12 were in Missouri, where African-American "students lost 162 more days of instruction than their White peers. In New Hampshire, Hispanic students lost 75 more days, and in North Carolina, Native-American students lost 102 days" (p. 4), more than their White counterparts. When just examining secondary students, these gaps get significantly wider Losen and Martinez, (2020).

In their study, Gopalan and Nelson (2019) examined the racial discipline gap between African-American students and their White counterparts and between Hispanic students and their White counterparts. The researchers used the Indiana Department of

Education data for students enrolled in prekindergarten through the twelfth grade for the 2008-2009 school year through the 2013-2014 school year. The researchers revealed that the racial discipline gap starts in prekindergarten. Of the prekindergarten and kindergarten students enrolled in the districts studied, on average, 5% of the African-American students were suspended out-of-school or expelled compared to 1.2% of Hispanic students and 1% of White students. The racial discipline gap widens as the student gets older. At the high school level, the suspension rate for African-American students is on average 34% compared to 23% of Hispanic students and13% for White high school students. The discipline gap for Hispanic students was slightly lower than the African-American discipline gap and continued to increase across the grade levels.

Siegel-Hawley et al. (2019) completed a mixed-methods study to examine the factors related to disproportionate school discipline in the Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium (MERC) division schools. Siegel-Hawley et al. (2019) analyzed data from the Virginia Department of Education and calculated discipline rates for differing racial groups. They interviewed school leaders to gain an understanding of their discipline practices and policies. The results of the data analysis showed that African-American students consistently received more exclusionary discipline than their White and Hispanic peers. African-American students represented 35% of the student population but received 75% of the subjective behavior infractions such as defiance or disrespect.

In their study, Kunesh and Noltemeyer (2019) examined the role of stereotypes in race-based disproportionality of discipline. Kunesh and Noltemeyer (2019) randomly assigned a vignette to a group of pre-service teachers. The participants in the study were

divided into three groups; the vignette was about a seventh-grade male student. After reading the vignette, the participant answered questions about the student and his behavior and explained how they would respond to the situation. The vignettes were the same except for the student's name. In one group, students were given names that connotated their racial identity. In the other group, the race of the student was given. The researchers revealed that in the cases where the student's name implied race, the participants reported that the African-American students were six times more likely to repeat the unwanted behavior than the White students. In the cases where the race was identified, the research revealed that the participants reported that African-American students were almost four times more likely to repeat the unwanted behavior than White students. Kunesh and Noltemeyer (2019) purported that the discipline gap may be related to a specific race bias. Their review of research revealed that the racial discipline gap could not be solely attributed to the differences in behavior between African-American students and their White counterparts, cultural miscommunication, or socioeconomic status.

Lacoe and Manley (2019) examined the discipline data from Maryland Public Schools from the 2009-2010 school year through the 2017-2018 school year. The researchers analyzed the data to determine if there were disproportionate rates of removal from the classroom for different student subgroups. Lacoe and Manley (2019) found that exclusionary discipline rates declined for all students over the ten years. However, the discipline rate for African-American students was twice as high as the removal rate for non-African-American students. The researchers also revealed that African-American

students with disabilities were issued exclusionary discipline at higher rates (13.5%) than African-American students without a disability (6.7%).

Gage, Katsiyannis, Carrero, Miller, and Pico (2020) examined exclusionary discipline data in about 95,000 schools focusing on the data for Hispanic students. The researchers found a disparity in the exclusionary discipline rates for Hispanic students compared to their White peers. Hispanic students were more likely to be suspended than White students. When comparing the discipline data for Hispanic students to African-American students, Gage et al. (2020) found that African-American students are disciplined at significantly higher rates than Hispanic students.

Ivey (2020) completed a qualitative case study and interviewed the parents and caregivers of six African-American male students from Midwestern Michigan to examine their perceptions of their experience with their students' out-of-school suspensions. The research results revealed that students were disciplined for various reasons, including blurting out in class, horseplay that resulted in putting their hands on another student, to physical altercations. One parent reported that her son received 14 office referrals in one month. Most of the referrals were for blurting out responses, not raising his hand, waiting to be called on, and disrespecting teacher authority. A parent shared one experience of visiting his son's classroom to monitor his behavior. The parent observed her son raising his hand several times, and when the teacher did not call on him, he blurted out a response. Another parent reported that her son, who had no discipline problems in elementary school, received several school suspensions in middle and high school and was eventually placed in juvenile detention for smoking marijuana. Parents reported frustration with the discipline system and expressed that their students are

disciplined for similar infractions that their white peers received mental health services. When committing the same infractions, all parents reported that their sons were good students and received good grades, but excessive school discipline harmed their attitude towards school. One parent expressed that excessive discipline diminishes, embarrasses, and destroys the students' self-esteem. After returning from a 10-day out-of-school suspension, this parent expressed the belief that his son was targeted due to his previous behaviors.

Bryant and Wilson (2020) completed a correlational explanatory research study to examine if a student's gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status could predict the likelihood of them being referred to the office for discipline or being issued exclusionary discipline because of the referral. Bryant and Wilson examined discipline data for over 2,500 students enrolled in an urban charter high school in southern California. The data analysis revealed that ethnicity and socioeconomic status were significant in predicting if a student would receive an in-school or out-of-school suspension as a consequence of office referrals for behavior. Bryant and Wilson (2020) found that Asian and Filipino students were less likely to receive discipline referrals than White students and African American and Hispanic students were more likely to receive discipline referrals. African-American students were more than 11 times more likely to be suspended than White students. Hispanic students were almost three times more like to be suspended than White students.

In his study, Christian (2020) surveyed African-American males from an urban district in the Southeastern United States who were on track to graduate from high school. Christian found that although the student participants perceived educators

supported them and school was a positive environment, some expressed that they felt targeted due to their race and gender by some educators when it comes to discipline practices. The majority of the participants expressed that African-American students received a harsher punishment for office referrals for disciplinary reasons than their White peers, who would receive a warning.

Shores, Kim, and Still (2020) reviewed the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) data from the 2011-2012, 2013-2014, and 2015-2016 school years to determine the extent African-American students are disadvantaged in their school experience compared to White students due to categorical inequalities. Shores et al. (2020) stated that they believed that schools have exclusive power to suspend students or retain them. The researchers found that racial disparities exist in discipline practices and school policies across schools in the United States. Shores et al. also revealed that schools with more significant racial, socioeconomic differences also have larger achievement and disciplinary gaps.

De Brey, Snyder, Zhang, and Dillow (2021) revealed that during the 2013-2014 school year, overall, 5.28% of elementary and secondary students in the United States were disciplined with at least one-half day of out-of-school suspension. De Brey et al. (2021) found disproportionality in discipline for African-American, Native-American, Multiracial, and Pacific Islander students. When disaggregated by race, the out-of-school suspension rate for African-American students was 13.68%, American Indian/Alaska Native students was 6.74%, Multiracial students was 5.26%, Hispanic students was 4.54%, Pacific Islander students was 4.53%, and Asian students was 1.11%. Overall, the data revealed that 0.22% of elementary and secondary students in the United States were

expelled from school during the 2013-2014 school year. When disaggregated by race, the expulsion rate for African-American students was 0.44%, American Indian/Alaska Native students was 0.37%, Multiracial students was 0.31%, Hispanic students was 0.15%, Pacific Islander students was 0.12%, and Asian students was 0.03%. Percentage rates were calculated by the cumulative number of students receiving the discipline action divided by the number of students enrolled on a single day between September 27 and December 31 (De Brey et al., 2021).

Overall, in Kansas, during the 2013-2014 school year, 4.04% of elementary and secondary students were disciplined with at least one-half of a day of out-of-school suspension (De Brey et al., 2021). When disaggregated by race, the out-of-school suspension rate for African-American students was 14.03%, American Indian/Alaska Native students was 6.21%, Multiracial students was 5.51%, Hispanic students was 4.40%, Pacific Islander students was 3.41%, and Asian students was 1.22%. The expulsion rate in Kansas was lower than the national average of elementary and secondary students expelled from school during the 2013-2014 school year. When disaggregated by race, the Kansas expulsion rate for African-American students was 0.34%, American Indian/Alaska Native students was 0.32%, Multiracial students was 0.29%, Hispanic students was 0.16%, Pacific Islander students was 0.12-0.35%, and Asian students was 0.05% (De Brey et al., 2021).

Gender and School Discipline

Patton (2000) found that males were more likely to receive discipline referrals than females. In his research, Patton (2000) examined the relationship between discipline referrals and demographic and academic data at a middle school in Jefferson City,

Missouri. Patton's results revealed a relationship between gender and discipline referrals. Patton found that over 50% of the male population received discipline referrals, and less than 28% of the female population was referred to the office for discipline. Patton also found a relationship between ethnicity and discipline referrals. African-Americans and Other race students of color were referred to the office disproportionately (Patton,2000).

Ward (2006) completed a quantitative study to examine data from the 2002-2003 school year for five major school districts in Indiana. In her research, Ward found discrepancies between the rate of suspensions and expulsions between male and female students. The research revealed that male students were overrepresented and female students were underrepresented in suspensions. The expected rate of suspensions for both male and female students was 50% each. The observed suspension rate for males was 68.7% and 31.3% for females. The data revealed that males were overrepresented in expulsions and females were underrepresented.

In their research, Losen and Skiba (2012) examined suspension data reported from the Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) for elementary and secondary schools and districts. The OCR collects racial and gender enrollment data and out-of-school suspension data for over one-third of the nation's school districts. The researchers determined a risk index by calculating the number of students suspended at least once in a specific group divided by the enrollment of that group. If a student is suspended more than once, subsequent suspensions are not counted in this report. Overall, Losen and Skiba found that middle school students' average suspension rate was 11.2% in 2006. When disaggregating the data by race and gender, the data revealed that, on average, male students are suspended at a high rate than female students, and African-American

students are suspended at a higher rate than all other races. The most significant gap in suspension data was an at least 10-point difference in the suspension rates for African-Americans males and females. Although the average rate of out-of-school suspensions was 11.2%, the suspension rate for African-American male students was 28.3 and 18% for African-American females. The suspension rate for White male students was 10% and 4% for White female students. The suspension rate for Hispanic males was 16.3% and 8.5% for Hispanic females. The suspension rate for Native-American male students was 15.9% and 9.6% for Native-American female students. The suspension rate for Asian/Pacific Islander male students was 6% and 2.1% Asian/Pacific Islander female students.

In a further review of the 2006-2007 data, Losen and Skiba (2012) focused on 18 of the largest school districts to examine how many schools suspended at least 33% of a specific racial group; the data show both a racial and gender gap in the percent of suspensions. In the 18 school districts, 175 schools suspended at least one-third of the African-American male students, and 95 schools suspended at least one-third of the African-American female students. In 43 schools, at least one-third of the Hispanic male students were suspended, and in 14 schools, at least one-third of the Hispanic female students were suspended. In 53 schools, at least one-third of the White male students were suspended, and in 29 schools, at least one-third of the white female students were suspended.

Losen and Skiba (2012) reviewed CRDC data from 2002 and 2006 for the 18 school districts to examine trends in the data. During this period, overall suspension rates increased in 12 of the 18 school districts, remained the same in two school districts, and

decreased in four school districts. The average increase in out-of-school suspensions for all students was 2.3%. In disaggregating the data by race and gender, the increase was not evenly distributed across racial and gender groups. Out-of-school suspensions increase 5.3% for African-American females and 1.7% for African-American Males. The rates increased 0.33% for Hispanic females and decreased 0.66% for Hispanic males. The suspension rates increased 0.44% for White females and decreased 1.6% for White males.

Epstein, Blake, and Gonzalez (2017) surveyed 325 adults from different racial and ethnic backgrounds to examine if adults viewed African-American females as older than their actual age. Seventy-four percent of the participants were White, and 62% were female. Thirty-nine percent were 25-34 years old, and 69% held a degree beyond a high school diploma. In the study, Epstein et al. (2017) used a scale to assess childhood innocence that Goff et al. (2014) created. The scale consisted of items that are associated with adultification and stereotypes of African-American females. The ages were divided into four groups consisting of 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, and 15-19 years of age. Based on the results of their study, Epstein et al. (2017) posited that African-American females are more mature than White females. They concluded that because African-American females are perceived as adults, they are more likely to be disciplined for their behaviors and receive harsher punishment than their White peers. Epstein et al. also found that African-American females are more likely to be referred to law agencies for their behaviors.

Morris and Perry (2017) conducted a mixed-methods study using data from the Kentucky School Discipline Study and supplementary data routinely collected from

parents in a large, urban public school district. Morris and Perry (2017) examined student infractions that resulted in disciplinary actions, including office referral, detention, suspension, or expulsion. Per the district's disciplinary policy, school personnel must complete electronic information detailing information about the offense, students involved, and the disciplinary action taken. The data included students enrolled in Grades 6-10 who were enrolled in the district from August 2008 to June 2011. Morris and Perry (2017) found that when considering the intersection of race and gender, the discipline gap between African-American females and White females was more significant than the gap between African-American males and White males. African-American males were referred for minor or moderate behavior infractions at twice the rate of their White peers. African-American females are more than three times as likely to be referred for similar behaviors than their White peers (Morris & Perry, 2017). These researchers found that African-American females were disciplined primarily for less subjective severe behaviors such as being disruptive, disobedient, and aggressive and dress code violations.

Paul and Araneo (2019) examined data from the CRDC for 2000 and 2011-2012 in New Jersey to see if the data revealed that African-American females were overrepresented in out-of-school suspensions and explosions. Paul (2018) found that, in 2000, African-American females represented 8.62% of the population and 13.44% of out-of-school suspensions. In the 2011-2012 data, African-American females' representation in schools declined to a little over 8%, and the out-of-school suspension rates for African-American females increased to almost 16%. When comparing the New Jersey data to the National data, Paul and Araneo (2019) found that African-American females are

overrepresented in out-of-school suspensions in the rest of the nation. Still, the suspensions are overall higher in New Jersey.

Annamma et al. (2019) conducted a mixed-methods study of student discipline data and methods in the Denver Public Schools, one of Colorado's largest urban school districts. The results of the data analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in the referrals to the office for discipline between African-American females and females of other races. Almost 50% of African-American female referrals were due to disobedient or defiant behavior. Followed by 40% of the Multiracial females, 36% Hispanic females, and 36% of Native-American female referrals were attributed to disobedient or defiant behavior. However, African-American females were significantly less likely than other females of color to be referred to the office for alcohol possession 0.6% compared to 1% and drugs 4% vs. 6%.

In their research, Bryant and Wilson (2020) found that a student's gender alone was not significant in predicting exclusionary discipline. When examining office referrals, they found that male students had significantly higher office referrals than female students. The findings also revealed that a student's chances of being assigned in-school or out-of-school suspension increased 1.15 times for each additional referral Bryant and Wilson (2020).

When looking at gender, Losen and Martinez (2020) found that for every 100 students, African-American males lost 132 days of instruction, and African-American females lost 77 days of instruction. Losen and Martinez (2020) found that the impact of suspensions and loss of instructional time gets even greater for students enrolled in alternative schools. Losen and Martinez (2020) found that per 100 students enrolled in

Alternative schools, African-American male students lost 235 days of instruction due to exclusionary discipline compared to 109 days for their White counterparts. African American female students enrolled in alternative schools lost 156 days of instruction per 100 students compared to 48 days for White females.

De Brey et al. (2021) revealed that in the 2013-2014 school year, 5.28% of elementary and secondary students in the United States were disciplined with at least one-half of a day of out-of-school suspension. When disaggregated by gender, the out-of-suspension rate for males was 7.25%, and for females was 3.2%. Furthermore, the data revealed that 0.22% of elementary and secondary students in the United States were expelled from school in the 2013-2014 school year. When disaggregated by gender, the expulsion rate for male students was 0.32% and 0.12% for female students. Percentage rates were calculated by the cumulative number of students receiving the discipline action divided by the number of students enrolled on a single day between September 27 and December 31 (De Brey et al., 2021).

When disaggregated by gender, the out-of-school suspension rate for males was 5.73% and 2.24% for females. In Kansas, 0.16% of elementary and secondary students were expelled from school during the 2013-2014 school year. When disaggregated by gender, the Kansas expulsion rate for male students was 0.24% and 0.08% for females (De Brey et al., 2021).

Hassan and Carter (2021) explored the 2013-2014 data submitted to the CRDC from ten states. In their study, Hassan and Carter included five states with the highest academic rating and five states with the lowest academic rating. The research results indicated that African-American female students are disciplined at higher rates (50.8 vs.

17.8) than White females. In Mississippi, where corporal punishment is still used, African-American females represent 49% of the student population and 64% of those paddled. Hassan and Carter also revealed that states with a low African-American female student population had higher rates of discipline disproportionality.

Academic Achievement and School Discipline

Monroe and Obidah (2004) conducted a qualitative methodological study to examine if a teacher's culture influenced their perception of what they determined to be disruptive behavior in the classroom. The participants included 22 students and one teacher. The student participants consisted of 12 African-American males, nine African-American females, and one White female. The teacher was an African-American female aged 31 with ten years of experience. Through solid relationship building with students and culturally responsive classroom management, the study found that the relationships the teacher built with students allowed her to redirect student behavior in the classroom instead of referring them to the office. These relationships kept students in the classroom. It is difficult to draw far-reaching conclusions from this study that only included one teacher from a specific culture, but it highlights the potential effects of building solid relationships with students.

In their study, Balfanz et al. (2007) found that the amount of exclusionary discipline is one of the top indicators to predict if a student will graduate from high school. In their longitudinal study, Balfanz et al. (2007) followed almost 13,000 high-poverty middle school students who attended schools with a high enrollment of students of color between 1996 and 2004. Balfanz et al. examined attendance, failing grades in math or English, and out-of-school suspensions to determine whether these warning flags

could predict if a student would graduate from high school. They found that of the 6% of students who received at least one day of out-of-school suspension, only 20% graduated from high school. They also determined that of the students who received at least one day of in-school suspension, only 17% graduated from high school. Balfanz et al. (2007) concluded that 80% of the students who received exclusionary discipline (either in-school or out-of-school suspensions) did not graduate from high school.

Griffin (2008) examined the relationship between student office referrals, absences, and GPAs in their career technical classes. Griffin (2008) collected data for 175 high-school students enrolled in career technical programs during the school year for two consecutive semesters. The students consisted of three different grade levels, tenth-grade through twelfth-grade. The population included 100 females and 75 males. The data analysis revealed that there was a relationship between student office referrals and GPA. Griffin found that for every day a student spent outside the classroom due to discipline or absenteeism, there was a decrease in the student's GPA.

Wildhagen (2012) examined the results of the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS). In the ELS, a nationally representative sample of high school sophomore students, administrators, teachers, and caregivers was surveyed. Student transcripts and reading and math assessment scores were also examined (Wildhagen, 2012). The initial survey was completed in 2002, with follow-up studies of a sample of these students completed in 2004 when the students were seniors in high school. Wildhagen examined the behavior and attitudinal differences between African-American and White high school students and their teachers. She also examined the discipline history of the school. Wildhagen (2012) found a relationship between strict discipline and how African-

American students view their academic potential. In schools with a disproportionate level of strict discipline between African-American and White students, African American students, whether they had received discipline referrals or not, tended to believe they had lower academic potential than their White counterparts. Due to the negative impact on their belief about their ability to achieve, Wildhagen purported the impact of over disciplining students of color to be just as harmful as the impact of overt racism (2012).

In their review of 2006-2007 data from the CRDC, Losen and Skiba (2012) examined middle school data from 18 of the largest school districts. The researchers found that the students from schools with higher rates of in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, or expulsions have a lower performance on standardized tests. Losen and Skiba (2012) posited that suspending students from the school environment does not improve the schools' learning climates.

Balfanz et al. (2014) found that of the students they were tracking, 75% who had zero suspensions graduated from high school, and 58% of them enrolled in a post-secondary school. The research also revealed that as the number of suspensions increased, the graduation rate and the enrollment into postsecondary education decreased. Of the students who graduated from high school, 52% had one suspension, 38% had two suspensions, 30% had three suspensions, and 30% had four or more suspensions. Respectfully, 39% of the students with one suspension, 31% of the students with two suspensions, 26% of the students with three suspensions, and 26% of students with four or more suspensions enrolled in post-secondary education. Exclusionary practices of discipline where the student is removed from the classroom can cause lasting adverse

effects on the student's education, including not graduating from high school and involvement in the juvenile justice system (Mergler et al., 2014).

York, Gibson, and Rankin (2015) completed an analytic literature review to define and examine how the term 'academic success' is used in educational research. York et al. (2015) reviewed the work of Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, and Hayek (2006) to determine how researchers commonly define academic success in studies. York et al. (2015) found that although reports have advocated for a more detailed review of academic success, most researchers continue to use grades and GPA when measuring academic success. Students are promoted and earn credits to graduate from high school based on their grades.

In their research, Morris and Perry (2017) compared student scores on end-of-year academic progress tests and found that students who have been suspended from school score lower on the test than those who were not suspended. The results of the data analysis revealed that in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions had a linkage to student achievement. Morris and Perry (2017) posited that to close the racial achievement gap, schools must focus on strategies to close the racial discipline gap.

During the 2015-2016 school year, students in public school systems in the U.S. lost over "11 million instructional days due to" due to the consequences of out-of-school suspension (Losen & Martinez, 2020, p. 3). Although students were suspended from school across all grade levels, the largest loss of days occurred in secondary school. These high rates of lost instruction led to lost opportunities to learn (Losen & Martinez, 2020). The researchers purported that schools cannot successfully close achievement gaps if they do not close racial discipline gaps (Losen & Martinez, 2020).

Bell and Puckett (2020) utilized critical qualitative methodology to explore if African-American students and their parents perceived being removed from the classroom due to school discipline practices impacted academic achievement. Bell and Puckett (2020) interviewed students from two Michigan school districts. Both school districts had a high African-American student population, 80.7% and 94.2%. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students was 78% and 59%, respectively. The data also revealed that although the schools had a high population of African-American students, 91% of the teachers in the Michigan school districts are White.

Bell and Puckett (2020) examined school discipline data from the 2016-2017 school year for one of the districts and the 2015 discipline data from the USDEOCR for the other school district. Discipline data from both districts showed an over-representation of African-American students. Bell and Puckett (2020) interviewed 30 African-American secondary school students and 30 parents of African-American students from various socioeconomic households. Also, nine of the student participants were diagnosed with a cognitive or behavioral disability. The researchers revealed that 83% of the student participants and 73% of the parents believed school exclusionary discipline negatively impacted grades. The student responses revealed that removal from school had an immediate negative impact on grades, and missing one day of school due to out-of-school suspension can be detrimental to academic success. The findings detailed three main facets of harm; educators' resistance to providing students with extra-credit or make-up assignments for their missed work, missing vital high-points assignments, and missing instruction (Bell & Puckett, 2020).

The participants in Bell and Puckett (2020) reported receiving one suspension to over 30 suspensions reported by one student. The number of days for each suspension ranged from one day to 39 days for one student who punched a gated window because he was upset that his teacher called him a failure. The researchers revealed that for the group of African-American participants, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds were more likely to attribute the declines in their grades to the educators' unwillingness to provide make-up work (Bell & Puckett, 2020). One student, who had been suspended for 5-days, reported that some of his teachers who refused to provide him make-up work stated that being suspended proved that he did not care about school. In contrast, other teachers expressed concern and understanding of his situation. Even with the make-up work provided, it was not easy to complete make-up work and learn new material simultaneously. Parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds reported pervasive barriers they encountered when trying to obtain missing work; one parent whose student had been suspended for five days reported that she called the school and wrote a letter but still could not obtain make-up work for her student. Parents and students from middle-class backgrounds attested the drop in their academic performance to high-point missing assignments like tests and quizzes that constituted a higher percentage of their overall grade. Furthermore, parents and students reported a decrease in academic progress due to the inability to obtain the benefits of the school environment. One parent whose child had received over 30 suspensions reported that lack of access to instruction by educators contributes to the decrease in academic performance (Bell & Puckett, 2020).

Summary

The literature review examined existing school discipline research studies. It began with an overview of the research history of school discipline. They were followed by the existing research that examines the racial discipline gap and how discipline is assigned based on the students' gender. Finally, examined in Chapter 2 were the current research on exclusionary discipline and how it impacts student GPA. Overall, the research supports that students of color, primarily African-American students, are disproportionally assigned exclusionary discipline. A detailed explanation of the methodology used in this study is included in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

Methods

The first purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the number of days spent outside of the classroom and suspension occurrences spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline is disproportionate among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. The second purpose was to examine the extent the disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom and suspension occurrences spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student gender. The final purpose was to examine the extent of the disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom and suspension occurrences spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year was is related to student GPA. This chapter includes the research design, the selection of participants, measurement, data collection procedures, data analysis and hypothesis testing, and the limitations.

Research Design

A quantitative research method was used for this study to determine whether disproportionality exists due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. "Casual-comparative research, or ex post facto (after the fact) research, is the most basic design for determining cause and cause-and-effect relationships between

variables" (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 45). Five variables of interest were examined in this study: student race, GPA, gender, the total number of suspension occurrences, and the total number of days the student spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline consequences.

Selection of Participants

For this study, purposive sampling was used based on the researcher's experience and knowledge of the MW school district. The school district chosen for this study has an enrollment of over 6,600 students in Grades 6-12. The sample included all students enrolled in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year in District MW

Measurement

The students' race, gender, GPA, total number of suspension occurrences, and total number of days the student spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline consequences were the variables of interest in this study. For this study, the students were identified with a federal ethnicity code of "0" for No Hispanic Ethnicity and a "1" for Yes, they have Hispanic Ethnicity (0 = No, 1 = Yes). The students with no Hispanic Ethnicity were further identified as Multiracial (M), Black or African-American (B), White (W), American Indian or Alaska Native (I), Asian (A), and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (P). Due to the low enrollment of the individual groups, I, A, P students were grouped into a category of Other race students (O). Gender was listed as male and female. The researcher used the student's race and gender as identified by the person(s) who enrolled the student into the school district. This information is entered into the MW District's data information system database.

The school district records the student's GPA. The student's cumulated GPA is computed every year for Grades 6, 7, and 8. A student's yearly GPA was used for students in middle school (Grades 6-8). Student GPA is cumulative for the four years the student attends high school (Grades 9-12). A cumulative GPA was used for students in Grades 9-12. The unweighted GPA is used to determine the class rank, top 10%, and class valedictorian. A student's unweighted GPA is calculated as the numeric average of all grades earned by the student. The total number of points earned is calculated using a four-point scale for every grade: A = 4.0, B = 3.0, C = 2.0, D = 1.0, F = 0 (District MW, 2019). The GPA data received from District MW for the students in both middle school and high school was recoded into three groups by GPA (4.00-3.00, 2.99-2.00, and 1.99 and below).

District MW provided the total number of suspension occurrences and days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline. The District currently uses a data information system called PowerSchool. In this study, exclusionary discipline was defined as any school disciplinary action that removes or excludes a student from his or her usual educational setting. The types of exclusionary discipline consequences used in this study include in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension. The exclusionary discipline measures were combined to calculate the number of suspension occurrences assigned to the student and the number of days the student spent outside the classroom. For this study, the "occurrence" was defined as anytime a student was removed from the classroom for at least a partial or full school day.

"Reliability is the degree to which an instrument consistently measures whatever it is measuring." (Lunenburg & Irby, p. 181). The reliability of the student's race,

ethnicity, and gender data is indicated by the fact that the individual enrolling the student must submit a birth certificate to verify the reported information. The reliability of the GPA, discipline days, and occurrences data is indicated by the uniform way this information is recorded and entered into the district's information system. This information can also be considered reliable because of the consistency of the student information that the district uses to record and store student demographic data, GPA, and discipline information. The entire district uses the same information system. The staff is trained to use the system, and the information is uniformly inputted to ensure consistency (District MW, 2020c).

Data Collection Procedures

Before collecting the data, the researcher received approval to conduct research from School District MW and the Baker University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Application to Conduct Research was submitted to the district's executive director of data and technology. The executive director approved the research study and granted access to the data on December 15, 2020 (see Appendix A). The Baker University IRB form was submitted on April 2, 2021 for approval. The Baker University IRB granted approval to conduct the research on April 23, 2021 (see Appendix B). District MW's executive director of data and technology submitted the data to the researcher via email in a Microsoft Excel file. The data were then downloaded into IBM SPSS Faculty Pack 27 for Windows.

Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Analyses of the collected data were used to answer the research questions listed in Chapter 1 of this study. Following are the research questions, the hypotheses, and

explanations of the statistical tests used to analyze the data. Multiple chi-square tests for goodness of fit and effect sizes, Cramer's V, were calculated to analyze the data in this study.

RQ1. To what extent is the number of days spent outside of the classroom and suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline disproportionate among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year?

H1. The number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline is disproportionate among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year?

A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted to test H1 because the frequency distribution by race for the days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline was compared to the frequency distribution by race for the enrollment of students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. A frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies based on these distributions was constructed. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, Cramer's V, is reported.

H2. The number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline is disproportionate among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year.

A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted to test H2 because the frequency distribution by race for the number of suspension occurrences spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline was compared to the frequency distribution

by race for the enrollment of students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. A frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies based on these distributions was constructed. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, Cramer's V, is reported.

RQ2. To what extent is the disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom and suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year related to student gender?

H3. The disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student gender.

Prior to testing H3, the sample data was disaggregated by gender. A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for female students, and a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for male students. For each test, the frequency distribution by race for the days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline was compared to the frequency distribution by race for the enrollment of students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. For each test, the frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies based on these distributions was constructed. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to test H3.

H4. The disproportionality in the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline is disproportionate among African-American, White, Hispanic,

Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student gender.

Prior to testing H4, the sample data was disaggregated by gender. A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for female students, and a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for male students. For each test, the frequency distribution by race for the number of suspension occurrences spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline was compared to the frequency distribution by race for the enrollment of students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. For each test, the frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies based on these distributions was constructed. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to test H4.

RQ3. To what extent is the disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom and suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year related to student GPA?

H5. The disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-8 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student GPA.

Prior to testing H5, the sample data was disaggregated by GPA (4.0-3.00, 2.99-2.00, and 1.99 and below). A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 4.0-3.00, a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 2.99-2.00, and a chi-square test for

goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 1.99 and below. For each test, the frequency distribution by race for the number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline was compared to the frequency distribution by race for the enrollment of students in Grades 6-8 during the 2019-2020 school year. For each test, the frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies based on these distributions was constructed. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to test H5.

H6. The disproportionality in the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-8 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student GPA.

Prior to testing H6, the sample data was disaggregated by GPA (4.0-3.00, 2.99-2.00, and 1.99 and below). A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 4.0-3.00, a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 2.99-2.00, and a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 1.99 and below. For each test, the frequency distribution by race for the number of suspension occurrences spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline was compared to the frequency distribution by race for the enrollment of students in Grades 6-8 during the 2019-2020 school year. For each test, the frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies based on these distributions was constructed. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to test H6.

H7. The disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 9-12 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student GPA.

Prior to testing H7, the sample data was disaggregated by GPA (4.0-3.00, 2.99-2.00, and 1.99 and below). A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 4.0-3.00, a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 2.99-2.00, and a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 1.99 and below. For each test, the frequency distribution by race for the number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline was compared to the frequency distribution by race for the enrollment of students in Grades 9-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. For each test, the frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies based on these distributions was constructed. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to test H7.

H8. The disproportionality in the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 9-12 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student GPA.

Prior to testing H8, the sample data was disaggregated by GPA (4.0-3.00, 2.99-2.00, and 1.99 and below). A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 4.0-3.00, a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 2.99-2.00, and a chi-square test for

goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 1.99 and below. For each test, the frequency distribution by race for the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline was compared to the frequency distribution by race for the enrollment of students in Grades 9-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. For each test, the frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies based on these distributions was constructed. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to test H8.

Limitations

Some limitations or factors can impact the research outcome; these factors are not under the researcher's control (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The limitations identified for this study are listed below.

1. The way discipline referrals are issued is subject to the teachers' perceptions and biases.
2. The way consequences are issued is subjective to the administrators' perceptions and or biases.
3. Although general discipline guidelines are defined by District MW, the interpretation of the guidelines by the building administrator might vary.
4. Administrators in various buildings may have differing philosophies on how they assign exclusionary discipline consequences.
5. Student GPA may be affected by the teachers' perception and biases due to the lack of grading guidelines and rubrics. A student's willingness to learn and their ability to comprehend grade-level material can also impact GPA.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to students enrolled in Grades 6-12 in District MW were disproportional by race and gender. Additionally, the purpose was to determine the extent is the disproportionality in the number of occurrences spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year was related to student GPA. This chapter included the research design, the selection of participants, measurement, data collection procedures, data analysis and hypothesis tests, and the limitations. Chapter 4 includes the descriptive statistics and the results of the hypothesis testing.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to students enrolled in Grades 6-12 in District MW during the 2019-2020 school year was disproportional by race and gender. An additional purpose was to determine if the disproportionality is related to the student's GPA. A quantitative study was conducted using the 2019-2020 discipline and GPA data from the MW school district. The eight hypotheses associated with the research questions were tested to examine the data. The results of the hypothesis testing are detailed in this chapter.

Hypothesis Testing

For RQ1, the data were disaggregated by race. A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted to test H1and H2. For RQ2, the data were disaggregated by gender and race, and a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted for males and females to test H2 and H3. The results of the tests were compared to test the hypotheses. For RQ3, the data were disaggregated by race and GPA for middle and high school students. Both middle school and high school GPAs were divided into three different categories. To test H5-H8, three chi-square tests for goodness of fit were conducted for the groups defined by GPA. The results of the tests were compared.

RQ1. To what extent is the number of days spent outside of the classroom and suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline disproportionate among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year?

H1. The number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline is disproportionate among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year.

A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted to test H1 because the frequency distribution by race for the number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline was compared to the frequency distribution by race for the enrollment of students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. A frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies based on these distributions was constructed. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, Cramer's V, is reported.

The results of the chi-square test indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4) = 198.37$, $p = .000$, Cramer's V = 0.17. See Table 4 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of days spent outside of the classroom for African-American students ($n = 209.7$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 114.8$). The observed number of days spent outside of the classroom for Hispanic students ($n = 238.6$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 183.0$). The observed number of days spent outside of the classroom for Multiracial students ($n = 261.5$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 165.3$). H1 was supported. The number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline is disproportionate among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. The effect size indicated a small effect.

Table 4

Observed and Expected Frequencies for H1

Race	$f_{observed}$	$f_{expected}$
African-American	209.7	114.8
Hispanic	238.6	183.0
Multiracial	261.5	165.3
Other	113.7	121.0
White	987.6	1227.0

Note. Other = American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students.

H2. The number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline is disproportionate among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year.

A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted to test H2 because the frequency distribution by race for the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline was compared to the frequency distribution by race for the enrollment of students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. A frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies based on these distributions was constructed. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, Cramer's V, is reported.

The results of the chi-square test indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4) = 208.88$, $p = .000$, Cramer's V = 0.27. See Table 5 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of suspension occurrences for African-American students ($n = 118$) was higher than the

expected number (n = 46.8). The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for Hispanic students (n = 83) was higher than the expected number (n = 74.6). The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for Multiracial students (n = 128) was higher than the expected number (n = 67.4). The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for Other race students (n = 57) was higher than the expected number (n = 49.3). H2 was supported. The number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline is disproportionate among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. The effect size indicated a small effect.

Table 5

Observed and Expected Frequencies for H2

Race	$f_{observed}$	$f_{expected}$
African-American	118	46.8
Hispanic	83	74.6
Multiracial	128	67.4
Other	57	49.3
White	352	500.0

Note. Other = American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students.

RQ2. To what extent is the disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom and suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year related to student gender?

H3. The disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student gender.

Prior to testing H3, the sample data was disaggregated by gender. A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for female students, and a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for male students. For each test, the frequency distribution by race for the number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline was compared to the frequency distribution by race for the enrollment of students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. For each test, the frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies based on these distributions was constructed. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to test H3.

The results of the chi-square test for female students indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4) = 218.39$, $p = .000$, Cramer's V = 0.36. See Table 6 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of days spent outside of the classroom for African-American female students ($n = 66.5$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 25.2$). The observed number of days spent outside of the classroom for Hispanic female students ($n = 50.0$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 43.6$). The observed number of days spent outside of the classroom for Multiracial female students ($n = 94.5$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 40.1$). The observed number of days spent out of the

classroom for Other race female students (n = 53.2) was higher than the expected number (n = 28.8). The effect size indicated a medium effect.

The results of the chi-square test for male students indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4) = 83.27$, $p = .000$, Cramer's V = 0.12. See Table 6 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for African-American male students (n = 143.2) was higher than the expected number (n = 93.6). The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for Hispanic male students (n = 188.6) was higher than the expected number (n = 138.8). The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for Multiracial male students (n = 167.0) was higher than the expected number (n = 123.3). The effect size indicated a small effect.

When the statistically significant results of the two analyses were compared, it was determined that for four of the five categories, African-American, Hispanic, Multiracial, and White, the disproportionality is similar for male and female students. Although Other race female students disproportionately spent days outside of the classroom and Other race male students did not spend a disproportionate number of days outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline, H3 was not supported. The disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year is not related to student gender.

Table 6

Observed and Expected Frequencies for H3

Gender Race	$f_{observed}$	$f_{expected}$
Female		
African-American	66.5	25.2
Hispanic	50.0	43.6
Multiracial	94.5	40.1
Other	53.2	28.8
White	164.2	290.8
Male		
African-American	143.2	93.6
Hispanic	188.6	138.8
Multiracial	167.0	123.3
Other	60.5	91.8
White	823.4	935.23

Note. Other = American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students

H4. The disproportionality in the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline is disproportionate among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student gender.

Prior to testing H4, the sample data was disaggregated by gender. A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for female students, and a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for male students. For each test, the

frequency distribution by race for the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline was compared to the frequency distribution by race for the enrollment of students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. For each test, the frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies based on these distributions was constructed. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to test H4

The results of the chi-square test for female students indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4)$ 102.34, $p = .000$, Cramer's V = 0.35. See Table 7 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline for African-American female students ($n = 33$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 12.29$). The observed number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline for Hispanic female students ($n = 28$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 21.3$). The observed number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline for Multiracial female students ($n = 39$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 19.6$). The observed number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline for Other race female students ($n = 30$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 14.1$). The effect size indicated a medium effect.

The results of the chi-square test for male students indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4) = 126.76$, $p = .000$, Cramer's V = 0.25. See Table 7 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline for African-American male students ($n = 85$) was higher than the expected number

(n = 35.8). The observed number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline for Hispanic male students (n = 55) was higher than the expected number (n = 53.1). The observed number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline for Multiracial male students (n = 89) was higher than the expected number (n = 47.2). The effect size indicated a small effect.

When the statistically significant results of the two analyses were compared, it was determined that for four of the five categories, African-American, Hispanic, Multiracial, and White, the disproportionality is similar for male and female students. Although Other race female students experienced a disproportionate number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline and Other race male students did not, H4 was not supported. The disproportionality in the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year is not related to student gender.

Table 7

Observed and Expected Frequencies for H4

Gender Race	$f_{observed}$	$f_{expected}$
Female		
African-American	33	12.3
Hispanic	28	21.3
Multiracial	39	19.6
Other	30	14.1
White	79	141.9
Male		
African-American	85	35.8
Hispanic	55	53.1
Multiracial	89	47.2
Other	27	35.1
White	273	357.8

Note. Other = American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students

RQ3. To what extent is the disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom and suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year related to student GPA?

H5. The disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial,

and Other race students in Grades 6-8 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student GPA.

Prior to testing H5, the sample data was disaggregated by GPA (4.0-3.00, 2.99-2.00, and 1.99 and below). A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 4.0-3.00, a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 2.99-2.00, and a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 1.99 and below. For each test, the frequency distribution by race for the suspension occurrences spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline was compared to the frequency distribution by race for the enrollment of students in Grades 6-8 during the 2019-2020 school year. For each test, the frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies based on these distributions was constructed. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to test H5.

The results of the chi-square test for middle school students with a GPA of 4.00-3.00 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4) = 55.44$, $p = .000$, Cramer's V = 0.32. See Table 8 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for African-American students ($n = 15.2$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 5.8$). The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for Hispanic students ($n = 21.0$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 13.0$). The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for Multiracial students ($n = 31.0$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 13.6$). The effect size indicated a medium effect.

The results of the chi-square test for middle school students with a GPA of 2.99-2.00 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4) = 87.23$, $p = .000$, Cramer's V = 0.24. See Table 8 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for African-American students ($n = 97.0$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 48.9$). The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for Multiracial students ($n = 71.5$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 45.0$). The effect size indicated a small effect.

The results of the chi-square test for students with a GPA of 1.99-0.00 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4) = 32.1$, $p = .000$, Cramer's V = 0.14. See Table 8 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for Hispanic students ($n = 111.5$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 72.8$). The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for Multiracial students ($n = 52.0$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 44.2$). The effect size indicated a small effect.

When the statistically significant results of the three analyses were compared, it was determined that there was evidence of disproportionality for the Multiracial students in all three GPA categories. There was evidence of disproportionality for African-American and Hispanic students in two out of the three GPA categories. Although the pattern of disproportionality was different at the three GPA categories, H5 was not supported. The disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial,

and Other race students in Grades 6-8 during the 2019-2020 school year is not related to student GPA.

Table 8

Observed and Expected Frequencies for H5

GPA

Race	$f_{observed}$	$f_{expected}$
3.00-4.00		
African-American	15.2	5.8
Hispanic	21.0	13.0
Multiracial	31.0	13.6
Other	2.0	7.2
White	67.0	96.7
2.00-2.99		
African-American	97.0	48.9
Hispanic	34.0	53.6
Multiracial	71.5	45.0
Other	14.5	32.6
White	154.0	190.9
0.00-1.99		
African-American	45.0	54.6
Hispanic	115.5	72.8
Multiracial	52.0	44.2
Other	29.0	46.8
White	194.3	213.3

Note. Other = American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students

H6. The disproportionality in the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-8 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student GPA.

Prior to testing H6, the sample data was disaggregated by GPA (4.0-3.00, 2.99-2.00, and 1.99 and below). A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 4.0-3.00, a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 2.99-2.00, and a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 1.99 and below. For each test, the frequency distribution by race for the number of suspension due to exclusionary discipline was compared to the frequency distribution by race for the enrollment of students in Grades 6-8 during the 2019-2020 school year. For each test, the frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies based on these distributions was constructed. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to test H6.

The results of the chi-square test for middle school students with a GPA of 4.00-3.00 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4) = 44.26$, $p = .000$, Cramer's V = 0.35. See Table 9 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of suspension occurrences for African-American students ($n = 11$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 3.9$). The observed number of suspension occurrences for Hispanic students ($n = 12$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 8.8$). The observed number of suspension occurrences for

Multiracial students (n = 23) was higher than the expected number (n = 9.2). The effect size indicated a medium effect.

The results of the chi-square test for middle school students with a GPA of 2.99-2.00 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4) = 87.23$, $p = .000$, Cramer's V = 0.26. See Table 9 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of suspension occurrences for African-American students (n = 53) was higher than the expected number (n = 24.1). The observed number of suspension occurrences for Multiracial students (n = 31) was higher than the expected number (n = 22.2). The effect size indicated a small effect.

The results of the chi-square test for middle school students with a GPA of 1.99-0.00 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4) = 11.5$, $p = .000$, Cramer's V = 0.14. See Table 9 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of suspension occurrences for African-American students (n = 31) was higher than the expected number (n = 19.2). The observed number of suspension occurrences for Hispanic students (n = 27) was higher than the expected number (n = 25.6). The observed number of suspension occurrences for Multiracial students (n = 19) was higher than the expected number (n = 15.6). The effect size indicated a small effect.

When the statistically significant results of the three analyses were compared, it was determined that there was evidence of disproportionality for the African-American and Multiracial students in all three GPA categories. There was evidence of disproportionality for Hispanic students in two out of the three GPA categories. Even though the pattern of disproportionality was different in the three GPA categories, H6

was not supported. The disproportionality in the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-8 during the 2019-2020 school year is not related to student GPA.

Table 9

Observed and Expected Frequencies for H6

GPA Race	$f_{observed}$	$f_{expected}$
4.00-3.00		
African-American	11	3.9
Hispanic	12	8.8
Multiracial	23	9.2
Other	1	4.9
White	45	65.3
2.99-2.00		
African-American	53	24.1
Hispanic	19	26.4
Multiracial	31	22.2
Other	10	16.1
White	70	94.2
1.99-0.00		
African-American	53	24.1
Hispanic	19	26.4
Multiracial	31	22.2
Other	10	16.1
White	70	94.2

Note. Other = American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students

H7. The disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 9-12 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student GPA.

Prior to testing H7, the sample data was disaggregated by GPA (4.0-3.00, 2.99-2.00, and 1.99 and below). A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 4.0-3.00, a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 2.99-2.00, and a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 1.99 and below. For each test, the frequency distribution by race for the days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline was compared to the frequency distribution by race for the enrollment of students in Grades 9-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. For each test, the frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies based on these distributions was constructed. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to test H7.

The results of the chi-square test for high school students with a GPA of 4.00-3.00 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4) = 23.34$, $p = .000$, Cramer's V = 0.32. See Table 10 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for African-American students ($n = 4.0$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 2.5$). The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for Multiracial students ($n = 9.0$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 3.7$). The observed number of days spent out

of the classroom for Other race students (n = 10.0) was higher than the expected number (n = 4.0). The effect size indicated a medium effect.

The results of the chi-square test for high school students with a GPA of 2.99-2.00 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4) = 16.18$, $p = .003$, Cramer's V = 0.17. See Table 10 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for Hispanic students (n = 25.0) was higher than the expected number (n = 18.4). The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for Other race students (n = 17.4) was higher than the expected number (n = 9.7). The effect size indicated a small effect.

The results of the chi-square test for high school students with a GPA of 1.99-0.00 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4) = 59.9$, $p = .000$, Cramer's V = 0.15. See Table 10 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for Multiracial students (n = 83.0) was higher than the expected number (n = 81.4). The observed number of days spent out of the classroom for White students (n = 452.0) was higher than the expected number (n = 366.5). The effect size indicated a small effect.

When the statistically significant results of the three analyses were compared, it was determined that the evidence of disproportionality for high school students was mixed across the GPA categories. For all students of color, the pattern of disproportionality was different in the three GPA categories. In addition, White students in the 1.99-0.00 GPA category were suspended a disproportionate number of days. H7 was supported. The disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic,

Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 9-12 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student GPA.

Table 10

Observed and Expected Frequencies for H7

GPA Race	$f_{observed}$	$f_{expected}$
4.00-3.00		
African-American	4.0	2.5
Hispanic	0.0	3.9
Multiracial	9.0	3.7
Other	10.0	4.0
White	34.0	43.0
2.99-2.00		
African-American	3.0	12.6
Hispanic	25.0	18.4
Multiracial	15.0	15.3
Other	17.4	9.7
White	86.4	90.9
1.99-0.00		
African-American	45.5	66.0
Hispanic	47.1	105.3
Multiracial	83.0	81.4
Other	40.8	49.2
White	452.0	366.5

Note. Other = American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students

H8. The disproportionality in the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 9-12 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student GPA.

Prior to testing H8, the sample data was disaggregated by GPA (4.0-3.00, 2.99-2.00, and 1.99 and below). A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 4.0-3.00, a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 2.99-2.00, and a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the data for students with a GPA of 1.99 and below. For each test, the frequency distribution by race for the number of suspension occurrences spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline was compared to the frequency distribution by race for the enrollment of students in Grades 9-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. For each test, the frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies based on these distributions was constructed. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to test H8.

The results of the chi-square test for high school students with a GPA of 4.00-3.00 indicated no statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4) = 4.32$, $p = .364$. See Table 11 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of suspension occurrences for high school students was not different from the expected number.

The results of the chi-square test for high school students with a GPA of 2.99-2.00 indicated no statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values,

$\chi^2(4) = 8.36$, $p = .079$. See Table 11 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of suspension occurrences for high school students was not different than the expected number.

The results of the chi-square test for high school students with a GPA of 1.99-0.00 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected values, $\chi^2(4) = 22.56$, $p = .000$, Cramer's V = 0.17. See Table 11 for the observed and expected frequencies. The observed number of suspension occurrences for Multiracial students ($n = 44$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 25.3$). The observed number of suspension occurrences for Other race students ($n = 19$) was higher than the expected number ($n = 15.3$). The effect size indicated a small effect.

When the results of the three analyses were compared, the findings for the GPA categories 4.00-3.00 and 2.99-2.00 were not statistically significant. The statistically significant finding for the GPA category 1.99-0.00 provided evidence of disproportionality for the Multiracial and Other race students. H8 was supported. The disproportionality in the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 9-12 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student GPA.

Table 11

Observed and Expected Frequencies for H8

GPA Race	$f_{observed}$	$f_{expected}$
4.00-3.00		
African-American	2	1.0
Hispanic	0	1.6
Multiracial	3	1.5
Other	1	1.6
White	17	17.3
2.99-2.00		
African-American	2	6.6
Hispanic	8	9.7
Multiracial	8	8.0
Other	10	5.1
White	49	47.7
1.99-0.00		
African-American	19	20.5
Hispanic	17	32.8
Multiracial	44	25.3
Other	19	15.3
White	109	114.1

Note. Other = American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students

Additional Analyses

The data was analyzed for outliers, and an outlier was found. Originally the outlier (186 days suspended outside the classroom) was included in the analyses because the outlier was verified as a valid data point. However, to determine if the outlier affected the results of three hypothesis tests, the chi-square tests for goodness of fit were also conducted without the outlier in the data set. The results of those tests were not different from those reported above for H1, H3, and H7.

Summary

In this chapter, the results of the hypotheses testing were presented. A chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted to test each hypothesis; the results of the tests were presented in both a narrative and data table format. Chapter 5 includes a study summary, the findings related to the literature, and the conclusion.

Chapter 5

Interpretation and Recommendations

Discipline practices that remove students from the classroom have little impact on correcting student behavior and have an adverse effect on student outcomes (APA Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008). Students removed from the classroom are less likely to graduate high school or attend postsecondary school (Balfanz et al., 2014). The impact of exclusionary discipline is often disregarded in the quest to close the achievement gap and improve outcomes for students of color. Research has shown that African-American, Native American, Pacific Islander students are disciplined at disproportionate rates (Patton, 2000; Ward, 2006). This chapter provides a study summary, findings related to the literature, and the conclusion.

Study Summary

Examined in this study was the relationship between race, gender, and the disproportionality of exclusionary discipline practices in a Midwestern public school system. Also examined was the relationship between exclusionary discipline and student GPA. This section includes an overview of the problem, the purpose of the study and the research questions, a review of the methodology, and the major findings.

Overview of the problem. The excessive use of exclusionary discipline practices can lead to a hostile school environment, increased behavior problems, and increased dropout rates (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Students of color, especially African-American students, are disciplined at disproportionate rates. Students of color are given less opportunity to succeed in school than their White counterparts (Losen & Martinez, 2020). Although District MW has engaged in equity work since 1995, a 2017

longitudinal data report revealed that the work has only slightly improved the disparity in the rates students of color and White students are disciplined (District MW, 2017).

Purpose statement and research questions. The first purpose of this study was to determine to what extent the number of days and suspension occurrences spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline is disproportionate among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. The second purpose of this study was to determine to what extent the disproportionality in the number of days and suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year was related to student gender. The third purpose of this study was to determine to what extent the disproportionality in the number of days and suspension occurrences spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year is related to student grade point average (GPA). To address the purposes of the study, three research questions were posed, and eight hypotheses were tested.

Review of the methodology. A quantitative research design was used to determine whether African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 are issued exclusionary discipline at disproportionate rates. Secondly, the study was designed to determine if a student's gender impacts exclusionary discipline rates. Finally, the study was designed to determine whether there was a relationship between exclusionary discipline and the student's GPA. The study was conducted using student discipline data reported by a school district in the Midwest with

a population of over 6,600 students during the 2019-2020 school year. Chi-square tests for goodness of fit were conducted to test the hypotheses.

Major findings. Three research questions guided this study. The first research question was addressed by testing H1 and H2 to examine the number of days spent outside of the classroom and suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline for disproportionality among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. The findings indicated that the number of days spent outside the classroom and the number of suspension occurrences was disproportionate for African-American, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students.

The second research question was addressed by testing H3and H4 to determine if the disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom and suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline during the 2019-2020 school year was related to student gender. The findings were mixed. The number of days spent outside of the classroom and the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline was disproportionate for female and male African-American, Hispanic, and Multiracial students. In addition, the results showed disproportionality for Other race female students. Other race male students and White female and male students were underrepresented in the number of days spent outside the classroom and suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline.

The third research question was addressed by testing H5-H8 to determine the extent of the disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom and the number of suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline was related to

student GPA, which was categorized into three groups 4.00-3.00, 2.99-2.00, and 1.99 and below. The findings related to this research question were mixed. The findings indicated that GPA was not related to the disproportionality in the number of days spent outside the classroom due to exclusionary discipline but was related to the number of suspension occurrences.

Findings Related to the Literature

In this section, how the findings of this study are related to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 are found. The findings related to the literature are discussed in the order of the research questions. The first research question was posed to determine whether the number of days spent outside of the classroom and suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline for disproportionality among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. The findings provided evidence that disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom existed for African-American, Hispanic, and Multiracial students. Additionally, disproportionality was found in the number of suspension occurrences for African-American, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students.

The CDF (1975) and Skiba et al. (2000) found a disparity in the exclusionary discipline of African-American students, and the findings of the current study support their research. In addition, the findings of the current study support the findings of Welch and Payne (2010), the NYCLU (2010), Losen and Skiba (2012), Porowski et al. (2014), and Girvan et al. (2016). The findings of these studies also revealed that African-American students were suspended at disproportionate rates. The findings of the current study also support Anderson and Ritter (2017). They found that when comparing

students in the same building, racial equity gaps existed but were less than the racial disproportionality in schools with high enrollment of African-American students. The current findings support Siegel-Hawley et al. (2019), who found that African-American students consistently receive exclusionary discipline at disproportionate rates. The study findings also support Hassan and Carter (2021), who found disproportional discipline for African-American students.

The findings of the current study support the research of Patton (2000) and Ward (2006) regarding disproportionality in suspension occurrences for African-American, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students. The findings are in contrast to the lack of disproportionality in the number of days spent outside of the classroom due to exclusionary discipline for Other race students. Patton (2000) and Ward (2006) found disproportionate discipline for all students of color.

Brown and Tillio (2013) found that African-American students are overrepresented in discipline data, and White students are underrepresented; the findings of the current study support these findings. In the current study, discipline data for American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander students were combined and presented as data for Other race students. Brown and Tillio (2013) disaggregated the data for Native-American and Asian students in their study. They found that Native-American students were over-represented in discipline occurrences but found that Asian students were underrepresented in both days spent outside of the classroom and discipline occurrences. The current findings did not support Brown and Tillio's findings.

The findings of the current study also support USDEOCR (2014) in finding that African-Americans are suspended at disproportionate rates. The current study does not support the USDEOCR (2014) findings of disproportionate suspension rates for Native-Americans and Native-Alaskans because the current study included these racial groups in the Other race category. Joseph (2018) found disproportionality in the exclusionary discipline of African-American, Hispanic, and Native-American students; the findings of the current study support the disproportionate exclusionary discipline of African-American and Hispanic students that Joseph found in his research. Ritter and Anderson (2018) found that Africa-American and Hispanic students are disciplined at disproportionate rates; the findings of the current study support these findings.

The current study did not support Gion et al. (2018), who found that Native Americans and Alaska Natives were underrepresented in the discipline date for middle-school students. However, the current findings support Gion et al. (2018), who reported that Native Americans and Alaska Natives were disciplined at disproportionate rates at the high school level. Gage et al. (2020) found that disproportionality in discipline rates exists for African-American and Hispanic students. The current study also supports De Brey et al. (2021), who found disproportionality in discipline for African-American, Native-American, Multiracial, and Pacific Islander students. In the current study, Pacific Islander, Native-American, and Asian Americans data were combined. The current study did not support De Brey et al.'s (2021) findings for the number of days suspended out of the classroom for Other race students but did support the number of suspension occurrences for Other race students.

In the current study, the third research question was posed to examine if GPA was related to the number of days spent outside of the classroom and suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline for disproportionality among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. In 2020-2021, when the current study was conducted, no research was found that measured disproportionality in exclusionary discipline disaggregated by race and its relationship to student GPA. Although disproportionality was found in the current study, there were no similar study results to compare with this finding.

Conclusions

This section details a summary of conclusions made based on the results of the data analysis conducted for this study. Implications for action and recommendations for future research are included in this section. Finally, the concluding remarks of the researcher are provided.

Implications for action. The researcher of the current study examined exclusionary discipline rates for middle and high school students in a school district in the Midwest. It is recommended that policymakers and educators make changes that would increase learning for all students, especially those historically marginalized. All district personnel should consistently engage in racial equity training, including implicit bias and stereotype training to increase their racial consciousness. The school district should offer professional development to provide educators with the tools and strategies needed to strengthen relationships with students and their caretakers. Educators should be given the tools to engage in conversations concerning race, especially with individuals who do not look like them. They can use this training to get to know their students and

families, so the knowledge gained can be implemented in the classroom to create a culturally relevant learning environment. Teachers' training should also focus on classroom management strategies that include students in the creation of classroom rules and expectations. Educators should also be trained in restorative practices to create a sense of community and belongingness for all students.

Recommendations for future research. The researcher of the current study examined district discipline data for disparities in the exclusionary discipline rates. The study focused on middle school and high school students only. As a result, future researches should expand the study to include discipline data for all students within the district from pre-K through high school. Future studies should also examine the types of infractions that result in a referral to the office while looking for inconsistencies and disparities in discipline data. Future studies should also examine the consequences of specific office referrals to see if some students receive harsher punishments than others. Finally, it is recommended that the current study be replicated in other Kansas districts as well as statewide to determine whether the disproportionality in the number of days spent outside the classroom and suspension occurrences due to exclusionary discipline among African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students exists and is related to gender.

Concluding remarks. The results of this study were drawn on discipline data from District MW. The data analysis revealed disparities in exclusionary discipline practices for African-American, White, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other race students in Grades 6-12 during the 2019-2020 school year. Although results were mixed in determining if the disparities in exclusionary discipline were related to gender and race,

discipline disparities were consistently seen in African-American and Multiracial students. Given these results, educators must invest in understanding the impact of systemic racism that exists in the school system and work to identify and defy their own implicit biases. All students deserve a free appropriate public education. The first step in ensuring this is to keep the child in the classroom.

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Appendices

Appendix A: District MW Approval

December 15, 2020

To whom it may concern:

As the executive director of research, evaluation, and accountability, I confirm that Julitha Rials has approval to conduct research with [redacted] Public Schools, USD [redacted]. Should you have any questions about this record, please feel free to contact me at [redacted].

Sincerely,

[redacted]
Executive Director Research, Evaluation, and Accountability
[redacted]

Appendix B: Baker University IRB Approval

Baker University Institutional Review Board

April 23rd, 2021

Dear Julitha Rials and Susan Rogers,

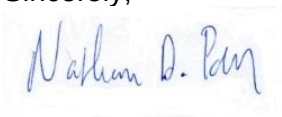
The Baker University IRB has reviewed your project application and approved this project under Exempt Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.
6. If this project is not completed within a year, you must renew IRB approval.

If you have any questions, please contact me at npoell@bakeru.edu or 785.594.4582.

Sincerely,



Nathan Poell, MLS
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee
Sara Crump, PhD
Nick Harris, MS
Christa Manton, PhD
Susan Rogers, PhD