A CASE STUDY OF THE PERSPECTIVES OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN ONTARIO

ON POLICIES AND PRACTICES ADDRESSING DISPROPORTIONALITY IN STUDENT

DISCIPLINE

by

Annastasia Onyinyechukwuka Oraegbunem

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University

2021

A CASE STUDY OF THE PERSPECTIVES OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN ONTARIO

ON POLICIES AND PRACTICES ADDRESSING DISPROPORTIONALITY IN STUDENT

DISCIPLINE

By Annastasia Onyinyechukwuka Oraegbunem

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2021

APPROVED BY:

Margaret E. Ackerman, Ed.D., Committee Chair

Russell Yocum, Ed.D., Committee Member

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this case study was to understand the perspectives of school administrators in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. The problem is that minority students get school suspension at significantly higher rates than non-minority students. The theory guiding this study is the Black identity development theory. There are four research questions with a central research question is, what are school administrators' perspectives on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students in Ontario? This single qualitative case study design purposefully sampled 10 school administrators for 7th to 12th grade from the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) in Ontario, Canada, that have successfully reduced suspension rates in the last three years. The data collection methods include semi-structured open-ended interview questions, focus group interviews, and the collection of the administrator's school discipline policy for analysis. The research used cross-case analysis software to transcribe the participants' interviews, sort out the themes, and assess all the relevant terms from interviews. There are four central themes and 15 sub-themes generated from the participants' interviews. The focus group interview revealed the participants' knowledge of policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students.

Keywords: suspension, disproportion, policy, prison pipeline, minority students

Copyright Page

Dedication

I dedicate this study to the late mother, Lady Ann Okuanata Igbodokwu. Also, the researcher dedicates this study to the children Justin, Augustine, Agnes, and Lucy. This work will serve as an encouragement platform to persevere while pursuing their goals in life, especially in their academic journey.

Acknowledgments

Through God's mercy and the intercession of the blessed mother, Mary, there were more achievements than life could offer through this study. God made this changeling dissertation journey rewarding with the help of several significant individuals.

To Jude (My husband): Without your love and support, I would have never accomplished all of the hours of work necessary to reach this destination. Jude, you encouraged me to persevere and complete this educational process by reminding me that I would be the first Ph.D. graduate from both sides of the family lineage.

To Justin, Augustine, Agnes, and Lucy (My children): Thank you for allowing me to work on the many hours of reading and writing throughout my coursework. I hope you know that I did this study for us. I hope you learned the value of working hard to achieve your goals. Now that this journey is coming to an end, I look forward to spending uninterrupted time together and making memories with you. I see the reason to persevere with all the challenges because you are my world, and I am grateful to God to be your mother.

To Late Ann and Emmanuel Igbodokwu (My parents): I did it! Thank you for convincing me of my strength to go through these challenges. I promised you I would reach this academic destination. I hope I have exceeded your expectations. I miss you very much.

To Dr. Ackerman and Dr. Yocum (Liberty University's professors): Thank you for choosing to chair my dissertation. Your support, criticism, and direction have yielded significant academic performance. Thank you for encouraging me to accomplish this doctoral journey; I am thankful that you are on my dissertation committee.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

Crime-Producing Needs (CPN)

Discipline Disparities Research to Practice (DDRP).

Disabilities Education Act (DEA)

District Board Minor Cases (DBJC)

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Greater Toronto Area (GTA)

Inside School Suspension (ISS)

Linear Programming Model (LPM)

Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools (MDS3)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Office of Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation (OPBE)

Out of School Suspension (OSS)

Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs)

Pretrial Diversion (PTD)

Pretrial Diversion (PTD)

Safe Schools Act (SSA)

School Resource Officers (SROs)

School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP)

Sequential Intercept Model (SIM)

Toronto District School Board (TDSB)

United States (US)

Zero Tolerance Policy (ZTP)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

In the mid-1990s, the Ontario Board of Education made the first step to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to discipline students in schools as a safe school policy on violence and Weapons (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018). In 1999, a political candidate promised to implement the Zero-Tolerance Policy (ZTP) to discipline students' bad behavior in schools, which manifested in April 2000 when the Ontario Education Minister Janet Ecker released a *Code of Conduct* for school boards ("The Ontario Safe Schools Act: School Discipline and Discrimination," 2020). The report also revealed that the Minister introduced the Safe Schools Act (SSA) in September 2001, allowing principals and teachers to suspend and expel students. This SSA was to eliminate volatile issues such as drug abuse and gun violence to achieve a healthy learning environment; however, there seems to be an increasingly volatile issue in the education sector (Nation, Henderson, & Monell, 2016). The SSA has changed from 2000 to 2015; for example, the zero-tolerance approach that began to take shape around 2004 changed to the progressive discipline approach in 2007 (Bailey, 2015; Winton, 2012). In 2009, the Ontario Government adopted the Kids Safe at School Act strategy with a bold vision of an Action Plan for Accepting Schools in 2012 (Bailey, 2015). Another SSA adoption on Model Bullying Prevention Plan for bias-based attacks through climate surveys offered responses beyond one-off punishments, such as suspensions in 2013 (Bailey, 2015). Two years later, the Ontario government initiated a bold and controversial curriculum reform to tackle sexuality, gender identity, and media stereotypes in 2015 (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018). Despite reform, there is a disproportionate impact on racial minority students and students with disabilities; the SSA needs to be color blind and impartial by treating all the students who commit the same

offense the same (MacAllister, 2016). Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in Ontario, Canada, has a higher rate of student suspensions and expulsions with a disproportionate impact on Black, the indigenous, and other racial minority students and students with disabilities ("The Ontario Safe Schools Act: School Discipline and Discrimination," 2020). For example, the Ontario Ministry of Education report shows an increase from 53,236 to 55,986 students' suspensions or 2.56% to 2.67% of all students attending Ontario schools with an issued total suspension from 85,931 to 91,514 accounting for multiple suspensions ("Suspension and Expulsion Facts, 2014-2017," 2019).

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the perspectives of school administrators in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. The problem is that there is disproportionality in school suspension discipline, affecting minority students at significantly higher rates than non-minority students (Griffin, Cunningham, & Chrystal, 2016; Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018). Students from low economic status experience higher dropout rates and increase juvenile crime chances than other students with higher income status (Bottiani, Bradshaw, & Mendelson, 2016). The Black identity development theory (Cross, 1971) plays a significant role in understanding human actions within the school environment to influence the students' academic success by involving a simultaneous awareness process for Black people to identify and internalize positive thoughts (Ritchey, 2014). This chapter includes the study's background, historical context, social and theoretical context, situation to self, problem statement, purpose statement, the significance of the study, research question, the definition of terms, and conclusion.

Background

The establishment of the SSA in September 2001 was to eliminate volatile school issues, for example, drug abuse or gun violence, to achieve a healthy learning environment ("The Ontario Safe Schools Act: School Discipline and Discrimination," 2020). There is an increasingly volatile public schools' system because of the disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students since the implementation of SSA (Bottiani, Bradshaw, & Mendelson, 2017). For example, some schools have a disproportionate penalty that hurts the youth by increasing their chances of juvenile criminal cases (Mallett, 2016). In Ontario, Canada, the Ministry of Education revealed a tremendous increase in a school suspension report for young students' harsh punishment ("Suspension and Expulsion Facts, 2014-2017," 2019). The school administrators in Ontario need to address the disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students; for example, some administrators apply disciplinary policy as an alternative to student suspension (Nation et al., 2016; Reimer, 2018). The alternative disciplinary policy affects every student's equity intervention to gain social, emotional, and psychological support instead of increasing the risk of subsequent contact with the juvenile justice system (Griffin et al., 2016). Educators need the best approach to encourage teachers to understand their role in maintaining a healthy learning community to prevent students' discrimination among their peers (Bailey, 2015). There are more understanding and empowerment among students from equality-seeking communities instead of focusing on history that suggests disproportionate policing of the marginalized society (Griffin et al., 2016). Since the establishment of SSA for safe learning environments in Ontario, Canada, there has been an increasingly disproportionate number of school suspension rates and a higher school dropout rate, especially in the GTA (George et al., 2016; Reimer, 2018). The problem is that there is

disproportionality in student discipline, with minority students getting suspension penalty at significantly higher rates than non-minority students. Ontario's adjusted SSA still has origins from the ZTP's effect on discrimination among students, which calls for research on school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline suspension rates for minority students. Adopting an SSA to discipline students in schools as a Safe Schools Policy on Violence and Weapons is yet to resolve the disproportionate suspension rate in Ontario's GTA (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018).

Historical Context

The origin of zero-tolerance began in the 1980s as a war on drugs issued by the United States Government because of the increasing juvenile arrests for violent crimes as government officials believed that the policy could help eliminate students' minor offenses (Griffin et al., 2016). As a neighboring country, Canada made the first step to adopt a ZTP to discipline students in schools in the mid-1990s as a safe school for the Ontario Board of Education Policy on Violence and Weapons (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018). In late 1993, the Scarborough Board of Education in Ontario, Canada, adopted a Safe Schools Policy against dangerous delinquents such as violence and bringing a weapon to school, requiring students' expulsion for a minimum of a year (Reimer, 2018). In 1999, Ontario political candidate Premier Mike Harris promised to implement a zero-tolerance policy to discipline students' bad behavior in schools, manifested in April 2000 when the Ontario Education Minister Janet Ecker released a *Code of Conduct* for school boards (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018). Conclusion: there is a lack of inclusion and social equity in the school for minority students among students' diversity (Harris & Linder, 2018). In 2016, the SSA restricted students from smoking, possessing, disrupting the classroom, being rude to their teacher or anyone in

authority within the school environment, or consuming Midol and aspirin drugs (Griffin et al., 2016; Reimer, 2018).

Social Context

The implementation of the SSA in Ontario, Canada was to eliminate volatile issues at schools such as drug abuse and other violent behaviors to achieve a healthy learning environment; however, there seems to be an increasingly volatile issue in the education sector (Yang et al., 2019). Some school administrators implement a disproportionate penalty that increases the student's chances of juvenile criminal cases with suspension (Reimer, 2018). Out-Of-School Suspensions (OSS) disrupt the student's opportunity to learn when pulled out of school, thus increasing the chances of juvenile justice crimes (Reimer, 2018). There was a social media video in October 2015 showing a school resource officer throwing a non-compliant 16-year-old minority female student across the classroom in a South Carolina high school (Aarthun & Yan, 2015). Aarthun and Yan reported that the minority female student refused to put away her cell phone and refused to leave the classroom when the teacher and administrator on duty asked her to vacate. The South Carolina high school administrator gave the minority female student and another classmate criminal charges for disturbing school (Aarthun & Yan, 2015). Aarthun and Yan explained that the South Carolina high school's social media video drew public attention, revealing school administrators' problem employing police officers as a school resource to discipline students' minor misbehavior, resulting in criminal charges. George et al. (2016) explained that such criminal charges from the school result in the student's suspension, which increases the student's chances of committing more crimes. The OSS could cause disruption that often becomes students' permanent departure from the education system (Yang et al., 2019). Prolonged periods of suspension could force students to drop out of school and lose

the protective elements of education (Bottiani et al., 2016). Students with a suspension record are five times more likely to drop out of school, and students suspended through disciplinary action were nearly three times more likely to have a juvenile justice contact in the following year (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018; Reimer, 2018).

Despite the potential harm stemming from ZTP in the US, some school administrators still practice the disciplinary policies in their schools (Nowicki, 2018). Nowicki also mentioned ZTP as factors that affect some students experiencing more suspensions because of the partiality, as there is evidence of adverse impact based on the disproportionate number of Black students. For example, schools within low-income communities serve Black students, and these schools have insufficient resources to reduce the students' higher risk of subsequent contact with juvenile justice if there is an increasing suspension rate in their school board (Reimer, 2018). However, applying the disciplinary policy in low-income communities often affects Black students three times more than White students (Yang et al., 2019). Students from low-income families' backgrounds are five times more likely to dropout of high school than middle-income students and six times more likely than high-income peers. Black students from low economic status experience higher dropout rates and increased chances of juvenile crime than other students with higher income status (Bottiani et al., 2016). Also, Black students encounter poor academic performance because the ZTP deprives these students of the benefit from the protective mechanisms built into the school setting (Mcintosh, Davis, Garraway & Burt, 2018).

Theoretical Context

The Black identity development theory (Ritchey, 2014) involves a simultaneous awareness process for Black people to identify and internalize positive thoughts. Ritchey explained that positive thinking from this process extends to understanding other racial groups as

a Black person, creating an equal society when everyone acknowledges the value of cultural diversity. Citing Bakari (1997), Ritchey (2004) argued that "Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) sometimes neglect to address the challenges across cultural student development for Black students" (p. 101). Black identity development involves simultaneous Black people's steps to internalize positive thoughts about other racial groups (Ritchey, 2014). Ritchey applied the following research questions; how do Black immigrant and indigenous students perceive diversity on campus (structural difference)? How do minority students describe their interactions with different students from racial backgrounds (behavioral climate)?

William Cross developed the nigrescence theory in 1971 that considered the seminal Black racial identity development model as the theorist referred to as "an identity change process from a Negro-to-Black experience that is in behavior during the Harlem Renaissance" (Cross, 1991, p. 189). The theorist re-considered the theory as a re-socializing experience that transforms a preexisting identity through a five-stage nigrescence model as follows:

Stage 1: the pre-encounter, depicting the person's identity to be changed. At this stage, an individual's attitudes can range from low salience to race neutrality than to anti-Black.

Stage 2: the encounter, isolation point that the person feels compelled to change. Here the theorist also discussed that some Black people are anti-Blacks who loath other Blacks while they feel isolated from their Black community as potential. Such Black people who are anti-Black often forget that they grew up with White westernized ideologies embedded in their culture (Cross, 1991). People at the encounter stage work around or shatter the relevance of their ideology and worldview while others provide some hint of direction to be re-socialized (Cross, 1991). The theorist mentioned two steps in the encounter stage: encountering where an event

happens to sharpen how individuals view their race and personalize when individual acts evoke that person's perception.

  Stage 3: the immersion emersion, describing the vortex of identity to change. At this stage, Black people shed their historical worldview by constructing a new frame of reference about their race; such individual has not yet changed but is willing to change (Cross, 1991). The theorist explained that the immersion stage is a powerful dominating sensation energized by rage, guilt, and a consistent sense of pride. A sense of rage at this stage can be a catalyst for Black students to seek out history, art, and music representing a culture never known (Cross, 1991). Cross (1991) explained that "a paradox conversion is that while rebelling against the larger society, the new convert may willingly conform to the demands for Black organizations" (p. 205). For example, many racial and ethnic minority students are either subverting their identity to get involved in the mainstream culture as they struggle to maintain a cultural connection to their racial identity (Griffin et al., 2016). Griffen et al. suggested that minority students must connect with others through a students' association or a safer space to seek support to succeed outside of the classroom. If Blacks accept being Black, they assume to be psychologically healthy and have high self-esteem, but Blacks who accept the values of White society and neglect their value suffer from self-hatred and low self-esteem (Cross, 1991). The theorist stated that Black people are at a disadvantage through societal constructions of overt and covert forms of institutionalized racism.

  Stage 4 and 5: the internalization and internalization-commitment, the habituation, and internalization of the persons' new identity (Cross, 1991). The theorist explained that these stages are the transition period when individuals face a new identity because they move away from how others view their personality to how they view themselves. Cross (1991) also mentioned that

Black people need to start thinking critically about their newfound racial identity to embrace what it means to be Black and self-love exuded into the universe. The Internalization-Commitment Stage combines with internalization rather than repeating internalization in a differential look (Cross, 1991). The Black identity development theory model is the ultimate transformation when someone achieves a racial identity because racism, domination, and privilege are intertwined into society resulting in race-related issues at the educational, individual, and institutional levels (Ritchey, 2014). Ritchey also explained that healthy racial identity development becomes progress through a series of linear stages when individuals eliminate thoughts and feelings about themselves and other Blacks by idealizing whites' beliefs.

Situation to Self

As a Canadian, a mother, an educator, and an aspiring school administrator, this study represents every Black or minority student underrepresented in their learning environment. This study is a platform to advocate for the minority students who struggle to speak up in their place of study. Some classmates were practicing school principals during the researchers' master's degree program, and these school principals practiced the Safe School Act to eliminate volatile issues such as drug abuse and gun violence (Harris & Linder, 2018). However, these school administrators have implemented a disproportionate penalty that increases students' suspension and school dropouts in their district school boards. The researcher learned from classmates that school administrators employ police officers to intervene in students' misbehavior.

For example, the researcher had a neighbor who is a minority parent on the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). The parent explained that the son got over five (penalty) yellow cards within a school year for violating the school policy because the principal claimed that the boy was misbehaving in the classroom. A neighbor complained that the school principal

threatened her and informed her that another boy's misbehavior would result in an out-of-school suspension. The neighbor said that some of the boy's offenses include dancing and thrusting his private part on other students, entering the girls' washroom, or talking when the teacher asked him to be quiet. A neighbor perceived the partiality that the son gets more penalties than the other students in the classroom because he is a minority of culture. Communities with diverse ethnicity where there are minority parents encounter such disproportionate penalties within their children's school. Most of the students who received a school suspension because of minor issues are at risk of committing more crimes because of the disruption that often becomes students' permanent departure from the education system (Yang et al., 2019). Prolonged periods of suspension could force students to drop out of school and lose the protective elements of education (Bottiani et al., 2016). Students with a suspension record are five times more likely to drop out of school. In contrast, students' suspension through disciplinary action were nearly three times more likely to have juvenile justice contacts in the following year (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018).

There seems to be an increasingly volatile issue in the education sector because of the increasing disproportionate penalty that hurts the youth by increasing their chances of juvenile criminal cases (Mallett, 2016). For example, the Ontario Human Rights Commission explained that zero-tolerance is neither a policy nor a program but a practice. It establishes a specific range of consequences for an infraction and the consistent application of that consequence if an act has a definite and inevitable result in any disciplinary situation by practicing zero-tolerance ("Zero-Tolerance Policies and School to Prison Pipeline," 2018).

From 2000 to 2015, Ontario's education policy has changed from the ZTP that began to take shape around 2004 to the progressive discipline approach in 2007, combining punitive and

proactive approaches (Bailey, 2015). Bailey explained that the increased risk of school social, emotional, and physical discriminatory environment has expanded to more policy approaches such as intense surveillance that results in distrust and disproportionate punishment of minority students. In 2009, reports on school violence moved to adopt the Keeping our Kids Safe at School Act (SSA) strategy but establishing a more proactive vision of action plan for accepting schools in 2012 (Bailey, 2015). The Ontario Government is committed to treating attacks on students from equality-seeking communities seriously. For example, in 2013, the Ontario Ministry of Education developed a model bullying prevention plan to tackle bias-based attacks through climate surveys offering responses beyond one-off punishments, such as suspensions (Bailey, 2015). In 2015, the Ontario Government also initiated a bold and controversial curriculum reform to tackle sexuality, gender identity, and media stereotypes (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018). Students' misbehaviors and physical violence as the heart of the problem could result from poverty, racism, homophobia, social and emotional oppression from students, teachers, principals, and staff from a community that claims to be equal in diversity (Puckett, Graves, & Sutton, 2019). In Ontario, Canada, the Ministry of Education revealed a tremendous increase in school suspension reports for young students' harsh punishment (Suspension and expulsion facts, 2016-2017; 2019). This study applied the methodology such as interviews, a focus group, and documentation from the philosophical assumptions that disproportionality in suspension is at significantly higher rates for minority students than non-minority students, resulting in the school-to-prison pipeline (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018).

The philosophical assumptions for this study are a combination of epistemological and axiological aspects. Axiological philosophies are the value of (theory) the Black identity

development theory, which involves a simultaneous awareness process for Black people to identify and internalize positive thoughts (Ritchey, 2014). While epistemological philosophy is the theory of knowledge that distinguishes belief from opinion, the belief that Ontario education policies have disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students, this belief would make the best foundation for an interpretive framework construction, such as reviewing the theories to understand participants' life experiences. Yin (2014) explained that for a researcher to gain a high-quality case study, the research needs to link theory and practice to present the related cases' in-depth and historical significance within a practical level. As a school administrator, working on this case study research would pave the way to compare other research interpretive frameworks to reveal the relationship between the researcher's frames and philosophical beliefs.

The participatory paradigm that will guide this study is that the school administrators perceive that policies in Ontario district school boards have disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. The participatory paradigm is a concept in social science theories derived from qualitative research tradition that treats people as research participants rather than research subjects (Senabre, Ferran-Ferrer, & Perelló, 2018). Barley and Russell (2019) also described the participatory paradigm as a mutual pattern of concepts, values, methods, and action research with people rather than researching people. This study applied personal knowledge or understanding of disproportionate practices and philosophical assumptions to guide actions throughout this case study. This study chose the participatory paradigm because it allows the understanding of people's perspectives based on the social reality of finding a solution to a problem to ensure desirable change (Barley & Russell, 2019). This study focused on learning from the participants' experiences without sharing bias, as it can

provide the required opportunity to articulate a motivation for conducting this case study (Yin, 2014). This study chose a participatory paradigm to help tackle social settings' complexity and promote a social dialogue culture that could influence policy to change attitude (Senabre et al., 2018).

Problem Statement

The problem is that there is disproportionality in school suspension discipline, affecting minority students at significantly higher rates than non-minority students (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018). For example, the Ontario Ministry of Education revealed the tremendous increase in a school suspension report for young students' harsh punishment ("Suspension and Expulsion Facts, 2016-2017"; 2019). The Ministry of Education statement in Ontario has shown significant evidence of the legal entanglement involved in the disproportionate students' suspension, increasing the chances of juvenile criminal cases. As of 2011 to 2012 and 2015 to 2016, Toronto public schools suspended over 300 male students, of which 48% of these students were Black, and 10% of students were White (Naccarato, 2017). Most of the students suspended because of minor issues are at risk of committing more crimes because of the disruption that often becomes students' permanent departure from the education system (Yang et al., 2019). Prolonged periods of suspension or severe penalty of expulsion could cause students to drop out of school and lose the protective elements of education (Bottiani et al., 2016). Students with a suspension record are five times more likely to drop out of school, while students suspended through disciplinary action were nearly three times more likely to have a juvenile justice contact in the following year (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to describe the perspectives of school administrators in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. Creswell (2018) explained that collaborating with the participants is necessary to get quality data, and the research cooperation demands maintaining participants' confidentiality. This study purposefully sampled school administrators to reflect the school districts with any suspension within three to five years in Ontario, Canada. Ritchey (2014) discussed the Black identity development theory, which involves a simultaneous awareness process for Black people to identify and internalize positive thoughts. Researchers can apply this theory to observe and determine what behaviors to learn and influence personal, behavioral, and environmental factors, which refers to teachers and administrators when handling students' behavior and eliminating the ZTP's negative influence on the teacher-student relationship in the classroom.

Significance of the Study

This qualitative case study focuses on school administrators' perceptions of Ontario's policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. This study is similar to the increasing students' suspension rate, demanding that educational leaders, policymakers, and people working in the education sector understand human behaviors, different learning methods, and how to interact or implement disciplinary policy within the school environment (Ritchey, 2014). People working in the education sector need to value the Black identity development theory by involving a simultaneous awareness process for minority students to identify and internalize positive thoughts (Ritchey, 2014). Policymakers and educational leaders need to understand the factors impacting the continued

disproportionality in student discipline, with minority students' suspension at significantly higher rates than non-minority students (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018). For example, suspensions prevent students from accessing the educational, social, emotional, and psychological supports needed to succeed; prolonged OSS may increase the student risk of subsequent contact with the juvenile justice system (Bottiani et al., 2017). Educational leaders need to acknowledge the administrators' perspectives on the best approach, philosophy, and strategies employed to decrease disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. Black students, the indigenous, and students with disabilities are under-served in Ontario school boards because of the increasing suspension rate in these populations (Bailey, 2015). There are many reasons for Ontario's transition from the ZTP to the progressive discipline approach to promoting a safe and accepting learning environment by reducing school dropouts and increasing graduation rates (Winton, 2012). However, the underlying penalty suspension model associated with the first ZTP remains in the Education Act, including allowing individual boards to list the mandatory suspension infractions resulting in disparate negative impacts on equality-seeking communities (Bailey, 2015). For example, school administrators seem to have been implementing a disproportionate penalty of suspension and expulsion that could be hurting young minority students by increasing the chances of juvenile criminal cases (Puckett et al., 2019).

Research Questions

As a qualitative research, this study applies the following research questions to focus on the purpose of the study: to understand school administrators' perceptions of policies addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students, especially for

the Ontario district school boards in Canada. These research questions serve as a guide for this case study:

Central Research Question

What are school administrators' perspectives on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students in Ontario?

Sub Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are administrators' perspectives on implementing a ZTP in Ontario schools on disproportionality?

Educational administrators need to collaborate with different organizations within the broader public system to increase students' suspension from the school to the prison pipeline (Yang et al., 2019).

Research Question 2: What are the administrators' perspectives on current policy addressing student discipline and disproportionality in Ontario schools?

Ontario school administrators need to address the disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates that hurt the youth by increasing their chances of juvenile criminal cases (Mallett, 2016; Nation et al., 2016; Reimer, 2018).

Research Question 3: What factors do administrators in Ontario consider when addressing student discipline in their schools?

Students with low-income families' backgrounds are five times more likely to dropout of high school than middle-income students and six times more likely than high-income peers (Griffin et al., 2016).

Research Question 4: What alternatives to zero-tolerance do administrators in Ontario recommend addressing student discipline and reduce disproportionality rates?

Addressing the increasing school suspension to reduce the disproportionate rate is urgently needed to focus on behavioral health because two-thirds of youths in the juvenile justice system have psychological disorders based on the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) (Heilbrun et al., 2017). Heilbrun et al. clarified that the SIM involves *five-interception points* from legal prosecution into rehabilitation-oriented alternatives for adults (Heilbrun et al., 2017).

Definitions

1. *Crime-Producing Needs*-Crime-Producing Needs (CPN) are factors that promote antisocial behavior, such as attitudes, values, and beliefs (Bottiani et al., 2016).

2. *Every Student Succeeds Act* - Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was established by President Barack Obama in December 2015 as a reauthorization law for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to meet students' college and career preparation needs (Mcintosh et al., 2018).

3. *Safe School Act* - Safe School Act (SSA) was established in September 2001, allowing school administrators to suspend and expel students to eliminate volatile issues such as drug abuse and gun violence to achieve a healthy learning environment (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018).

4. *Inside-School-Suspension*- Inside School Suspension (ISS) is a punishment when a student violates a disciplinary policy from the school; the administrators decide to stop the student from attending any school function for some time, depending on the school system (Bush et al., 2016).

5. *Out-of-school suspension* - Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) is a term used for truancy infractions to suspend students who would not want to attend school because of the illustrative inherent problems ZTP (Kalvesmaki, & Tulman, 2017).

6. *Restorative practices*- Restorative practices are a new approach to strengthening relationships between students and educational leaders, targeting social connections with communities when implementing restorative practices to replace any disciplinary policy (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018).

7. *Expulsion*- Expulsion is a severe penalty that the school administration gives to a student that violates the school policy. The penalty restricts such students from attending nor participates in any school function for over ten days, depending on the school system (Kalvesmaki, & Tulman, 2017).

8. *School-to-prison pipeline*- School-to-prison pipeline (STPP) is a process that funnels students out of school into the juvenile justice system (Tyner, 2017). Tyner explained that students face harsh consequences for their negative behaviors for disciplinary reasons, increasing the chances of encountering law enforcement inside and outside of schools, thus ruining the students' academic records for future reference (Tyner, 2017).

Summary

The Ontario Board of Education adopted an SSA to discipline students in schools as a Safe Schools Policy on Violence and Weapons (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018). This SSA was to eliminate volatile issues such as drug abuse and gun violence to achieve a healthy learning environment; however, there seems to be an increasingly volatile issue in the education sector (Nation, Henderson, & Monell, 2016). In Ontario, Canada, the Ministry of Education revealed a tremendous increase in school suspension reports for young students' harsh punishment (Suspension and expulsion facts, 2016-2017; 2019). The purpose of this case study qualitative approach was to describe school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for

minority students. Despite ongoing efforts to address, the problem is that there remains disproportionality in student discipline, with minority students' suspension at significantly higher rates than non-minority students (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018).

In conclusion, this study intends to understand school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students through the research questions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The Safe School Act's establishment was to eliminate volatile issues such as drug abuse and gun violence; however, there seems to be an increasing issue in the education sector (Nation et al., 2016). Despite eliminating Zero-Tolerance Policies (ZTP) in Ontario, Canada, minority students continue to get suspended at higher rates than their peers (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018). The purpose of this case study qualitative approach was to describe school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. The problem is that there is disproportionality in school suspension discipline, affecting minority students at significantly higher rates than non-minority students (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018). School suspension boosts the risk of committing more crimes because of the disruption that often becomes students' permanent departure from the education system (Yang et al., 2019). Prolonged periods of students' suspension could encourage school dropout (Bottiani et al., 2016). Students with a suspension record are more likely to drop out of school and fall into the juvenile justice system (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). The Black identity development theory is the theoretical foundation of this study with related case studies. The literature review examines the minority students' experience within the school, where there is a diversity of culture. This study focuses on a qualitative case study approach to address the issues that disproportionality in student discipline with minority student's suspension at significantly higher rates than non-minority students promote drop out of school in a pattern of institutional racism (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

This qualitative case study describes school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. It is necessary to make the best foundation for an interpretive framework construction by reviewing Black identity development theory related to the participants' life experiences to understand the school administrator's perception in this study (Yin, 2014). For a researcher to gain a high-quality case study, the research needs to link theory and practice to the present in-depth of the related cases and the historical significance within a practical level. As a school administrator, working on this case study research would pave the way to compare other research interpretive frameworks to reveal the relationship between the researcher's frames and philosophical beliefs (Yin, 2014). The Black identity development theory is the foundation and guide to this qualitative case study.

Black Identity Development Theory

The Black identity development theory involves a simultaneous awareness process for Black people to identify and internalize positive thoughts (Ritchey, 2014). The positive thinking developed from this process becomes a selfless one that extends to an awareness of other racial groups and not only about themselves as a Black person, creating an equal society when everyone acknowledges the value of cultural diversity. "Bakari (1997) argued that predominantly White institutions (PWIs) sometimes neglect to address the challenges across cultural student development for Black students" (cited in Ritchey, 2014, p. 101). Ritchey explained that Black identity development involves Black people's simultaneous steps to internalize positive thoughts about other racial groups. Ritchey (2014) outlined some questions that guided the research, such as how Black immigrant and indigenous students perceive diversity on campus (structural

difference)? How do minority students describe their interactions with different students from racial backgrounds (behavioral climate)?

Ritchey (2014) discussed Cross's (1971) study on nigrescence theory in the study as Black identity development theory by reviewing subsequent studies relating to the original nigrescence theory and the stages of identifying development among Black students in higher education. The Black identity development theory has a model of five sectors with three patterns of healthy Black identity development (Ritchey, 2014). Ritchey explained that the models proposed a process of change as an identity for Negro-to-Black conversion experience, which includes a re-socializing experience. The socialization transforms a preexisting identity into a more Afro-centric character, while the Black identity development theory passes through several processes and stages (Ritchey, 2014). "Bakari (1997) argued that PWIs rarely meet the challenges of cross-cultural student development for Black students" (cited in Ritchey, 2014, p. 101). The five-stage Black identity development theory Model as follows:

Stage 1: the pre-encounter reveals an individual's attitudes are ranging from low salience to race neutrality then to anti-Black depicting the person's identity that needs changing.

Stage 2: the encounter at this stage, some Black people are anti-Blacks, loathing other Blacks while they feel isolated from their Black community as potential people(Ritchey, 2014). The anti-Black people often forget that they grew up with White westernized ideologies embedded in their culture (Cross, 1991). Black people at the encounter stage shatter the relevance of their ideology and worldview while others provide some hint of direction for re-socialization (Cross, 1991). There are two steps in the encounter stage: encountering where an event happens sharpening how individuals view their race or individual personality that acts because of the event that evoked that perception (Ritchey, 2014).

Stage 3: the immersion emersion, Black people shed their historical worldview by constructing a new reference frame about their race, and such individual has not changed yet but is willing to change (Cross, 1991). The theorist explained that the immersion stage is a powerful dominating sensation by rage, guilt, and a consistent sense of pride, describing identity's vortex to change (Ritchey, 2014). A sense of rage at this stage can be a catalyst for Black students to seek out history, art, and music representing the new culture (Cross, 1991). Cross (1991) explained that "a paradox conversion is that while rebelling against the larger society, the new convert may willingly conform to the demands for Black organizations" (p. 205). If Blacks accept being Black, there will be an assumption of psychologically healthy with high self-esteem, but Blacks who accept the values of White society and neglect their value suffer from self-hatred and low self-esteem (Cross, 1991). The theorist stated that Black people are at a disadvantage through societal constructions of overt and covert forms of institutionalized racism (Ritchey, 2014).

Stage 4 and 5: the internalization and internalization-commitment, the habituation, and internalization of the new personality (Cross, 1991). Cross explained that these stages are the transitioning period of individuals facing a new identity because they move away from how others view their personality to how they view themselves. Cross (1991) mentioned that Black people need to think critically about their newfound racial identity to embrace being Black and self-love exuded into the universe. The Internalization-Commitment Stage combines internalization, not repeating internalization in a differential look (Cross, 1991). The Black identity development theory model is the ultimate transformation of someone achieving a racial identity because racism, domination, and privilege are intertwined into society resulting in race-related issues at the educational, individual, and institutional levels (Ritchey, 2014). Also,

Ritchey explained that healthy racial identity development is progressive through a series of linear stages when individuals eliminate their thoughts, feelings, and other Blacks idealizing whites' beliefs.

Griffin et al. (2016) reviewed other studies and reported that students of color encounter more racism than their White peers; the report showed "students' perception of racism and discrimination on their campuses" (p. 34). Black students experience alienation because of racial prejudice and discrimination. Carla (2017) reported that minority students experienced racism or an encounter with unfriendly stares or offensive remarks from White students and the faculty (as cited in Griffin et al., 2016). For example, many racial and ethnic minority students are either subverting their identity to get involved in the mainstream culture as they struggle to maintain a cultural connection to their racial identity (Griffin et al., 2016). Griffen et al. suggested that minority students must connect with others through a students' association or a safer space to seek support to succeed outside of the classroom.

Related Literature

The Ontario Ministry of Education established policies and practices for safe learning environments to eliminate volatile issues such as gun violence and drug abuse; however, there seems disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018). Educational leaders will benefit from this study by reviewing school administrators' perspectives on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students (Puckett et al., 2019). School suspension increases students' risk of committing more crimes because of the disruption from learning that often becomes their permanent departure from the education system (Yang et al., 2019). Also, prolonged periods of suspension encourage students to drop out of school, and such

students are more likely to have juvenile justice contact in the following year (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). Bottiani reveals that out-of-school suspension affects student equity intervention to gain social, emotional, and psychological support, increasing chances of contact with the juvenile justice system (Bottiani et al., 2017). It is necessary to lay the best foundation for an interpretive framework construction by reviewing different theories and related literature to understand life experiences to reveal the relationship between the researcher's philosophical beliefs (Yin, 2014). Also, Yin explained that qualitative studies like this need to link theory and practice to present the related cases' in-depth and historical significance within a practical level. Here is the relevant literature to understand the developing topics and how to fill the study field gap.

School Suspension Disciplinary Policy

Implementing the Safe School Act (SSA) was to eliminate drug abuse and gun violence to achieve a healthy learning environment; however, there seems to be an increasingly volatile issue in the education sector (Nation et al., 2016). School administrators seem to have been implementing a disproportionate penalty that increases the student's chances of juvenile criminal cases with a suspension penalty (Puckett et al., 2019). The penalty of suspension contributes to racial and gender disparities in school, which disrupts the student's opportunity to learn when pulled out of school, thus increasing juvenile justice crimes (Aarthun & Yan, 2015). Lack of racial diversity and stereotypes within the school environment results in criminalization behavior because teachers may face challenges to communicate with students virtually outside of their race or gender (George et al., 2016). George et al. explained that if there is racial bias, there are often criminal charges that result in the student's suspension. The OSS could cause permanent departure that forces students to drop out of the school system (Bottiani et al., 2016). Students

with a suspension record are five times more likely to drop out of school, while students

suspended through disciplinary action were nearly three times more likely to have a juvenile

justice contact in the following year (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018).

Wallace (2017) examined the intersection of race, gender, and the school-to-prison

pipeline in a case study investigating the impact of exclusionary discipline on minority

girls. The study's purpose was to understand how the disproportionate implementation of

discipline policies affects minority girls and increases their chances in the criminal justice system

(Wallace, 2017). Wallace collected research data through semi-structured interviews and surveys

from eight minority women (ages 20-30) who experienced a suspension penalty. Also, Wallace

reviewed case study data reports of school discipline and juvenile justice from the Virginia

Department of Education and Office of Juvenile Justice. The research report showed that

teachers assume minority girls are loud, assertive, and aggressive, so the school principals

employed school resource officers or police to intervene in the discipline (Wallace, 2017).

Wallace mentioned that the pipeline consumes minorities and students with disabilities from

school suspicion more than their peers' justice system. Wallace (2017) reviewed case studies

from the US Department of Education Civil Rights Office, National Women's Law Center, The

Virginia Department of Education, and Justice Policy Institute revealing that 49% of school

referrals to law enforcement are minority students. Wallace (2017) concluded that stereotypes,

institutional racism, and implicit bias encourage the school-to-prison pipeline.

Also, Wallace (2017) reviewed literature that discussed school administrators'

perceptions regarding the impact of a ZTP on the increasing disproportionate student suspension

that may result in the school-to-prison pipeline. School administrators responded that there was

no alternative policy to discipline violent behaviors because minority students are grounded in

cultural norms beyond public educators' control (Wallace, 2017). Wallace showed evidence that Black students and students with disabilities receive disproportionately treatment as bad students before entering their classrooms. Wallace (2017) suggested that school administrators can prevent the school-to-prison pipeline from the classroom by training teachers to correct and tolerate students' behaviors rather than punishing and pushing students out of the classroom. For example, school administrators need to encourage teacher-to-student interaction through social and academic integration. Wallace (2017) explained that teachers lack patience and tolerance with students, which involves the justice system for cases like students talking back to a teacher and truancy that consists of a trip to the principal's office, followed by detention. The ZTP has contributed to the classroom's unnecessary criminalization that strips students of the opportunity to learn (Aarthun & Yan, 2015). Out of the classroom leads to punishments, while OSS increasingly causes disruption that often becomes the permanent departure that forces students to drop out of school, and a trip to the police station contributes to the pipeline (Bottiani et al., 2016). School suspension results in academic failure, substance abuse, mental health problems, gang activity, and chances of students' involvement with the justice system (Griffin et al., 2016). Minority students face racism, classroom bias, perjured testimony, prosecutorial bias, and misconduct in crimes of economic necessity that result in the arrest and incarceration of school dropouts (McGrew, 2016). Minority students are mostly from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and are overrepresented in the justice system because they are threats to society's wealthier members (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). Schools and the prison pipelines are interconnected parts of the political economy because of racial discipline disparities that have shaped the perceptions of who is valued, capable, safe, and dangerous in the society (McGrew, 2016). Establishing a safe school act eliminates volatile issues such as drug abuse and gun violence, which encourages

police presence at schools with harsh tactics such as physical restraint to discourage students (Nation et al., 2016). However, students experience excessive contact with law enforcement, increasing criminal activity, and a less favorable school climate (Harris & Linder, 2018). Inviting police officers into schools does appear to change the school environment's dynamics, which increases the chances of students' involvement with the justice system for minor offenses that happen within the school grounds (Aarthun & Yan, 2015). Aarthun and Yan suggested that school administrators could restrict the police officers outside the school environment and involve them only to disrupt drug markets or make arrests for serious violent offenses.

Racial Disparities in the Disciplinary Policy

There is an increasingly volatile issue in the education sector after establishing a safe school act until today. Simultaneously, students face disruptive behavior's consequences to understand their actions (Harris & Linder, 2018). Harris and Linder explained that ZTP is ineffective because it ruins students' lives, burdens the justice system, and creates more work because the policies do worse than right the disruptive behavior. For example, there is an increasing school dropout rate compared to a student's graduation for a better life and a cumulative victimization process as a pushout mechanism (Harris & Linder, 2018). Another evidence of the negative impact of ZTP implementation in the school system is the increasing suspension of minority males exposed to the juvenile justice system (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015). Cuellar and Markowitz found an increasing number of juveniles in the justice system compared to youth-related OSS report consequential to offending behavior. Cuellar and Markowitz (2015) examined the OSS cases, which showed the disproportionate number of youths committing offensive behavior while at school. Cuellar and Markowitz reported that there are biased based arrests for offenses identical to OSS cases. Cuellar and Markowitz (2015)

pointed out that 85% of juvenile arrests were from offenses committed outside the school, which are more severe than in-school crimes. Cuellar and Markowitz focused on evaluating the challenges that school administrators face when designing and implementing disciplinary policies to reduce violence. Cuellar and Markowitz (2015) investigated youths facing suspension challenges by collecting data from their school district and a juvenile justice system using a MANOVA statistical analysis. Cuellar and Markowitz's purpose of the study was to determine if school suspension policies contribute to the increasing number of youth criminal cases concerning the school-to-prison pipeline. School administrators and teachers can tackle any behavioral issues by providing the necessary School Resource Officers (SROs) to help restructure poor behavior for school safety and security, listen, and know and understand students' stories before releasing suspension penalty (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015). Cuellar and Markowitz explained that there could be reasons for students misbehaving in class because such students could be seeking the teacher's attention to share the trauma they face at home. Also, Cuellar and Markowitz (2015) discussed that educational administrators need to evaluate their decisions to discipline students' disorderly conduct and disrespect before involving law enforcement because excess discipline can ruin the students, teachers, and the life of the communities.

The school with applied excessive discipline, such as suspension, is more unsafe than schools that have developed rich cultures to support or restore students' dignity with evidence-based discipline practices (Cummings & Bain, 2017). Cummings and Bain explained that school administrators need to use radical reform to build an equal learning environment and tackle institutional racism by dedicating time to training teachers to deal with problematic children that result in the school-to-prison pipeline. Policymakers, educators, and juvenile justice professions

are responsible for tackling the problems in their local communities by identifying necessary changes, such as focusing on inclusion and rehabilitation for the youth to gain their educational rights (Mallett, 2017). For example, educators need to learn the required skills and training to evaluate students' behavioral issues while involving the teachers, students, parents, and the community to organize a behavioral plan with school and community resources (Cummings & Bain, 2017). Cummings and Bain discussed that there could be challenges if the school is overpopulated, lacking funds, and needed resources, especially for the impoverished community. School administrators and teachers' training requires functional rehabilitation models to undo the psychological, physical, and material damage that the White supremacist capitalist incurred on minority children (Miguel & Gargano, 2017). There is a need for educators to apply the best approach to tackle behavioral and emotional issues in their school to end the increasing social, economic, and health disparities to plague marginalized communities (Cummings & Bain, 2017).

The Effect of Disproportion on School-to-prison-pipeline

A social media video in October 2015 showed a school resource officer throwing a 16-year-old minority female student across the classroom in a South Carolina high school (Aarthun & Yan, 2015). Aarthun and Yan reported that the minority female student refused to put away her cell phone a refused to leave the classroom when the teacher and administrator on duty asked her. In South Carolina, high school administrators gave the minority female student another criminal charge for disturbing classmates (Aarthun & Yan, 2015). Aarthun and Yan explained that the social media video from this South Carolina high school drew public attention, revealing a school administrator's problem employing a police officer as a school resource to discipline students' minor misbehavior, resulting in criminal charges. George et al. (2016) explained that such criminal charges from the school result in student suspension, which increases the student's

chances of committing more crimes. Students with a suspension record are five times more likely to drop out of school, while students suspended through disciplinary action were nearly three times more likely to have a juvenile justice contact in the following year (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). Since the establishment of ZTP within the past 30 years in the schools, there has been an increasingly disproportionate number of Latino and Black youth school suspension rates and a higher dropout (Nation et al., 2016). Minority male students are a minority among a diversity of students in their school's disciplinary policy, and the penalty is a consistent increase of documented school suspension (George et al., 2016). Conclusion: there is a lack of inclusion and social equity in the school for minority students among students' diversity (Harris & Linder, 2018). For example, the increase in the gap between White and Hispanic graduation rates by 10%, while that of the White graduation rate and minority increased to 6% (Stout, Archie, Cross, & Carman, 2018).

Bottiani et al. (2017) examined 58 schools with a sample of 19,726 in Maryland, focusing on how Black and White persevere to complete the study gap in schools drop out. Bottiani et al.'s reports showed 7,064 White students' dropout and 12,622 for Black students. The assessment aimed to find adjustment problems through stratified analysis of White and minority students because of the increasing school dropout associated with perceived school disproportion and integration. Bottiani et al. (2017) found that student perseverance to complete study gaps were associated with Black students' perceptions of less school disparity ($\gamma=-.54$, $p < .001$), less academic integration ($\gamma=.50$, $p < .001$), and increased social integration ($\gamma=.77$, $p < .001$). Bottiani et al. (2017) explained the implications of academic diversity in school dropouts, which differ by race in their research findings. Black students account for 28% of all juvenile justice arrests, 35% of waived criminal court, and 58% of admitted adult prisons (Bottiani et al., 2017).

Black students experience social injustice, especially males, gay, or transgender students who are vulnerable because of community-based characteristics (George et al., 2016). Black students reported racism in the dominant culture, which identifies the power structures from the White privilege and supremacy that perpetuates the marginalization of minority students (Patton et al., 2019). For example, some students experience maltreatment, victimization, neglect, physical or sexual abuse having a wide range of harmful outcomes and increases the risk of further problems (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018).

School-to-Prison-Pipeline

In the 1980s, US President Ronald Reagan established federal policies for schools safe learning environments to eliminate volatile school issues such as drug abuse and gun violence; however, there seems to be an increasingly volatile issue in the education sector (Nation et al., 2016). The federal policy for school safety is now a systematic funneling of disadvantaged youth out of schools and into the criminal justice system (Harris & Linder, 2018). In 1994, President Clinton established the Gun-Free Schools Act to demand that schools expel any student carrying a gun while on school property (George et al., 2016). George et al. explained a release of federal funding to the state's compliance with this Act for schools to adopt a ZTP on firearms. After Columbine's school massacre in Colorado that claimed 12 people's lives and injured 24 students in mass shootings, the ZTP gained momentum for safer schools (Griffin et al., 2016). In 2001, US President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in demand that schools refer to all violations of the ZTP to the juvenile justice system (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). Bhopal and Chapman discussed that NCLB's implementation had increased students' suspension for schools to demand obedience and compliance, including encouraging students with poor academic

performance to drop out of the study. Some schools prolong or increase suspensions to keep students with poor academic performance at home (Harris & Linder, 2018).

The US federal policies for schools' safe learning environments to eliminate volatile issues paved the way for many states to initiate their ZTP, such as involving the police officers to arrest and incarcerate students to violate school policies in the US (Aarthun & Yan, 2015). School administrators perceive that a ZTP creates no room for students to misbehave, disobey, disrespect, disrupt, or mistake, such as truancy within the school environment, resulting in suspensions for minor infractions (Nation et al., 2016). Middle and high American schools initiated over 46,000 School Resource Officers (SRO) for safety against mass shootings (Aarthun & Yan, 2015). In 2005, public schools had 68% of SRO involving police officers, surveillance cameras, metal detectors, locker searches, and drug-sniffing dogs (Harris & Linder, 2018).

The SRO practice affects public schools because of the increasing number of youth arrests and the high risk of students' involvement with the juvenile criminal justice system (Nation et al., 2016). Implementing the ZTP has been responsible for changes such as security against gangs, technology, personnel, which also influences profiling, compromises the balance between schools and the justice system because of the increasing juvenile referrals for minor infractions (Harris & Linder, 2018). The presence of the SROs may be daunting in some schools as an alternative measure to keep students out of crime (Lynch, 2017). The goal of placing SROs inside schools was to prevent crime for safety against gangs or more mass school shootings, but SRO contributes to exposing the school children to the justice system for minor reasons (Nation et al., 2016). Suppose the Ontario district school board, such as TDSB's policies addressing disproportionality in student discipline practices SRO's presence from US federal policies for

schools' safe learning environment in their education system. In that case, this practice could promote suspension rates for minority students.

Addressing the Issues with Social Inequality in the Schools

There are gaps in the literature for lack of inclusion and social equity for students of color among diverse cultures in the schools (Harris & Linder, 2018). For example, there are gaps between Whites and Hispanic graduation rates by 10% in the US school, while that of the Whites and Blacks increased to 6% from 1975 to 2010 (Stout et al., 2018). Also, student enrollment is becoming ethnically diverse. However, the enrolment rate remains high for White or Caucasian students (Stout et al., 2018). Educational administrators could use a social action approach to resolve police brutality issues within the learning community (Cummings & Bain, 2017). Cummings and Bain outlined examples that explained how faculties could facilitate, mentor, and guide the students through the steps of analyzing their own beliefs while applying new-gained knowledge. Another step in this social action approach of practicing letter writing in English class and addressing the local Police Chief is to discuss better collaboration methods between the citizens and the police (Cummings & Bain, 2017). In this letter writing, the students would address the issues concerning their learning community and allow them (students) to decide what they want to do to resolve the identified problem (Stout et al., 2018).

The documented suspension penalty over-represents minority male students from poor economic backgrounds during the past three decades (Cummings & Bain, 2017). The SSA could be targeting only minority and disadvantaged students by leaving residual effects that span generations (Harris & Linder, 2018). The policy criminalizes minority male students more than the other ethnicity, thereby depriving them of education's fundamental human rights (Bottiani et al., 2016). Bottiani et al. examined the increasing suspension rate from 1.5 million to 3 million in

72,000 schools; minorities are 18% of the student population but represented 46% of the total

suspension from the 1970s to the 2009-2010 school year. Puckett et al. (2019) investigated

similar statistics that minority male students are considered underprivileged, disabled, mentally

ill, and having low academic performance and behavioral challenges among their peers. Puckett

et al. explained a disproportionate representation of minorities and disadvantaged students in the

school discipline penalty because their educational administrators perceive such students as unfit

to school norms. Educational administrators seem to lack the skills to effectively support

students' behavior by labeling the dangerous or troublemakers unfit to the school's social and

behavioral norms (Rocque & Snellings, 2017). The school administrators placed the unfit

minority students from low economic families and those with poor academic experience in the

list of offenders for the school discipline policy to expose these students to the justice system

(Cummings & Bain, 2017). Most educational administrators neglect to address the exclusion of

students of color from receiving a proper education since the implementation of ZTP has been

implemented in the US (Bottiani et al., 2016). Minority and Latino students receive harsh

punishment with expulsions and suspensions more than White peers because of social inequality

((Harris & Linder, 2018).

Effects of School to Prison Pipeline on the Community

The SSA's establishment was to eliminate drug abuse and gun violence, but instead,

there is an increasingly volatile issue in the education sector (Nation et al., 2016). School

administrators have been implementing a disproportionate penalty that hurts young students by

increasing the chances of juvenile criminal cases (Puckett et al., 2019). Puckett et al. explained

that most school administrators use SRO as standard tools for schools to demand obedience and

compliance from students, resulting in the increasing suspension rate. Most of the cases that

students violate the school policy are minor discipline infractions that the teacher should typically handle or a visit to the principal's office, but with SRO minor offense becomes criminal justice issues (Rocque & Snellings, 2017). Rocque and Snellings explained that most educational administrators need to train their teachers to gain classroom management skills to tolerate students' behavior rather than depriving them of their education right by sending them out of the classroom for minor offenses. The SRO continuously channels minority students down to the justice system, which creates an unsafe learning environment and unhealthy community because involving the justice system ruins students' lives, affecting their families and communities by systematically breaking bonds (Rocque & Snellings, 2017). Rocque and Snellings explained that minority students receive criminal charges while still in high school and changed their attitude by making them more susceptible to risky behavior. The community needs to help the schools nurture students who are out of school by taking responsibility for the nation to care for the youth while still maturing and developing to be a universal fit (Bush, Haygood, & Vincent, 2016). Bush et al. recommended the community's need to keep suspended students out of crime because prisons spawn a generation of future prisoners, creating over two million children with at least one incarcerated parent that could end up in prison. The SRO contributes to the prison crisis by criminalizing youth for minor school infractions, resulting in half of the incarcerated individuals entering the justice system without a high school diploma (Berlowitz, Frye & Jette, 2017).

The ZTP has been responsible for the compromised balance between education and law enforcement because of the growing number of juvenile referrals for minor infractions (Bush et al., 2016). The school-to-prison pipeline has become an uncontrollable phenomenon in the American education system because the US National Center for Education Statistics released

46,000 SRO patrolling American schools to prevent crime and have the responsibility of keeping schools safe (Rocque & Snellings, 2017). The SROs engage in behaviors that may contribute to the OSS to the juvenile justice system for minor reasons making the presence of the SROs a daunting experience for students (Aarthun & Yan, 2015). The implementation of SROs inside schools was to seek alternative measures to keep students from the juvenile justice system, but the reverse is the case (Lynch, 2017).

Intervention Techniques to Reverse School-to-Prison-Pipeline

Educational administrators could prevent students from entering the juvenile justice system through academic and social integration to create an equal learning environment (Bush et al., 2016). Bush et al. explained that the school needs to build a mutual relationship of trust, caring, and a positive attitude to prevent or tackle students' behavioral issues. There are techniques that the school administrators could apply to retain students in their school rather than an out-of-school suspension that could leave students susceptible to the justice system (Warikoo & de Novais, 2015). Warikoo and de Novais pointed out that school administrators can request government intervention to restructure the policies increasing students' numbers to the justice system. Vue, Haslerig, and Allen (2017) recommended that schools need to establish programs that train teachers to build positive learning environments for students, which is valuable in reversing the numbers of students referred to SRO. For example, school administrators need to increase professional subject matter knowledge through specialized methods associated with positive student outcomes (Bush et al., 2016). Bush et al. also recommend that schools need to involve their community for support, such as using the local community centers for students' recreational programs as additional outlets to improve leadership skills. Involving the community, such as the parents, teachers, libraries, boosters, service clubs, youth development

organizations, and faith groups in educational issues could eliminate the school from the juvenile justice system (Warikoo & de Novais, 2015). Intervention techniques to bring students back to school is the Pretrial Diversion (PTD) program, such as youth referral by a judge, ongoing supervision from the justice system, monthly progress reports, payment of restitution, and discharge from the justice system (Tyner, 2017). Involving police officers to handle minor students' misbehaviors with the intervention techniques could help youths learn how to navigate severe development stages for changes (Berlowitz et al., 2017). Berlowitz et al. suggested that educational administrators could establish more programs that the school will collaborate with the community to teach the youth leadership and decision-making skills for changes in the current failing system.

Influence of ZTP on School-to-Prison-Pipeline

Students entering the gateway to juvenile imprisonment begin with a classroom referral to the courtroom (Tyner, 2017). Tyner explained that the school-to-prison pipeline from the legal defense fund encourages students out of school and into the streets. Tyner also revealed that the students end up in the juvenile correction system, known as the school-to-prison pipeline that deprives children and youth of meaningful opportunities for education, future employment, and participation in our democracy. Tyner (2017) exposed the emergence of school-to-prison-pipeline trends in school disciplinary practices and ZTP. As a school administrator, it is challenging to dismantle the pipeline and create new pipelines to succeed for all children. However, Tyner suggested that educational administrators undertake the endeavor; it was necessary to know the contemporary civil rights issue. Then, examine the landscape of America's classrooms and the juvenile justice system because the implications that adhere to the argument

of race-conscious policies and affirmative action policies consider race as the critical factor in student admissions requirements (Vue, Haslerig, & Allen, 2017).

The school-to-prison pipeline is a relatively recent phenomenon identified by researchers as a link between adverse school outcomes, discipline, and involvement in the justice system (Rocque & Snellings, 2017). Rocque and Snellings' purpose of their study was to critically examine the School-to-prison-pipeline on race and discipline as an extension of the at-risk society that has emerged in the last twenty to thirty years. After reviewing research, theory, and remaining puzzles concerning the school-to-prison pipeline, Rocque and Snellings (2017) found out that education and penal policy changes have converged to increase students' chances have not succeeded in school may become trapped in the criminal justice system. Rocque and Snellings claimed that the two systems' causal link is not clear; however, there could be a high risk present in both arenas. For example, the school disciplinary policy revealed racial disparities in the criminal justice system that adequately explained. Rocque and Snellings (2017) concluded a need for further research to understand more relationships between a school administrator and penal policies, educational outcomes, and involvement with the criminal justice system. Racial disparities exist and increase the numbers of those impacted by exclusionary discipline, including adverse educational outcomes (Rocque & Snellings, 2017). Also, Rocque and Snellings suggested that exploring a new approach should fill the gap in the literature.

Education advisors and current students know about the benefits of learning. For example, graduates apply their experiences to the field to articulate the specific areas beneficial to the students and the agency (Bush et al., 2016). However, Bush et al. explained that understanding student agencies' role in developing successful professionals by preparing them to work in the field is critical. Graduates gain a set of skills from classroom learning, such as

presentation and communication, to boost public self-confidence. Student agencies pave the way

for graduates to practice the learned skills to develop more business knowledge for

professionalism (Bush et al., 2016). Also, Bush et al. explained that the agency provides

internships for students to gain professional experience in resumes and the opportunity to

network within the sector.

The ZTP is a component of anti-bullying strategies, focuses on social justice advocates,

journalists, and scholars (Berlowitz et al., 2017). The literature gap is that the ZTP pushes

students out of public schools and increases the chances of falling into the criminal justice

system in institutional racism (Yaluma, Little, & Leonard, 2021). The study is to understand

school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing

disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. Berlowitz et

al. (2017) explained that a radical reform program could improve the school to the juvenile

justice system. Implementing materialist policies in any school is subject to idealist

interpretations of White supremacy because the schools encounter inadequate protocols and

publicity to transform to the status quo (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). For example, the Toronto

District School Board (TDSB) has several policies and procedures to identify and prevent

improper professional activities for protection against reprisal-related reports of suspected

wrongdoing within the school ("Reporting of Suspected Wrongdoing (Whistleblowing)," 2014).

Most schools implement contradicting policy that affects student perspective on affirmative

action within interracial contact on school, revealing that racism impacts school decisions on

ethnicity (Warikoo & de Novais, 2015). School discipline applies disparities by race, gender, and

sexual orientation well-documented, placing significant students at risk for adverse outcomes

(Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). Bhopal and Chapman explained how to improve knowledge and encourage effective interventions through Discipline Disparities Research to Practice (DDRP).

The plan involves the collaboration of 26 nationally known researchers, educators, advocates, and policy analysts, who came together to address disciplinary disparities. The Atlantic Philanthropies and Open Society Foundations tried possible within the three years of collaboration and conducting meetings with groups of stakeholders such as advocates, educators, juvenile justice representatives, intervention agents, researchers, and policymakers. Bhopal and Chapman (2018) discussed that to increase the availability of practical and evidence-based interventions, it is necessary to develop and support a policy agenda for reform to improve equity in school discipline. Bhopal and Chapman's findings revealed 11 new research projects to expand the knowledge, particularly in intervention from noted researchers at the Closing the School Discipline Gap Conference. A culminating report of the collaborative's work released a formal three papers on policy, practice, and new research summarizing Discipline Disparities Briefing Series (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). Bhopal and Chapman's recommendations focused on offering practical, evidence-based recommendations for reducing disparities in discipline in our nation's schools.

Disproportionate Learning in Diverse Society

Schools have a growing number of volatile issues requiring urgent attention to improve educational philosophies, instruction, and curriculum design that meet minority students (Yuan, 2017). Students with disabilities, and minority students, face the consequences of disproportionate discipline policy implementation by getting more severe punishments for minor crimes or subjective reasons (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). The disparities policy implementation is growing regardless of the penalty, 15.5 % of all public-school suspensions are the minority,

and 8.6% are for the student with a disability, making up 32 % of youth in the justice system (Puckett et al., 2019). Most educational administrators use out-of-school suspension more as a disciplinary tool, labeling one in four Black children as students with a disability, and these students experience multiple times suspension than the other peers (Yuan, 2017). Yuan explained that ZTP demonstrates disparities when disciplining students with disabilities by increasing the chances of such students getting in contact with the justice system with unfair punishments. In Ontario, Canada, some educational administrators overlook the Education Act established in 1980 that demands extensive procedural protections for exceptional students with disabilities by the Bill 82 Education Amendment Act ("The Education Act," 2020). Students that display any mental deficiency need unlimited support in schools, but the problem is that most teachers lack the skill to tolerate such students (Naccarato, 2017). Naccarato explained that school administrators need to provide professional development courses for competent teachers to deal with students with disabilities with behavior problems.

The students with disabilities must gain adequate care rather than getting deprived of quality education and ending up in the justice system because of the disproportionate policy penalty (Bottiani et al., 2016). The National Longitudinal Survey for Children and Youth in Canada (1994) showed that about 17 out of 1000 Canadian families have children of zero to 14 years with learning and emotional disabilities, 15% of these children have a level of disability (cited in "Education for Persons with Disabilities in Ontario," 2000). For example, Education for Persons with Disabilities in Ontario revealed that publicly funded schools in the province received 12.5% of students, over 260,000 children with chronic conditions or activity limitation, emotional problems, and learning disabilities in the fall of 2000. The disproportionate suspension rates could be on the differential involvement that Black and White's students engage various

types of misbehaviors that lead to a suspension (Steele, Steiner, & Hamilton, 2021). The Ontario

district school board policies and practices that involve students with a disability need to be

carefully examined, such as tracing the student's family background and health documentation

before exercising the harsh punishment of OSS (Mallett, 2016). Implementing OSS in response

to truancy is challenging to justify the consequence of excluding the student from school

(Anderson, 2020). School administrators could face difficulty with their school community with

the increasing suspension rate, promoting students' lack of interest in meeting an important

educational goal (Huang, 2020). The sense of trust in the school communities mediates

relationships between student disadvantage and academic achievement, implying that negative

links between student disadvantage and performance operate through detriments to trust from

their school (Huang, 2020). Also, educational leaders need to influence a positive learning

climate that allows teachers' instruction to produce substantial effects on student academic

achievement (Block-Lerner, 2021). Block-Lerner clarified that developing a positive school

climate refers to building quality school life that reflects norms, goals, values, learning practices,

organizational structures, interpersonal relationships between teacher and the students.

Teacher and Student Leadership Development

Teacher and student leadership effectively develop positive school culture, though less

definitive, but encourages collaboration among the administrator, teachers, and students to yield

significant student achievement (Anderson, 2020). Teacher leaders could influence other

classroom teachers, the same as higher-performing students could influence the isolated or low-

performing students through instructional coaching (Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Zijlstra & Volman,

2016). Gaikhorst et al. conducted notable findings that show positive persistence effects of

student performance on the effectiveness of the teachers receiving coaching because the teachers

got influence from their peers' instruction through formal and informal avenues. School

principals with the teacher and student leader have a higher student performance rate, especially

in disadvantaged school districts (Anderson, 2020). Although principal leadership matters, it is

necessary for the school systems to cultivate skilled teacher and student leaders' representatives

to improve student outcomes, especially in school districts with low historic academic

achievement (George Mwangi, Fries-Britt, Peralta, & Daoud, 2016). George Mwangi et al.

clarified that developing teacher and student leaders require intensive, hands-on training on

improving academic instruction and a positive school climate. School administrators select

students and teachers who are more familiar with the school environment than their peers to

enable them to act through instructional and prioritized practical skills, with the need to promote

hands-on learning experiences to others (Owen, 2016).

Schools with lower suspension rates focus more on outcomes from preparation programs

for student and teacher leaders for academic improvement and organizational management skills

such as supervisors, teachers, and student achievement growth (Morais, & Miranda, 2021).

Minority students in schools staffed by students and teacher leaders outperformed other schools

in the district by about 2.5% of reduced suspension rates, whether by more significant size,

intensified in charter schools, or aligned with the school reform mission (Salleh, 2016). Teacher

and student leaders' benefits are evident after handling suspension problems based on

ethnicity because the representatives advocate for diversity of offenders by ensuring that

misbehavior did not account for the disparities (Vanblaere & Devos, 2016). Educational

administrator leaders adopt new leadership development approaches district-wide to create their

positive school culture by revising standards for the leadership, creating new preparation

systems, selectively leaders, providing support and evaluation (Thacker, 2017). Administrators

provide professional development programs focusing on instructional leadership, teacher's trust, collective efficacy, norms for collaboration, teacher turnover, and student achievement (Wang, 2016; Wang, Wang, Li, & Li, 2017). An intensive professional development program for in-service instructional leadership promotes student achievement or positive instructional climates for schools with lower subsequent teacher turnover (Wilson, 2020).

Advocating for Minority Students in their Schools

Organizational change requires a sensitive approach to encourage diversity in everyday professionalism and mindsets (Slay, Reyes, & Posselt, 2019). Canadian schools have become a more diverse, pluralistic society that needs to address race, intersectionality, and equity to disrupt colorblind ideology (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018). Black students experience more frequent and severe disciplinary actions such as suspension that removes them from school, compared with their White peers (Bottiani et al., 2017). Bottiani et al. examined the Black–White discipline gap in 58 high schools with a sample of 19,726 adolescents (number of Black students is 7,064; the number of White students is 12,622) in Maryland. Employ a multilevel framework and leverage data from the US Department of Education's civil rights office, Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools for student-report (MDS3) school climate survey. Bottiani et al. (2017) characterized 58 high schools by their excess in Black relative to OSS's White student risk. Bottiani et al. assessed that Black students' excess risk of out-of-school suspension was negatively associated with perceived school equity and school belonging. The assessment was to determine the positively associated adjustment problems, such as externalizing symptoms, through White and Black students' stratified analysis. Bottiani et al. (2017) found gaps on school-level discipline associated with Black students' perceptions for school inequity ($\gamma=-.54$, p $< .001$), less school belonging ($\gamma=.50$, p $< .001$), and increased adjustment problems ($\gamma=.77$, p $<$

.001). Bottiani et al. (2017) explained the implications for educational reform in high schools in which out-of-school suspension practices differ by race in their research findings.

Within the 1980s and 1990s, the school began to implement academic diversity requirements for all students to inspire a multicultural curriculum. Thus, educational administrators demand that the diversity curriculum answer educational and social injustice (Patton, Sánchez, Mac, & Stewart, 2019). For example, establishing zero-tolerance policies within school districts and the regiment of disciplinary actions within schools have an inequitable impact on individual students, not only on minority lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender adolescents (Mallett, 2016). Many children and adolescents at school are already vulnerable and are at risk for difficulties because of specific individual, family, community-based characteristics, experiences, and harms. Students who experience maltreatment, victimization, neglect, physical or sexual abuse have a wide range of harmful outcomes and risk further problems. There are also disproportionate impacts on youthful offenders of color involved with the juvenile courts (Mallett, 2016). Mallett explained that any decision-making point within the juvenile justice system over-represents adolescents of color. For example, these students go from arrest to charges to disposition with the most significant disparities; the further a youthful offender penetrates the system, it becomes a problem known as disproportionate minority contact (Mallett, 2016).

The school-to-prison pipeline affects minority youth, primarily when disabled and the minority of students in their school, resulting from the disproportionate discipline policies penalty (Nance, 2015). The establishment of the federal policies for safe learning environments to eliminate volatile issues such as drug abuse and gun violence paves the way for school administrators to adopt a ZTP with a penalty of out-out school suspension (Nation et al., 2016).

The federal policy for a school's safety is now a systematic funneling of disadvantaged youth out-of-school and into the criminal justice system; thus, there are unforeseen consequences for students that affect families, schools, and communities (Harris & Linder, 2018). The Gun-Free School Acts' establishment with the demand that schools expel any student carrying a gun while on school property has a negative bond between schools and the juvenile justice system (George et al., 2016). Implementing materialist policies in any school is subject to idealist interpretations of White supremacy because the schools encounter inadequate protocols and publicity to transform to the status quo (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). Most schools implement contradicting policy that affects student perspective on affirmative action within interracial contact in school, revealing that racism impacts school decisions on ethnicity (Warikoo & de Novais, 2015). Educational administrators have taken some measures of using discipline by considering some factors for students' psychological and academic development to be receptive and knowledgeable about learning environments, such as effective communication to assign proper punishment (Nation et al., 2016).

Key Terms of School to Prison Pipeline

The school-to-prison pipeline is the process that funnels students out of school and into the juvenile justice system because of violating the school rules putting students at a high risk of criminal cases, which dents the students' future (Puckett et al., 2019). ZTP enforces harsh punishment on students in the event of having a weapon, alcohol, or drugs on campus, fighting, threatening students, teachers; any students' misbehavior considered disruptive has a penalty of out-of-school suspension (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). The ZTP gained momentum for safer schools with suspension or expulsion penalty after the Columbine school massacre in Colorado that claimed 12 people's lives and injured 24 students in a mass shooting (Griffin et al., 2016).

The ZTP is the unintended negative and disproportionate consequence for students' minor offenses; however, harsh punishments may ruin students' lives (Harris & Linder, 2018). Also, there is an increasing OSS rate, resulting in more high school dropouts, and the ZTP pushes more students into the juvenile justice system (Harris & Linder, 2018).

The suspension is a disciplinary policy penalty from the school administrators to decide that the student can no longer attend any school function for an extended period, depending on the school system (Bush et al., 2016). However, some schools increase suspension rates to keep students with poor academic performance at home (Harris & Linder, 2018). The establishment of the ZTP was to protect public school systems from drugs and gun violence through harsh punishments sent as a clear message to students who violate the rules (Bottiani et al., 2017). Also, dealing with students who repeatedly break the school rules made educational administrators, policymakers, and even a large percentage of parents support the harsh penalty of a ZTP for school safety (Bottiani et al., 2017).

Punitive environments describe a student-inflicted disciplinary penalty, an unpleasant result of action when a student child misbehaves or violates the school policy (Puckett et al., 2019). Students entering the gateway to incarceration begin with a referral from the classroom to the courtroom (Tyner, 2017). The students end up in the juvenile correction system, known as the school-to-prison pipeline, depriving students of meaningful opportunities for education, future employment, and participation in our democracy (Puckett et al., 2019). The emergence of the school-to-prison pipeline trends in ZTP creates a punitive environment that can lead to behavioral issues and OSS (Tyner, 2017). For example, children with a harsh family upbringing, a punitive environment are more likely to display alcohol addict-related issues as adolescents than children with a loving and caring family upbringing (Puckett et al., 2019). Students from a

punitive environment are more likely to be bullied and bully others, and such students end up with lower academic performance (Puckett et al., 2019).

Most students experience differentiated circumstances that could influence their behaviors because of the external and internal punitive environmental norms that reward good behavior and penalize misbehavior (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). The punitive environment can also help adjust the consequences of students' behavior but maybe defaming the ZTP implemented harsh punishments regardless of the behavior (Griffin et al., 2016). The school administrators need to reassess the effect of the consequences on misbehavior by tracing the students' family background to different enforcement rates to protect students at-risk for entering the justice system (Mallett, 2016). Also, students go from arrest to disposition with the most significant disparities, and the further a youthful offender penetrates the system, it becomes a disproportionate minority contact (Mallett, 2016).

In response to punitive environments, public schools adopt restorative practices to tackle increasing disciplinary issues, such as support systems to resolve conflicts and promote academic achievement (Warikoo & de Novais, 2015). Restorative practices are put in place to strengthen relationships between students and the justice system (Wallace, 2017). For example, school administrators need to involve their community for support, such as using the local community centers for students' recreational programs as additional outlets to improve leadership skills (Bush et al., 2016).

Gaps in Research Literature

The gaps in the research literature are the evidence that educational leaders, political leaders, and the justice system involved in reforming the public school contradict each other (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). There are disparities in the policy's implementation, 15.5 % of all

public-school suspensions are Minority, and 8.6% are for the student with a disability, making up 32 % of youth in the justice system (Puckett et al., 2019). Most educational administrators use out-of-school suspension more as a disciplinary tool, labeling one in four Black children as students with a disability, and these students experience multiple time suspensions than the other peers (Yuan, 2017).

Another literature gap is the intersection of race, gender, economic, and environmental factors that funnel minority females into the school to the justice system. For example, there is inadequate research on most students versus minority students receiving inclusive learning opportunities (Puckett et al., 2019). Concepts and theories on social, cultural, and economic capital linking to education, such as Bourdieu's (1977) theory, discussed that individuals hold their positions because of their past performance for social and cultural interest. Bourdieu believed that humans are intricate with their environment, which can be related to the correctional settings that act as a catalyst in the school to the justice system. Some schools increase suspension rates to keep students with poor academic performance at home (Harris & Linder, 2018).

Summary

This chapter reviewed related studies and the theoretical framework as a significant influence of the research process. For example, a few theories discussed in this chapter explicitly explain case studies related to the black identity development theory involve a simultaneous awareness process for Black people to identify and internalize positive thoughts (Ritchey, 2014). The literature review examines the minority students' experience within the school, where there is a diversity of culture. The study uses a qualitative approach to describe school administrators'

perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student

discipline and suspension rates for minority students (Creswell& Poth, 2018).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to describe the perspectives of school administrators in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. There seems to be an increasingly volatile issue and disproportion on school suspension, especially in the Ontario Public School system, since implementing the Safe School Act (SSA) (Bottiani et al., 2017). For example, there is a disproportionate penalty that hurts the youth by increasing their chances of juvenile criminal cases (Mallett, 2016). The Ontario Ministry of Education in Canada revealed a tremendous increase in school suspension report for young students' harsh punishment ("Suspension and Expulsion Facts, 2014-2017" 2019). Adopting an SSA to discipline students in schools as a safe school's policy on violence and weapons is yet to resolve the GTA, Ontario's disproportionate suspension rate (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018). There is a lack of inclusion and social equity in the School for minority students among students' diversity (Harris & Linder, 2018).

This qualitative approach case study aimed to understand school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students (Creswell& Poth, 2018). This study purposefully sampled 10 school principals from the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) who had successfully reduced suspension rates in the last three school years. The data collection methods include semi-structured open-ended interview questions, focus group interviews, and the collection of the administrator's school discipline policy for analysis. The chapter discussed the research design, setting, participants, procedures, researchers' role, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and conclusion.

Design

A qualitative research design allowed this study to bring certain beliefs to get the in-depth data through the five approaches of inquiry, beginning with the philosophical assumptions and interpretive frameworks that inform the research problems (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A qualitative approach was the best to gather authentic findings by applying the paradigm interpretative frameworks such as the social theory, epistemological with axiological philosophical assumptions, data collection, and analysis for this study (Yin, 2014). A case study was the best qualitative approach that focuses on the object of study and the inquiry product to get a specific illustration of a real-life setting regarding Ontario policies addressing disproportionality discipline and suspension rates for minority students (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2014). This study focused more on a concern of disproportionality and select the bonded case of Ontario policies and practices to show the issue of increasing suspension rates for minority students. A single case was the most appropriate for this study to apply an existing theory (Black identity development theory) and assess an explanatory power out of the case's intriguing properties and dynamics (Lazar, Feng, & Hochheiser, 2017; Ritchey, 2014). Lazar et al. explained that a single case study requires a few research participants for systematic comparison that will test the theory's validity and limits. The study's methodological aspects are interviews, a focus group, and documentation from the epistemology with axiological philosophical assumptions that policies and practices have disproportionate discipline and suspension rates for minority students, especially for the TDSB in Canada.

This study's philosophical assumption made the best foundation for an interpretive framework construction, such as reviewing the theories to understand participants' life experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Linking theory and practice was the best approach to gain

a high-quality case study that presents an in-depth description of the case and the significance

from a practical level (Yin, 2014). A single case study was the most appropriate qualitative

design approach to investigate school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and

practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority

students (Creswell, 2017). A single case study was the best approach to understand the issue and

provide recommendations for reducing the disproportionality in exclusionary discipline practices

in the TDSB in Ontario, Canada (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study focused on a single case of

TDSB policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension

rates for minority students. This case study approach required open-ended interviews, a focus

group, and documentation for effective collaboration with the participants to collect valuable

data and analysis (Creswell, 2018). A case study research is a linear but iterative process that

requires skills and expertise in linking theory and practice to produce a high-quality and

historical case study at a practical level (Yin, 2014). This research managed to link theory and

practice by presenting the breadth of the case study and the historical significance at a practical

level. Yin explained that when "the process has been given careful attention, the potential result

is the production of a high-quality case study" (p. 199). Yin argued that case study research was

a challenging endeavor that hinges upon the researcher's skills and expertise. Yin noted that case

study research was a challenging endeavor that hinges upon the researcher's skills and expertise.

<div align="center">**Research Questions**</div>

The following research questions (RQs) for this study:

Central Research Question

What are school administrators' perspectives on policies and practices addressing

disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students in Ontario?

Sub Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are administrators' perspectives on implementing ZTP in Ontario schools on disproportionality?

Research Question 2: What are the administrators' perspectives on current policy addressing student discipline and disproportionality in Ontario schools?

Research Question 3: What factors do administrators in Ontario consider when addressing student discipline in their schools?

Research Question 4: What alternatives to zero-tolerance do administrators in Ontario recommend addressing student discipline and reduce disproportionality rates?

Setting

This qualitative case study research was from Toronto in the Southern Ontario Region, Canada, known as the Greater Toronto Area (GTA); this study focused mainly on the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). As a researcher, it was convenient to choose the TDSB location for this study because it is the most populated district school board in the province, and there was an increase of disproportion school suspension ("Suspension and expulsion facts, 2014-2017," 2019). The table below shows TDSB suspension data for the last three years.

Table 1

Total Number of Suspension from 2014 to 2017

Panel	Suspension			Student Suspended		
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Elementary Schools	3,114	3,272	3,570	1,970	2,195	2,304
Secondary Schools	3,660	3,599	3,736	2,554	2,530	2,623
Total	6,774	6,971	**7,306**	4,524	4,725	**4,927**

Table 1: Adapted from Caring and Safe Schools Report 2016-17 TDSB.pdf (2018).

The Ontario Ministry of Education reported 31 public and 29 Catholic English, four public and eight Catholic French district school boards, six hospital-based and 10 school authorities with four geographically isolated district boards in Ontario ("Education Facts, 2017-2018," 2019). The Education Facts also revealed one provincial school authority, including 3,954 elementary and 896 secondary schools in Ontario. The TDSB manages 641 schools and over 256,000 students, 451 elementary schools, 110 secondary schools, 75 Early Child and Family Centers located in elementary schools, and five adult education schools (Toronto District School Board, 2014). The same TDSB report showed approximately 31,910 permanent and 10,500 temporary staff, including 11,360 elementary school teachers and 5,000 at the secondary level in TDSB. The TDSB introduced a reporting system for policies and procedures to identify and prevent improper professional activities that protect against reprisals of suspected wrongdoing by an employee of the TDSB. ("Reporting of Suspected Wrongdoing (Whistleblowing)," 2014). TDSB has various programs outside of classrooms such as Afrocentric, technology, athletics, and specialized arts programs to engage students ("Afrocentric Secondary Programs," 2014). For example, an Afrocentric Program is an approach to learning that focuses on sources for African-centered knowledge and perspectives that creates a rich and diverse academic achievement for grades nine and 10 students ("Afrocentric Secondary Programs," 2014). TDSB also offers Prevention and Intervention Programs to promote a safe, inclusive, and accepting learning environment in collaboration with staff, students, and community to address inappropriate student behavior to build strategies that promote and foster positive behaviors ("Prevention and Intervention Programs," 2014). For example, there are prevention programs for improving student attitudes and behaviors, such as character education and restorative practices. In contrast,

the intervention programs are anger management, peer mediation, and community conferencing involving the police, parks and recreation, and public health ("Prevention and Intervention Programs," 2014).

GTA's population has a consistent increase from 3.4 to 6.8 million or 49.6 % to 51.8 % between 2014 and 2018; children aged 0–14 have been in slow-growth from 2.3 to 2.9 million in decades ("Ontario Population Projections, 2018–2046," 2019). The Ontario Population Projection report also shows that large urban areas, such as the GTA, receive most international migration for young age structures. At the same time, the Central Ontario region gains migration from other parts of the province. The Northern Ontario regions also receive a small share of international migration and emigration among young adults that reduce their population growth ("Ontario Population Projections, 2018–2046," 2019). This study chose the GTA school district location because of accessibility and convenience for administrators whose schools have encountered students' suspension to understand the research problem. The table below presents 2016 to 2017 suspension by grades.

Table 2

Suspension Rates by Grade (Divisions) for 2016 to 2017 School Year

Grades	No. of Suspension	No. of Suspended Students	Suspension rate (%)
Junior Kindergarten	30	23	0.13%
Senior Kindergarten	55	37	0.21%
1st Grade	204	116	0.64%
2nd Grade	276	161	0.91%
3rd Grade	266	160	0.90%
Primary Division	**831**	**497**	**0.56%**

7th Grade	669	461	2.89%
8th Grade	802	533	3.36%
Inter. Division	**1471**	**994**	**3.13%**
9th Grade	896	587	3.65%
10th Grade	1036	689	4.16%
11th Grade	938	664	3.77%
12th Grade	866	688	2.89%
Senior Division	**3,736**	**2,623**	**3.55%**
Total	**7,306**	**4,927**	**2.01%**

Table 2: Adapted from Caring and Safe Schools Report 2016-17 TDSB.pdf (2018).

The district school board in Ontario has a total of 7,436.36 administrators (principals and vice-principals), which comprise 5,452.64 elementary and 1,983.69 secondary administrators ("Education Facts, 2018-2019," 2020). Since a school has one school principal and 110 secondary schools in the TDSB, this study selected 10 school principals' participants from TDSB 7th to 12th grade in Ontario, Canada, because the suspension rate was higher from intermediate division (See Table 2). Canada has over 200 ethnic origins, but the 2011 National Household Survey showed that there are four largest racialized groups of White (Caucasian), Asia, African (Black), and Latin America (Hispanic) ("Diversity is a Fact; Inclusion is a Choice," 2017). The TDSB has ethic background of White (29%), South Asian (24%), East Asian (15%), Black (12%), Mixed race (9%), Middle Eastern (5%), Southeast Asian (4%), Latin American (2%), and Aboriginal (0.3%) (CensusFactSheet, 2013). Thus, this study selected different ethnic backgrounds, educational backgrounds, and years of high and middle school experience.

Participants

This study purposefully sampled 10 principals from TDSB to understand how the school administrators successfully reduced suspension rates from some schools. The sampling procedure for this study was convenient as the closest and largest district school board in Ontario in Canada with increasing disproportionate suspension rates that affect minority students. This study selected samples from TDSB secondary schools (7th to 12th Grade) that have encountered and reduced student suspension for the past three years, from 2014 to 2017 ("Caring and Safe Schools Report 2016-17 TDSB.pdf, 2018). This study applied maximum variation for identifying criteria to ensure a diversity of participants from various school types, ethnic backgrounds, educational backgrounds, and years of experience as much as possible (Creswell, 2017). There were eight females and two males in this study. Participants in this study include one Aboriginal, two Africa (Black), three Asia, three White (Caucasian), and one Latin American (Hispanic). The participants represent seven collegiate institutes, one specialized school, and two alternative schools. The participants' educational backgrounds are four master's degrees, two master's degrees plus 30 graduate hours, two education specialist degrees, and two doctorate degrees (see Table 2). This study selected school administrators from prospective schools based on their multiple years of experience reducing the specified setting's suspension rate. This study assigned pseudonyms to all schools, participants, and demographic information in narrative form and tables.

Table 3

Ten TDSB School Principal Participants

School Site Name	Secondary School Type
Winch Collegiate Institute	Collegiate Institute

Burn Collegiate Institute	Collegiate Institute
Hub High School	Alternative School
Nest Collegiate Institute	Collegiate Institute
Vicar Collegiate Institute	Collegiate Institute
Noel Alternative School	Alternative School
Forhil Collegiate Institute	Collegiate Institute
Donmil Collegiate Institute	Collegiate Institute
Coke School of the Art	Specialized School
Town Collegiate Institute	Collegiate Institute

Table 3: Adapted from Toronto District School Board, 2014-2020

Procedures

After getting approval from the IRB application for this research, the interview questions were sent to Liberty University experts to analyze the interview questions and necessary modifications. This study got approval through the Cayuse Human Ethics website from Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) on school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students (See Appendix A). After the expert's feedback and approval, this research received stamped consent form, flyer, and recruitment letter. The researcher sent out the approved documents to the school principals' emails displayed on the TDSB website requesting an online audio interview with participants who have successfully reduced their suspension rate for the past three years, 2015 to 2018 (See Appendix B). The next step was sampling purposefully 10 participants from the TDSB school principals that responded to the sent email to ensure a maximum variation of participants' perception of policies and practices addressing

disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students (See

Appendices B & C). In the email sent to the school administrators, there were attached consent

forms to read, sign, and send back to the research to explain the research intensions and the

interview questions to prepare ahead of time (See Appendices D & E). The participants provided

the necessary details to allow them to make informed decisions about their participation. The

participants were pleased to respond to the semi-structured, open-ended, online audio interviews

from Microsoft Teams because of the current pandemic in 2020. The interview lasted for about

45 to 60 minutes each (See Appendix D). The participants responded to 10 audio-recorded

interview questions through Microsoft Teams. After the interview, the recorded files were

downloaded and sent for transcription, analysis, and coding to generate themes with the Notiv

software application.

After the interview completion, the next step for data collection was conducting the focus

group interview. The selected school administrators for this research received five interviews

focus group questions on the consent email for review and calendar invitation to pick a time and

date schedule convenient to participate in the focus group interview (see Focus Group para.). The

focus group interview was like the first online audio-recorded interview. The focused group

questions posed to the identified themes from the initial interviews and allowing administrators

to participate in the group paved the way for interaction among other participants' perceptions

(Creswell, 2018).

The final step for data collection is to gather copies of the administrator's school

discipline policy and document illustrating approaches to develop positive school culture and

improve students' discipline. This research sorted out findings generated directly from

participants' interviews by connecting theory and practices to present the breadth of case study

research and its historical significance (Yin, 2014). This study implemented various mandatory strategies to ensure proper handling and confidentiality of information, which was the focus of this study, especially with the editing of participants' interview transcripts (Creswell, 2018). The interview transcriptions repeatedly played while listening to the audio files to ensure accurate words. To avoid misrepresentations of content, the 10 school administrator participants reviewed and approved the transcripts before sending them back to the researcher for analyses and generating themes.

The Researcher's Role

The researcher's goal as a Canadian is to contribute to the best way to tackle disproportionate issues in the education system because Canada is a nation of immigrants with diverse cultures. There are volatile educational problems revealed from a formal classmate in the master's program who were school principals in the three district school boards selected for this study. The implementation of the SSA in Ontario, Canada was to eliminate volatile issues in the learning environment such as drug abuse and gun violence to achieve a healthy school; however, there seems to be an increasingly volatile issue in the education sector (Nation et al., 2016). School administrators seem to have been implementing a disproportionate penalty that increases the student's chances of juvenile criminal cases with a suspension penalty (Puckett et al., 2019). The penalty of suspension contributes to racial and gender disparities in school, which disrupts the student's opportunity to learn when pulled out of school, thus increasing juvenile justice crimes (Aarthun & Yan, 2015). The researcher had encountered disproportionate experience from one of the Catholic English schools in Ontario District School Boards in Canada. As a Canadian educator, the intention for this study was to advocate for the safety and reduce the disproportionate penalty for a healthy learning environment, having learned the impact of

disproportionality on the disciplinary penalty in other countries such as the US that increases

students' chances of juvenile criminal cases (Puckett et al., 2019).

This research aimed to describe school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies

and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for

minority students. The case study was the best-fit approach to address the increasing school

suspension growth for quality research that focuses more on school administrators' perspectives

in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and

suspension rates for minority students (Yin, 2014). This approach was challenging, knowing that

it involves semi-structured open-ended interviews to learn by hearing stories of the participants'

experiences and analyze common themes' surveys (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study did not

exercise any authority on the participants; the school administrators were willing to participate in

this study.

Data Collection

A case study qualitative research was the best approach to understand the school

administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in

student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. Reviewing real-life case studies

relating to disciplinary policies and procedures as a specific illustration was the best-fit approach

to the disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students

(Creswell & Poth, 2018). The method to collect data for this research includes semi-structured

open-ended interview questions, focused group interviews, and the collection of the

administrator's school discipline policy for analysis. This research approach allowed the review

of three to four years of suspension rate and collection of data from the interview with the school

administrators that have successfully reduced their student's suspension rate within the past three

years. The school administrators who participated in this study have reduced the suspension rate in their districts. This study applied data triangulation using more than one qualitative data collection method to assure research validity that captured the same phenomenon's different dimensions (Tracy, 2010). This study had different mandatory processes for qualitative data collection to evaluate school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students (See Appendices E). The school suspension rate in Ontario has been fluctuating for many years, and there have been policy changes to maintain the Safe School Act (SSA). The best strategy to gather quality and validated studies was through data triangulation from semi-structured open-ended interview questions, focused group interviews, and collection of the administrator's school discipline policy for analysis (Yin, 2014). If the research findings from all the data collection methods draw similar conclusions, then there is an establishment of validity in the finding (Tracy, 2010).

Rewarding collaboration with school administrators was necessary to collect valid data of students suspended (See Appendices E). The research focuses on understanding school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students.

Interview

This research implemented a semi-structured open-ended questioning format to understand the participants' independent thoughts (William, 2015). William advised probing semi-structured open-ended questions on case study topics such as school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. Also, William stated that applying a semi-

structured questionnaire paved the way for one-on-one interviews to reveal the participants' sincere beliefs with the in-depth information necessary for the study. The semi-structured open-ended question provided leeway for the interviews to be conversational to learn from the participants' authentic life experiences (Creswell, 2017). Conducting a semi-structured interview (SSI) was necessary to blend in open-ended questions with follow-up questions of school administrators' perspectives of policies and practices to address disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students (William, 2015). The interview method was the best fit qualitative instrument to study the participants' perception and discuss the best approaches and philosophies that other successful school leaders have applied to solve the increasing suspension rate (Creswell, 2018). Ten school administrators in TDSB, Ontario, Canada, participated in this research through a virtual audio interview because of the current Covid-19 pandemic crises to maintain social distancing (See Appendix D). This study used Microsoft Teams application to interview participants, requiring little computer knowledge and skill to interview school administrators with the mentioned platforms. However, there was a created link to test the platform several before sending the links to the participant's e-mail addresses. This study recorded the interview through Microsoft Team, generating automatic transcription of the interview and transferred it to the Notiv software to generate themes and codes. This study used follow-up questions to extend interviewees' responses to explore the participants' personal experiences in a conversational format (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Semi-structured open-ended interview questions to ask participants are below; Liberty University IRB reviewed these questions to confirm their validity.

1. Please introduce yourself. RQ1

2. Please walk me through your administrative perception of policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline for minority students in Ontario? RQ1

3. Of the professional experiences you identified in your opinion, which would you say were the most significant? RQ1

4. What are your perspectives on the previously implemented zero-tolerance policy in Ontario schools?

5. What are your perspectives on the current policy addressing student discipline and disproportionality in suspension rates between minority and non-minority students in Ontario?

6. What alternatives to zero-tolerance do administrators in Ontario recommend addressing student discipline and reduce disproportionality rates on suspension?

7. Ideally, part of becoming an administrator involves the process of examining and evaluating leadership practice. Where are you in that process? RQ1

8. What strategies or advice do you have to offer other school administrators for reducing disproportionality? RQ3

9. This next question is unique; it will invite you to look ahead. How do you expect your perception to change or develop over the next several years? RQ3

10. We have covered many questions in this conversation, and I appreciate your time. One final question is, what else do you think would be essential to know about school suspension? RQ3

Questions one through five are knowledge questions designed as follow-up questions to the participant's responses to the invitation (Patton, 2015). Patton also explained that such questions are relatively straightforward and non-threatening to help develop rapport between the

participant and the researcher. The formation of complex systems of beliefs is primarily a subconscious value for a task, and after an experience, a person begins to develop a deep awareness of one's opinion (Yin, 2014). Yin explained that new knowledge becomes the capacity for a person to reflect on one's faith and decide what to include in a workable meaning system. Also, Yin (2014) explained that it was essential to ask questions that will help participants reflect on their awareness of their perception and progress while examining and evaluating their worldview. Questions six focus on the strong correlation between an administrators' knowledge and parents and the community (Bailey, 2015). The seventh question was also a non-threatening question that allows the participants to talk more in-depth about the phenomenon of worldview development without requiring them to be highly vulnerable (Patton, 2015). This study kept the interview engagingly to yield valuable data; for example, question eight was the first question with a relatively high degree of vulnerability; this study chose not to ask it until the interview is well underway with an established good rapport (Yin, 2014). Question nine elicits some of the question's participants may have asked as part of the process of developing their worldview. This study paid attention to the concept of cognitive dissonance that such questions can cause (Yin, 2014). Questions nine also put participants into role-playing contexts, helping the participants think more deeply about their perception, inviting them to step outside of themselves, become observers, or co-researcher (Patton, 2015; Creswell, 2017). Question 10 serves as the closing question giving the participant freedom to add to what the interviewee has already said. Also, Patton (2015) discussed that asking thousands of such questions as a life coach often yields valuable information when any discussion could quickly have shut down.

Document Analysis

This study's documentary data collection was from the Ontario Ministry of Education; the government published documents and made them available for researchers online or archival ("Safe Schools: Statistics on Suspension and Expulsion," 2019). The government websites published students' suspension documents and linked the data with the district school boards; however, this study also collected data directly from the TDSB website (Toronto District School Board, 2020). It was easy to assess Ontario government documents related to school suspension for the appraisal theme. Documentary analysis was appropriate for this study; for example, this study reviewed the documents to generate coding content into investigation subjects like transcripts generated from focus groups and interviews (William, 2015). The participants in this case study provided a copy of their school discipline policy and any documents illustrating their approach to developing positive school culture and approach to student discipline. This study analyzed these documents to corresponding with the related case studies on disproportionality in student discipline with minority student suspensions at significantly higher rates than non-minority students. The primary sources of these studies were the documentation and school policy reports. Creswell and Poth (2018) explained a systematic procedure applied in this study for review. For example, articles, school agendas, and students record case files necessary for a case study qualitative approach. It was also essential to evaluate any materials for this study and protect the participants' confidentiality. This study kept all the materials for this research, especially any document with the participants' details, in a safe file where no one can assess to expect Liberty University records.

Focus Group

This study had a focus group interview to support interactive communication among administrators whose schools experienced decreased suspensions to learn the best approach,

philosophy, and strategies employed to decrease disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. This study used semi-structured open-ended questioning to know the participants' independent thoughts (William, 2015). In this focused group, the participants never knew their fellow participants while responding among unseen peers in the study. The participants used anonymous usernames to log in to the focused group, and only their voices (audio) were heard through Microsoft Teams to gather in-depth information in the study (William, 2015). There were 10 school administrators from TDSB in the online audio interview because of the current Covid-19 pandemic crises to maintain social distancing (See Appendix B). There was significant knowledge gained from the school administrators' roles in policies and practices that were difficult to achieve through other data collection measures. It was flexible to engage school administrators at convenient times and locations to participate (Creswell, 2017). Microsoft Teams was perfect for conducting audio focus group interviews for the school administrators and was easy to transfer to the Notiv software to generate themes. The participants responded to the initial online interview questions (on the flyer) to reflect on experiences with the suspension's increasing rate. The school administrators participated in real-time discussions with other participants to review related cases. However, participants decided not to interact with others and posted initial responses to the questions even though they could learn from the interaction from the participants. The participants received a calendar link for participation. These were the questions for the focus group interview:

1. What is your administrative perception of policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline that you have not already written down? RQ1

2. What are your administrative perspectives on current policy addressing student discipline and disproportionality on suspension in Ontario schools?

3. What factors do administrators in Ontario consider when addressing student discipline in their schools?

4. What strategies or advice can other school administrators learn from you in collaboration to address issues for the future growth of education in Ontario? RQ3

5. What else do you think would be essential to know about the school suspension? RQ3

Questions one to two are follow-up questions from the prior responded invitation to participate in the study (Patton, 2015). This study included prefatory statements to transition the participants into an expert (Patton, 2015). Questions three focus on the strong correlation between an administrators' perception and that of parents and the community (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). Question four were a relatively high degree of vulnerability, and for this reason, this study chose not to ask it until the interview was well underway with an established good rapport (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). Question five put participants into role-playing contexts, which can help the participants think more deeply about their perception, inviting them to step outside of themselves, become observers, or co-researcher (Patton, 2015; Creswell, 2017).

Data Analysis

Using a qualitative approach for this study was the best fit for studying to get in-depth data collection (Creswell, 2018). The data collection methods for the study are interviews, documents, and focus groups. As data were analyzed using Yin's steps for data analysis to generate themes identified from the participants' experiences with descriptions concerning one another. All relevant terms from interviews, documents, and the focus group interview were listed and assessed to understand the participants' experience (Yin, 2014). This study used Microsoft Team to transcribe the interviews, which were sent back to the participants for

confirmation before transferring to and Notiv software to sort out the themes of the participants' experiences. This study used cross-case analysis to explore similarities and differences across for empirical generalizability and theoretical predictions of the participants' perspectives to get a quality and valid study with the most common terms in the literature and the research questions (Ryan, 2012). The transcripts were from Microsoft Team to the Notiv software to conduct the first cross-case analysis stage using a "conceptually clustered matrix" (Ryan, 2012). The first significant step of the analysis was labeling the initial grouping of ideas and removed unrelated opinions by evaluating the necessity before assembling common themes into the individualized descriptions (Yin, 2014). The next step was reviewing the coding procedures, using empirical examples of school administrators' perspectives to form genialized descriptive codes for similarities across participants' responses and review documents as a case-ordered meta-matrix (Yin, 2014). The other step was forming general explanations showing on the charts, and when possible, this study showed empirical examples by categorizing cases by type (Ryan, 2012). For example, sorting out school administrators that successfully reduced the suspension rate used was necessary to understand their perspective on Ontario's policies addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. This study used annotated and open-coded themes on school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students (Yin, 2014).

Yin explained that open coding required data cataloging generated from the transcribed interviews and then narrowing the categories to the significant themes. For example, this study sorted out codes, categorical aggregation, and naturalistic generalizations for the best approach, philosophy, or strategies that the school administrators applied to achieve proportionate or

decreased student suspension. This study also categorized variables to explain the theoretical

predictions using predictor-outcome matrices with causal models (Ryan, 2012). After completing

the initial coding, the next step was focusing on the coding to condense the data through a

compilation of preliminary coding into more significant classifications of many codes (Yin,

2014). The final step was analyzing the participants' meaningful statements to categorize

common themes from survey comments, interviews, and documents to get in-depth and real-

world context (Yin 2014; Creswell, 2017). This study separated personal experiences to the most

significant degree to present the participants' perspectives on policies and practices that address

disproportionate suspension rates and the practice. This study concludes with a critical appraisal

of the methodological of related literature reviews on cross-case analysis to discuss the best

report findings (Ryan, 2012).

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, trustworthiness encompasses various dimensions of credibility,

dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the study (Nyirenda et al., 2020). This study

believed that trustworthy research is the one that educators and other fields of study can review

with confidence, research that other fields of study can learn or implement in work, knowledge,

and skill to get a significant result. As a researcher, it is necessary to show accurate and fair data

presentations throughout the collection and analyze the process for establishing reliability as the

best way to ensure this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study used various data collection

and analysis validation to increase the aspect of trustworthiness in this study. This study revealed

that qualitative study should be rooted in a healthy and clear understanding of local contexts,

such as the researcher's position developed iteratively through various rounds of discussion to be

trustworthy (Nyirenda et al., 2020). Nyirenda et al. also stated a longstanding debate about

ensuring rigorous qualitative analysis without losing any value in the researcher's

epistemological stance.

Credibility

Credibility is the internal research validity related to how congruent the findings are with

reality (Nyirenda et al., 2020). Nyirenda et al. explained that to enhance credibility, there should

be prolonged engagement, triangulation, rapport building, iterative questioning, saturation,

checking member, inclusive theme coding that is iterative to fit predetermined criteria

reflexivity. This study reviewed Creswell's (2017) qualitative suggestion to use many sources of

data collection measures to substantiate this study's authenticity as the best fit to triangulate data

triangulation. This study applied the qualitative approach to collect single case sources of data to

provide the ability to triangulate data. For example, analyzing the interviews and focus groups.

This study presented a complex picture of participants' experience and relating responses; there

is a need to show mind maps to the reviewed literature to increase this research (Creswell, 2018).

This study used these varieties of resources available as "corroborating evidence to provide

insight on the presented themes and participant perspectives" (Creswell, 2017, p. 260).

Dependability and Confirmability

The study's dependence is the degree of reliability which research team or observers can

replicate and agree about what they see and hear (Yin, 2014). Confirmability, also known as the

objectivity of a study, is the researcher's neutrality interpretation of findings (Nyirenda et al.,

2020). Nyirenda et al. explained that any study worthy of confirmability is free from any

inherent or social-desirability bias if the researcher designs and executes the study tools while

maintaining reflexivity. Reflexivity acknowledges and considers beliefs or experiences that can

influence the research process, participant responses, data collection methods, and analysis (Creswell, 2018). This study sort colleagues for peer debriefing to assess the interview questions before the interviews. This procedure helped to pose problems of the study and reviewed the research participants' interviews to confirm the honesty of the school administrators' perceptions (Creswell, 2017). The participants had the chance to review their interview transcripts for accuracy, which acts as an extra measure to ensure that the individuals' views are free from bias (Creswell, 2018). This study used an audit trail to show the raw data, analysis tables, and a detailed log of research steps taken throughout the study.

Transferability

Transferability is the generalization of a research finding and the applicability of findings to other contexts. For example, any reliable or valid research should be transferable for other sectors to describe the study context and assumptions (Nyirenda et al., 2020). This study selected the participants through three Southern Ontario Public School District boards based on the participants' section presented criteria collected from the Ontario Ministry of Education and school district board websites. This study presents a detailed, thick description of the information to encourage readers to apply similar knowledge to other research settings and evaluate applicable transference (Creswell, 2017). This study also selected a criterion sample with a maximum variation for participants in terms of gender, ethnicity, and type of school location (for example, urban or suburban area).

Ethical Considerations

This study acknowledged the administrators' perspectives on the best approach, philosophy, and strategies employed to decrease disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. This study is transparent with bias when discussing the

prospective school administrators' roles on policies and practices that are challenging to achieve through other data collection methods (Creswell, 2017). This study cited all the documents used to avoid plagiarism and present a report to eliminate suppositions when paraphrasing other people's work. This study sort research approval from IRB to assess potential harmful implications for participants, and all participants were treated respectfully (See Appendix A). This study assured participants that participation is voluntary and will gain informed consent from each participant before collecting any data. This study reminded the participants that they could opt-out of the research anytime necessary (See Appendix B). This study respected the participants' culture, religion, gender, and other essential qualities they may have (Creswell, 2017). Participation in this research is not anonymous; however, this study used codes for administrators and their schools and use non-identifiable language in the findings to protect the participants' confidentiality (See Appendix D). This study secured the research data through a password-locked computer and password-protected e-mail accounts for digitally sent documents. This study maintained confidentiality by locking files in private key cabinets and made the information accessible to only the persons directly engaged with the study (Creswell, 2017).

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

This chapter discusses the case study to describe school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. This study's site is in TDSB in GTA Ontario, Canada, because the sampled area was purposeful for convenience. The TDSB is easy to access and has a high rate of school suspension in Ontario. The study focused on the schools from TDSB that have successfully reduced their suspension rate to address disproportionality in student discipline, with minority students' suspensions at significantly higher rates than non-minority

students. The study discussed the research design, participants, and procedures in further detail in the chapter. This chapter presents the researcher's role, data collection and analysis, research trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to describe the perspectives of school administrators in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. The epistemology and axiological philosophical assumptions were employed to focus on the participants' experience. Ten school administrators from Toronto District School Board (TDSB) in Ontario, Canada, shared their experience of successfully reducing their schools' suspension rates. These 10 school principals were all from TDSB (Grade 07 to 12), including different secondary schools such as seven collegiate institutes, one specialized school, and two alternative schools. This chapter shows the participants' descriptions, participants' experience, school demographics, research findings, and a summary. Also, this study presents the results in correspondence with the generated themes based on the research questions. This study presents the answered research questions following the discussion of the identified themes.

Participants

The participants for this study were from 10 schools from four cities within the TDSB, which is in the southern part of Ontario (See Table 4). This study purposefully sampled the school administrators that have successfully reduced suspension rates from some schools within three years. The selection of the school districts focused on the most convenient closest, and leading school board in Ontario in Canada, with increasing disproportionate suspension rates on minority students. The sampling of participants ensured maximum variation such as various school types, ethnic backgrounds, educational backgrounds, and years of experience as much as possible (Creswell, 2017). Participants were eight females and two males, one Aboriginal, two

Africa (Black), three Asia, three White (Caucasian), and one Latin American (Hispanic) from

seven collegiate institutes, one specialized school, and two alternative schools (see Table 3). This

study selected school administrators from prospective schools based on their multiple years of

experience reducing the specified setting's suspension rate. There were four master's degrees,

two master's degrees plus 30 graduate hours, two education specialist degrees, and two doctorate

degrees (see Table 4). This study found out the participant demographics after receiving IRB

approval and then contacting the school administrators. The participants' variation in gender,

ethnicity and education level occurred naturally during the conversation. The participants were

all from secondary schools in the district, from varying school types, grade levels, ethnicity,

gender, and education level (Creswell, 2017). This study assigned pseudonyms to all schools,

participants, and demographic information in narrative form and tables.

Table 4

Research Setting (TDSB Secondary Schools with Reduced Suspension Rate (RSR)

Overview for Three Years

School Name	School Type	Grade	% of RSR	Enrollment
Winch Collegiate Institute	Collegiate Institute	9 to 12	0.69%	1340
Burn Collegiate Institute	Collegiate Institute	9 to 12	0.32%	1235
Hub High School	Alternative School	7 to 12	0.13%	1010
Nest Collegiate Institute	Collegiate Institute	9 to 12	0.15%	750
Vicar Collegiate Institute	Collegiate Institute	9 to 12	0.18%	1050
Noel Alternative School	Alternative School	10 to 12	0.21%	430

Forhil Collegiate Institute	Collegiate Institute	9 to 12	0.11%	920
Donmil Collegiate Institute	Collegiate Institute	9 to 12	1.25%	1850
Coke School of the Art	Specialized School	9 to 12	0.46%	1070
Town Collegiate Institute	Collegiate Institute	9 to 12	0.12%	1450

Table 4: Adapted from Toronto District School Board Site 2014-2020

Table 5

The Participants (School Administrators) Overview

Administrators	School Setting	Ethnicity	Gender	Degree Obtained
Mateo	Collegiate Institute	Latin American (Hispanic)	Male	Masters + 30
Jane	Collegiate Institute	Caucasian	Female	Master
Ada	Alternative School	African (Black)	Female	Doctorate
Sara	Collegiate Institute	Caucasian	Female	Education Specialist
Esha	Collegiate Institute	Asian (South)	Female	Master
Paul	Alternative School	Caucasian	Male	Master
Mary	Collegiate Institute	Aboriginal	Female	Master
Angela	Collegiate Institute	African	Female	Doctorate
Divina	Specialized School	Asia (Southeast)	Female	Education Specialist
Fan	Collegiate Institute	Asian (East)	Female	Masters + 30

Table 5: Adapted from Toronto District School Board Site 2014-2020

This study presents detailed descriptions of each participant regarding their personal experiences with the successful reduction of suspension rates, including information on their education and background as educators. This study assigned pseudonyms in the descriptions and throughout the findings to protect the participants' anonymity.

Mateo

Mateo served as a secondary school social studies teacher for 12 years before becoming a school administrator for six years now. Mateo had a master's degree in supervision and administration with various 30 hours of district leadership training aside from his master's degree. The district's training helped Mateo become a principal without serving as a supervisor role before becoming a principal. Mateo had a role model of an administrator from one of his family members during his education career that became a driving force to pursue his master's degree in supervision and administration. However, Mateo was unsure if he could perform well in his role as a school principal until he successfully reduced the suspension roles in this school under a year of his reign. Mateo confirmed that earning that master's degree was beneficial for deciding to enter into administration, where he learned to apply the leadership style that allows his followers to demonstrate their strengths in areas they feel most successful. Mateo perceived that the suspension rate in the district is disproportional to Black male students than other minority students. Mateo explained how he successfully reduced the suspension rate in his school by implementing academic diversity requirements for all students to inspire a multicultural curriculum. Mateo and his staff have created a practical approach to developing and sustaining positive school culture, which goes through assessment twice to integrate minority students. Also, Mateo acknowledges his staff as a solid administrative staff that supports and

enacts his shared vision. Mateo shared a leadership vision with his assistant principal and gave authority when it comes to professional development.

Jane

Jane served as a 10th-grade public school teacher for eight years after two years as a private school teacher before becoming a school principal. Jane earned her master's degree in social justice, and her leadership style is a combination of a shared vision with student-oriented, as she alluded to be a servant leader, noting that she is a "server just as much as being a leader." Jane learned so much from other school administrators that successfully reduced suspension rates in their school, but she noted that " the suspension did reduce, but they could not sustain the rate… goes up and down" Jane decided to try her approach to tackle the increasing suspension rate from the facilitation of collaboration meetings. Jane hired an expert to help out in the task, "I know how important it is and what type of role an expert will play." Jane gained more knowledge from the expert and implemented the knowledge in her practice. However, Jane struggled earlier to understand the collaborative process and the impact on minority students. Tackling disproportionate penalties that affect particular students became effective with collaboration and implementing intervention techniques in her school. Jane's leadership team develops a positive school culture with the trust she had in the grade-level leaders. The team followed Jane's process as a shared vision, such as having ideas presented to grade levels. She noted, "[Grade level chairs] take the turn to enact the others grade level whatever the discussion was from the leadership meeting."

Ada

Ada taught 11th-grade Biology for nine years before becoming an assistant principal for four years then; she has then been appointed the school principal for three years now. Ada

graduated with a Bachelor of Science Education degree in Biology and originally planned to attend medical school but had a calling towards education and decided to continue education. Ada continued her study to master's degree up to her doctorate in educational leadership and administration. Ada describes herself as a leader that enables others to act in their respective jobs. Ada expressed how her experiences as a minority in her administrative role developed her leadership style to encourage healthy relationships with her employee and students. Ada's perception of the increasing disproportionate suspension rate in the district created poor or unhealthy relationships between the schools and the minority students, "You know, if you do not have a relationship with the children, then you really cannot grow a school."

Ada also believed that reducing the suspension rate was successful because of loyalty, collaboration with the community, and the decision-making skills for the current failing system. She noted that problems keep occurring from the administrative level because there are no plans to solve the existing problem. There is a need to make plans, call for leadership meetings to make changes, review data, and monitor the shared visions.

Sara

Sara was a secondary school teacher for 12 years before becoming a vice principal that paved the way for her current position as a school principal. Sara gained much experience while as a vice principal for five years; she had access to lots of data concerning the harsh policy penalty on minority male students. Sara perceived that the disproportionate suspension rate in the district is an over-representation of racialized minority students, especially the Black male students. When Sara was the vice principal, she worked with her school principal to reduce up to 5% of the suspension rate in their school. Sara noted, " it has been a tough task to control this rate; nothing is working out," Sara went back to graduate studies for her masters and education

specialist degrees in curriculum and instruction because of the enthusiasm to do more hands-on roles in her school setting. Sara had observed other school administrators she worked under during her teaching career and decided to make the best version of herself in an administrative position. Sara describes herself as a servant leader that desires input from all her staff to bring the school vision to realization. Sara explained there have been more disciplinary policy changes to build a positive school culture but are all ineffective "we just have to do what is on the policy as instructed; there is no chance to choose." However, the leadership practice an administrator display is what matters more; for example, how to effectively integrate the policy into the school that helps other minority students feel less isolated matters most, Sara said. Sara explained how she shares the leadership roles with her staff in a separate schedule on cluster day because she wants everyone to contribute to developing a positive school culture.

Esha

Esha is a secondary school principal who taught grades 10 and 12 in various public schools within the district with over 20 years of experience. Esha has a master's degree in educational leadership, and she supports teachers in enacting new standards to develop positive school culture. Esha had had the opportunity to serve by mentoring minority students and hearing their experiences in the school when she was the Master Teacher and while she served as an assistant principal. Esha's perception of the increasing disproportionate suspension rate in the district is that the minority student needs an advocate to speak up for them because nothing is changing; instead, the only success is the consistent changes of policy without yielding positive results to build an equal learning environment. Esha also explained that her leadership style has helped her reduce her school's suspension rate because she believes in implementing best practices while maintaining a clear vision to build positive school culture.

Paul

Paul started a career in the education system as a volunteer when the principal needed a new assignment and worked as a classroom teacher for five years in various disciplines, giving him a well-rounded perspective. Paul served as an assistant principal at a few schools for seven years; he also worked at the district office for a few years before becoming the principal at his current school and has served there for almost nine years. Paul gained a master's degree in educational administration that shaped his leadership style. Paul expressed his perception of the increasing suspension rate and the changes in Ontario's policy, yet to make positive changes to students' lives. Paul explained that the district copies patterns in North America to build equality in a diverse society but still struggles with disproportionality. Paul believed that educational administrators are the policymakers, and as such, they need to focus on how to tackle issues with the disproportion in the policy penalty that is affecting mainly the Black students in the district. Paul is an active participant in collaboration meetings, and he works side-by-side with other educators to enact the school vision to develop positive school culture. Paul believed that being visible in the school, developing relationships, and building capacity in his faculty helped him reduce the suspension rate. Paul also explained that collaboration meetings with the teachers and the student leaders helped prevent disproportion and integrate the minority students. Paul says, "I am present to help develop the approach for positive school culture, giving my input, and learning from them."

Mary

Mary is from a family of educators, and she attended the college of education for a major in English. As a certified teacher, Mary taught English for six years at middle and high school levels. Mary went back to school to improve herself for the school principal's role and earned

her master's degree in administration and supervision. Mary gained more experience when she served as a high school assistant principal for six years before becoming the current school principal. As a school administrator in Ontario, Mary's perception of policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates is hash on the minority students, especially the Black students. Mary encourages communication from the minority students, and she is open to hearing complaints and the experiences the students face in the school environment. Mary explained that her approach to reduce the suspension rate in her school was the teachers' shared ideas, the feedback from student leaders, and the use of the information to modify her leadership style to meet the needs of the minority students. Mary believed that building a mutual relationship of trust, caring, and a positive attitude helped her school tackle behavioral issues. Mary explained that her approach to developing a positive school culture focused on retaining students in their school rather than driving them away. Mary provides training to help teachers implement and analyze the approach for positive school culture; Mary noted, "We plan to make the school equal for everyone so we can analyze them. We look at our improvement through the interventions, and we look at test data."

Angela

Angela was a secondary school teacher who taught ninth grade for eight years and served as an instructional facilitator before becoming an assistant principal for five years to becoming the current school principal for six years now. Angela went back to school to earn her master's in educational leadership and administration; she immediately continued studying for a doctorate, focusing on curriculum and instructions. Angela's perception of the disproportionate policy and practice affecting minority students is harsh on a particular race. Angela stated that the penalty is harsh on Black male students more than other gender and races because they lack the necessary

parental care, feel isolated when they are in the school, and fall victim to the policy violation. Angela explained that she tries with her team as much as she could to integrate the minority students in the school activities by keeping them busy and opportunities to socialize with other students. Angela noted, "these students are easily irritated, and they lose control with the teachers or classmates." Angela believed in the best practices to develop a positive school culture that integrates all students academically and socially. One of Angela's approaches is collaboration as much as possible, and she delegates tasks for her staff to enact them successfully by building equal relationships with the students. Angela explained that she provides regular incentives to motivate and build all the staff members' morale, and she increased teachers' training programs to help her staff build positive school culture.

Divina

Divina is a school administrator from a family of educators, but she first served as a an instructional leader in the equity department for six years and was a vice principal for five years before becoming a school administrator. Divina went back to school to earn her master's degree in education administration and education specialist degree and has been a school principal for eight years. While in her graduate studies, she realized the need to reduce the increasing suspension rate in her school and decided to try her approach she developed from the equity department that worked. Divina perceives the Ontario policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates just for a particular race. Divina explained that the policy penalty is harsh on students with disabilities and minority students through the years that the policy has changed. Divina gained significant knowledge while in the equity department as a collaborative leader "It felt like there was a lot at stake…that requires my

attention," "we need to work the plan to see what it is that you need. Know which the students are missing out." Divina paid attention to her team's capacity to sustain a positive school culture.

Fan

Fan was a secondary school teacher for 15 years before becoming a school administrator. She first served as an assistant principal for two years and now a school principal for four years. Fan earned her master's degree in educational leadership and policy with various 30 hours of training within her district school board aside from her master's degree. She worked with school administrators that influenced her leadership style and focused on data-driven instruction. Fan's perspective as a school administrator in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates is that the policy penalty is partial. Fan explained that some race in the district faces the consequences more than the others because the parents are not helping the children cope with their ill manners. Fan values implementing best practices to sustain reduced suspension rate with transparent leadership for all stakeholders to be aware of her vision. Although it took a few years, the school finally successfully reduced suspension rates amid the increasing disproportionate penalty in the district. Fan maintains an open-door policy for students to speak up and feel free to discuss any concerning situations in the school. Fan mentioned the new programs the school established to train teachers to build positive learning environments for students.

Results

This study has four guiding research questions addressing the school administrators' perspectives on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students in Ontario. The questions asked what the administrators' perspectives on implementing Zero Tolerance Policy (ZTP) in Ontario schools on

disproportionality are, what are the administrators' perspectives on current policy addressing student discipline and disproportionality in Ontario schools. What factors do administrators in Ontario consider when addressing student discipline in their schools and the alternatives to zero-tolerance that administrators in Ontario recommend addressing student discipline and reduce disproportionality rates. This study describes the emergent themes and sub-themes generated from the interview below. This study completed the interview showing an overview of how each principal experienced successfully reducing suspension rate in their school with corresponding categories. The reduced suspension ratings for each category in their schools aligned with the administrators' experiences provided in the interviews. This study designed the instrument to allow participants to provide detailed responses to express thoughts, beliefs, and opinions that reflect the purpose of this research. During the interview transcription data analysis, participants' experiences became clearer and interconnecting while the themes emerge. The instrument for data collection in this study was enlightening, such as the transcription of the interview involves reviewing the participants' experience repeatedly and categorizing the data into themes promoted an opportunity to understand the school administrators' story clearly. Only four participants in the focus group interview through Microsoft Team and five principals sent their approach to develop positive school culture by email submission. The focus group interview data built upon the participants' interview discussions, allowing a deeper understanding of the perspectives of school administrators in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. From the five school administrators that submitted their approaches to developing positive school culture, one sent only a link to review the document, and two responded by words, and the remaining three submitted links with explanations. The administrators in this study developed their approaches from the positive

school climates on the Ontario Ministry of Education websites, capturing the concepts of collaboration, a cohesive vision, and specific goals. Documents from the Ontario Ministry of Education also showed the suspension and expulsion statistics in the recent year confirming that the changes in the policy have little or no improvement to reduce the disproportionality on minority students. This study presents interconnecting themes generated from the data analysis determining which ideas most clearly support each emergent them. The table below shows the themes, subthemes, and codes from the study.

Table 6

Presentation of Themes and Codes

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
Zero Tolerance Policy	Disciplinary Action	Disproportion| Intention| Policy vision|Student achievement| Mission| Penalty guidelines| Violation| Purposeful| Integration| Persevere| Adjust vision Focused| Differentiating| Positive culture| Support| Backward design| Escalating| Data| Collaboration.

	Data-Driven Focus	Ratings| Dig deep| Analyze| Discuss strategy| Data collection| Refinement| Reinforcement| Intervention| Best practices| Data supported decisions| Alignment| School performance.
	Common Vision	Growth| Responsibility| Believe| Expectations| Focused| Vision| Monitoring| Ownership| Actionable| Shared workload.
School Suspension	Student Role	Partial penalty| Intervention| Integration| Vision| Mission| Student population| Learn from others.
	Administrative Role	Specialized assistance| More time for planning| Resources needed| Awareness| Impact Policy implementation| Advocate| Involvement.

	Suspension Rate	School culture| Data| Negativity| Incompetence| Community support| Suspension penalty| Data assessment| No parental support| Teachers'support.
	Disciplinary Policy	Not believing| Purposeful| Student need| Varied assistant for students| Need-based support| Data for decision-making.
Unequal Learning	Diversity	Equity| Racial diversity| Positivity| Multicultural curriculum.
	Population	Racial diversity| Encourage diversity| School inequality| Racial privilege| Data.

	Minority Student	Adjustment problem| Harsh disciplinary action| Racial visibility| Disability differentiation| Isolation| Integration| Intervention| Academic achievement| Student-oriented program.
Leadership Development	Teacher and Student Leaders	Student needs| Student advocacy|School needs| Learn from others| Integration| Positive supporter| Listener teamwork|Success| Share knowledge| Get involved| Empowerment| Build capacity| Trust| Share vision| Knowledge| Collaboration| Input| Provide resources| Challenge staff| Enable others to act.

Involvement	Community involvement| Parental involvement| Planning| Provide resources| Relationships| Staff growth| Recognition rewards| Positive environment| Social integration| Academic integration| Vision leadership team| Others in Goalsetting.
Administrative Visibility	Commitment| Dedicated| Data-driven| Contributing| Always present| Public speeches| Good listener| Accessibility| Open-door policy| Positive| Visible| Approachable| Feedback| Advocate.
Communication	Transparent| Open| Listening to feedback| Get input| Relationship strategies| Two-way communication| Giving feedback| Open-door policy.

(Owen, 2016). The participants in this study shared the value of incorporating vision in the disciplinary action, data-driven focus to keep records for improvement, and a common vision for sustainability. The sub-themes generated in this study demonstrate the critical components of successful reduction of suspension rates that make them meaningful within school settings.

        Disciplinary action. School principals implement various structures in place that promotes disproportionate suspension that is harsh on minority students. The minority students leave their school through suspension penalty and enter the gateway to juvenile imprisonment beginning from the classroom referral to the courtroom (Tyner, 2017). However, some school administrators work hard to reduce the suspension rate in their schools, a key component noted by participants on how they successfully reduced the suspension rate in their school is by having protected time during the school day for professional teacher training on how to collaborate with the students. Participants acknowledged that teachers complete the amount of work that spills over to hours outside of the school day, creating stressful time in the schedule to manage student's behavior. Sara explained that she uses the penalty guidelines and interventionists to cover classroom teachers for monitoring student's behavior during the day. Sara noted, "It is not enough just to have the time in the day for teachers to collaborate but creating an environment of the purposeful meeting is necessary for teachers to gain extra training as beneficial and be engaged in sustaining them." Tyner (2017) revealed the emergence of school-to-prison-pipeline trends in school disciplinary practices as school administrators claim that it is challenging to manage student's behavior and reduce suspension and expulsion for all children. Paul stated that implementing disciplinary policy is with the intention that it is purposeful to improving student achievement. Also, Angela noted that her staff members are aware of matters of the increasing suspension rates in their district and creating a schedule that allows for regular meetings for

collaboration to reduce the rates. Educational administrators undertake the endeavor; it was necessary to know the contemporary civil rights issue (Tyner, 2017). Fan understands that modifications to the increasing suspension are necessary if the current processes do not garner the desired results to reduce the rates. Divina stated,

> If it is not working, we tweak and adjust as necessary through meetings where teachers can contribute for improvement; I make decisions based on the school vision to build positive school culture. All changes and the intervention techniques made are in the school vision. I play role models in the school's daily decision-making to align with the school policy vision.

Angela values the idea of creating a disciplinary policy with a clear purpose on how to cope with student's behavior, and she explained how the process flows to support a purposeful and meaningful mission. Esha explained how she works on establishing a focused culture by differentiating the needed support for students and the teachers. Esha aligns the vision with the school goals to determine the teacher's level of competency to reduce their suspension rates and then provide the students with the necessary support to persevere. Ada explained that she offers the needed support by having personal conversations with the students by walk-throughs in the classroom to get feedback from observations and discussions during collaboration with their teachers. Ada noted, "once I determine the needed support, I provide various resources through coaching and observation from other teachers. Mary is purposeful in implementing the disciplinary policy with teachers to align with their school goals with evidence from their collaboration meetings before making decisions because she wants to understand how to share concepts with her teachers to serve better. Paul discussed that collaboration is the key to creating a positive school culture that supports shared vision; having worked in various roles and multiple

schools before becoming the current principal, he noticed how the school focused on creating a schedule for multiple collaborations per week. Paul explained:

> I create a collaborative, positive school culture where the teachers could appreciate spending time working together towards common goals to reduce suspension rates and implement best practices to support teachers in being more productive in their workload while managing student's behavior.

All the participants provided mentioned the protected time for their school's collaboration. Ada had one of the most thorough structures of the positive school culture, focusing on collaboration among the participants. Ada discussed how she implements her structure in the school to allow teachers to complete the necessary workload and still have time to help students cope with their behaviors since the Ontario Ministry of Education requirements for teachers is vast. The implications that adhere to the argument of race-conscious policies and affirmative action policies consider race as the critical factor in student requirements (Vue, Haslerig, & Allen, 2017). At Ada's school, she meets with her teachers mostly once a week to review and review data and monitor students' behaviors, assessments, or activities completed the previous week to analyze the teachers' skills to teach the students. Ada said they use their outfitted school conference room and the readily accessible school data that allows her to look briefly. School administrators seem to have been implementing a disproportionate disciplinary policy that increases the student's chances of suspension penalty (Puckett et al., 2019). Jane noted the importance of having structures to help teachers control students' misbehavior while attending to their workload helps avoid disciplinary actions with the intention of disproportionality. The penalty of suspension contributes to lack of racial diversity and stereotypes in school results in criminalization behavior disrupting the student's opportunity to

learn because teachers are maybe facing challenges to communicate or collaborate with students (George et al., 2016).

        Data-driven focus. The participants explained that reducing the suspension rate and proving their achievements is by tracking their success records. The school principals acknowledge that focusing on data-driven policy implementation provides a goal to develop positive school culture. Jane shared a document that focused on data, outlining the steps: (1) collect data, (2) analyze data to prioritize the needs, (3) set, review, and revise the SMART goals, (4) select common approaches, (5) determine the results, and (6) monitor and evaluate the results. Other participants also expressed the importance of reviewing data to implement any disciplinary policy for successful planning modification to meet student needs. Sara desired to be a school principal because she could significantly reduce the increasing suspension rate in her school by getting involved in the data analysis process before her current role. Mary said,

        It is helpful to review data, especially when you take over a new position to track record.

        I look at the suspension ratings yearly and dig deep with the staff to use the data as a

        guide to achieve my vision.

        Ada noted that "it is important to review suspension rates in the district and seek intervention strategies then apply the best practices for improvement."

        Divina believed in the strength of data-driven focus as the best practice of aligning school performance with policy implementation. Esha communicated the same thoughts about aligning best practices in disciplinary policy to develop positive school culture as the Ontario Ministry of Education outlined. Implementing materialist policies in any school is an idealist interpretation of race supremacy, making the schools encounter inadequate protocols and publicity to transform to the status quo (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). Also, Mateo said that he

reviews data and creates room for data that did not exist during his district's training before becoming the current school principal. Divina noted that "as a former member of the equity department, I had access to many data concerning suspension from many schools." Divina looked for an opportunity and constantly thought of the best refinement approach to reduce the suspension rate and the reinforcement plan to develop positive school culture. Paul said that it was easier to make data-supported decisions when implementing any policy or practices. Paul noted,

> I believe that reviewing the data about the suspension rate in the district was easier to develop an intervention model for our school, which was tremendous in helping us analyze the disciplinary policy and implement practices to reduce the suspension rate successfully in the past three years.

> Fan expressed a direct correlation between data-driven disciplinary policy and implementing the best practice that reduces suspension rate, positively impacting student achievement. Angela shared that her approach to reduce the suspension rate has directly impacted her school performance and growth. School administrators who use collaboration meetings for data-driven decisions and aligned planning provide a shared vision to reduce suspension rates and promote student success (Bush et al., 2016).

> **Common vision.** The participants noted many points of a shared vision to their employees as practical approaches to have reduced suspension rate in their school. Mary explained that with the help of her staff, they had reduced the suspension rate, and there are structures in place to continue with the success and create positive school culture. Mary also discussed how she got the isolated students involved because she thinks everybody needs to feel important that they are part of its sustainability. Sara shared how she makes things happen in her

school to reduce the suspension rate by sharing her vision with the staff members and making them believe that they can handle students' misbehavior without escalating it to suspension. Ada noted, "I feel the staff and the students all believe in our vision; we display our vision focus everywhere on the school to remind everyone." Creating a common vision corresponds with a data-driven focus allowing the teachers to focus on students' needs based on existing data records Ada stated. Esha stated that the administration could investigate the students' needs to decide how to help them best from feedback or by reviewing the increasing suspension rate in the district. Also, having a common vision requires analyzing the staff, students' needs, creating the positive culture desired within the school-look at the data, and viewing progress (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). Jane noted, "it makes the plan easier to implement by knowing what you want and involving everyone with the vision you want to achieve, follow up with the plans because implementing any policy or practice requires that you check the results." Educational administrators and teachers know the specific areas beneficial to the students more than policy statements (Bush et al., 2016). Principals show the importance of the process put in place, and follow up on those expectations, while the teachers see the value in these measures. Sara noted that teachers share common data of criticizing students' behavior without putting effort to control them at first, but that changed when they went through professional training on coping with the students. Sara noted that:

> "now the teachers feel safer to manage the student's misbehavior first before reporting it because nobody can ask, "why are you doing that?" or "that is not a rigorous activity" since we are working together to reduce suspension rate for our school."

Analyzing the documents from TDSB websites shows several policies and procedures that prevent improper professional activities for protection against reprisal-related reports of

suspected wrongdoing within the school ("Reporting of Suspected Wrongdoing (Whistleblowing)," 2014). Fan explained that a common vision allows the team to introduce a concept with a follow-up that promotes her school leadership team meeting and the administrator's involvement. A culminating report of the collaborative's work improves any policy and practice while eliminating discipline disparities (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). Esha shared that she involves everyone to best support minority students by creating common assessments that allow them to analyze and understand these student's needs more effectively. Mateo said that the continuous changes in the district policy are with more responsibilities that yield little or no result, so having a common vision and working as a team helps him and the teachers more effectively accomplish their goals. Bhopal and Chapman (2018) discussed that increasing the availability of practical and evidence-based interventions requires developing a positive school culture policy agenda for reform to improve equity in school discipline.

Theme Two: School Suspension

Theme two provides an insight into the second research question that sort to understand the administrators' perspectives on current policy addressing student discipline and disproportionality within their school settings. Principals shared structures they have to sustain their reduced school suspension rate that allowed the emergence of the second theme, best practices for collaboration and instruction, and four identified sub-themes: students role, administrative role, suspension rate, and disciplinary policy.

Student role. The administrators showed their concern about how students neglect to review the school policy and fall victim to the harsh penalty suspension in their school. Ada shared, "I put structures in place that holds every student to the same standards and level of accountability." School administrators seem to have been implementing a disproportionate

suspension penalty (Puckett et al., 2019). Mateo said that it is essential to identify the students'

strengths and weaknesses to build capacity in the schools by assigning the strong among them to

lead and advocate for the weak among them. Ada agreed that the principal would not attend a

school effectively alone because there must be students who can empower other students to cope

with their issues and make decisions in the best interest of the students. Paul expresses his

approach to building capacity through students. Paul said,

> I build capacity in everyone, including the custodians, secretaries, students, and teachers,
>
> because we have rotating leadership team for three years. Serving in a leadership role
>
> broadens their perspective and collaboration to discuss and communicate decisions across
>
> their peer. I focus on involving the leaders in the curriculum planning teams to develop
>
> assessments, review data, and make recommendations for the next steps.

Ada noted that students need to be more involved in the policy development to create awareness

of the penalty involved and the only way to reach out to more students is through collaboration

with their representatives. Paul explained that the most significant impact on collaboration is that

there is more awareness in the decisions because the students have all the information and are

part of the process from the beginning. Paul also noted that students need to play influential roles

in reading and gain information on the school requirements to reduce their penalty rate. Mateo

said that new students sometimes shy away from asking their peers to help them because they

often feel that they might have a teacher who may have time to tell them everything. Ada said

that students need to have good relationships with their fellow students to extend to their teachers

to help develop positive school culture. Paul said that developing a culture of understanding can

allow teachers and students to support minority students to improve their academic achievement

and personality. Other participants also contributed their administrators' perspectives on how

students play a role in the current policy addressing student discipline and disproportionality within their school settings.

   Administrative role. Educational administrators should trust their followers to provide them with opportunities suited to their abilities in creating positive school culture. The participants perceive that the need helps their teamwork well with implementing the current policy in their school. Jane acknowledged the value of having a leadership team implement the continuous changing of policy in the district that yields no reduction in suspension rates. Fan said that the current policies do not change the ways the administrators perform their role because the suspension rate is still increasing, which could have slowed down from the intervention of the Covid-19. Mary also acknowledged that principals need to use their skills to help the minority students instead of depending on the district's policy as a guide. Fan explained that school administrators could play role models to the leadership team and create concepts they can learn from before reviewing the current policies. Jane pointed out that school principals need to build a good relationship with minority students before implementing policies. Mary said trust is a collective team effort where the administrator encourages others to act because it creates a collaborative culture. Fan explained that creating a trusting team trust is more accessible to delegating tasks and knowing the next issue to resolve around you. Jane said that trust works best with approaches to build a positive school culture where minority students will feel relaxed to abide by the rules. Students suspended through disciplinary action were nearly three times likely to have a juvenile justice contact in the following year (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). Jane explained that the principal needs to acknowledge that the students and the employees are the teams to build a positive school culture because the team needs to work together to build and make each other look good; both the school and the students should look good. Mary noted that

administrators who create a supportive environment also develop the capacity to empower teacher and student leaders to build that trust for positive school culture. School administrators responded that there was no alternative policy to discipline violent behaviors because minority students are grounded in cultural norms beyond public educators' control (Wallace, 2017). Fan added that creating supportive environments allows students and teachers to take the initiative to lead in the school with an influential culture of support. All the participants expressed their administrators' leadership responsibilities for best practices when implementing the current policy to reduce suspension rates in their schools.

Suspension rate. All the administrators in this study expressed their perspectives on current policy addressing student discipline and disproportionality within their school settings. The participants showed their concern about the increasing suspension rate that drives the minority students out of their schools. Students experience excessive contact with law enforcement, increasing criminal activity, and a less favorable school climate (Harris & Linder, 2018). Angela's perception regarding the current policy is that there is still an increasingly disproportionate number of students in the suspension penalty. Angela said that Black students, the new minority students, and students with disabilities suffer more from the disproportionate penalty because most principals see them as bad students before entering their classrooms. Esha explained that teachers lack patience and tolerance with students, making the current and the subsequent ones hard to implement without more suspension. Esha said,

> The new minority students need discipline from home to make it easier for us; some of
> them come late to school without excuses, no call to let the school know of their truancy,
> while others are rude to their peers. I do to issue a warning, but it does not work because
> they keep returning to the principal's office for detention and suspension.

Esha explained that school administrators need to encourage social and academic integration where the students will be busy building a good relationship to improve their personality and schoolwork. Out of the classroom leads to punishments, causing disruption that often becomes the permanent departure, such as drop out of school (Bottiani et al., 2016). Angela said,

> I try to engage the students when they come into the office because the suspension is not the best result. I prevent sending students out from the classroom by training teachers to correct and tolerate students' behaviors rather than pushing students out of the classroom because most of the students are intentionally looking forward to going out of the classroom.

Angela agrees that the current policy also results in the classroom's unnecessary isolation that strips students of the opportunity to learn. Implementing suspension as a policy penalty promotes academic failure, mental health problems, gang activity, and substance abuse (Wallace, 2017). The participants contributed their experience on how other school administrators struggling to reduce suspension rates in their school could learn to work effectively.

Disciplinary policy. The school administrators in this study revealed that the current and the previous disciplinary policy are harsh on minority students and students with a disability because of racism and classroom bias. Sara said that there had not been any positive changes in the policy since the removal of ZTP because there are still increasing suspension rates in the district. Divina explained that the minority students overrepresents in the increasing suspension rates because of racial discipline disparities. Sara discussed how she works with her team to sustain the reduced suspension rates in their school, yet sometimes they still struggle with students taking ownership of their responsibilities. Divina explained that the teacher struggles

with working with the minority students to focus and respond to the schoolwork and making it difficult to control their behavior. Sara said that sometimes the teachers do more work than the parents should be disciplining their children on how to behave and be a social fit. Divina said that teachers should believe in themselves and support a positive belief in their students because they are the next generation. The participants expressed their concerns on how school administrators depend more on the disciplinary policy than their skill to develop positive school culture.

Theme Three: Unequal Learning

Theme three provides insight into research question three that sought to explore factors that administrators in Ontario consider when addressing student discipline in their schools. The participants in this study discussed the various considerations they must not overlook in their administrative plans to develop a positive learning culture within their school settings. Schools have volatile issues requiring urgent attention to improve educational philosophies, instruction, and curriculum design that meet minority students (Yuan, 2017). The three sub-themes extracted in this theme are diversity, population, and minority students.

Diversity. The participants in this study acknowledge that their TDSB is a large school board with different ethnic backgrounds from various immigrants, but there is a lack of inclusion equity for minority students (Harris & Linder, 2018). Toronto's population has a consistent increase from 3.4 to 6.8 million or 49.6 % to 51.8 % between 2014 and 2018 ("Ontario Population Projections, 2018–2046," 2019). The administrators in this study revealed that they have the best interest of their minority students when developing positive school culture. Ada said that she values the multicultural curriculum to meet the need for racial diversity in her school. Ada said,

We have many students in our school, and our community is diverse, but there are

minority students among us. Although we consider diversity in our approach to building

positive school culture, the suspension rate still goes up and down in our district. My

teachers and I are doing a great job of helping.

Ada also confirmed that the TDSB location is the most populated district school board in

the province, and there is an increase in disproportion school suspension ("Suspension and

Expulsion Facts, 2014-2016," 2019). Like what Ada said, Paul pointed out that there are various

programs outside of classrooms that the district allows the school to provide for minority

students, such as Afrocentric, athletics, technology, and specialized arts programs to engage

students ("Afrocentric Secondary Programs," 2014). The participants agree that they implement

the programs in their school to encourage diversity of culture when building a positive learning

environment. Paul said, "I encourage the teachers to help African students enroll in the

Afrocentric Program to learn sources for African-centered knowledge and perspectives that

create a rich and diverse academic achievement." Mateo noted that her school implements other

district programs focusing on diversity to build positive school culture. Mateo said, " I consider

diversity a lot when implementing any approach in the school; we apply the Prevention and

Intervention Programs to collaborate with students. If any students see any inappropriate activity

or any students in isolation, they can report to the teachers." The TDSB developed the

Prevention and Intervention Programs to promote a safe, inclusive, and accepting learning

environment in collaboration with staff, students, and community to address inappropriate

student behavior to build strategies that foster positive behaviors ("Prevention and Intervention

Programs," 2014). Paul also said that some of the programs they implement are promoting harsh

suspension penalties for minority students because they are yet to know the school system and

fall victim to the harsh penalty. All the participants express how they consider diversity in their approach to build positive school culture.

Population. The administrators considered population as a challenge when implementing an approach to develop positive school culture. Some of the participants shared challenges they face in sustaining the reduced suspension rates in their schools. The students with disabilities must gain adequate care rather than getting deprived of quality education because of the disproportionate policy penalty (Bottiani et al., 2016). Esha spoke of the need for coaches and mentors to lighten the teachers' load because of the student population. Students that display any mental deficiency need unlimited support in schools, but the problem is that most teachers lack the skill to tolerate such students (Naccarato, 2017). Esha said,

Some students need special attention but with the workload for the teachers, especially those who take the lead in the school have other responsibilities with so many students. These students suffer since there could be little or no time to attend to their needs.

Sara noted that the teachers could impede the reduced suspension rate because of the many students they need to attend to while struggling with their workload. Angela also explained that some teachers need extra training on coping with many students' behavior when encouraging diversity because most of the students may not understand the teacher's intention. School administrators need to provide professional development courses for competent teachers to deal with students with disabilities with behavior problems (Naccarato, 2017). Angela pointed out that her school population often struggles to manage what they receive from the district to be part of some programs. While Divina said, "It does make a difference when you have enough time and resources to complete the amount of work the teachers have. They should get some incentive according to their students' population." Education for Persons with Disabilities in Ontario

revealed that publicly funded schools in the province received 12.5% of students, over 260,000

children with activity limitation, emotional problems, and learning disabilities in the fall of 2000.

Divina explained that the schools' administrators and teachers need more time and more

curriculum coaches to help control students' behaviors and develop influential positive school

culture. Sara said she would be great to have extra coaches, one per subject area per core subject

area, more resources for technology such as laptops and camera to shadow teachers' activities

and get the information out to the students efficiently.

Minority student. The participants expressed their challenges on considering the

minority students in their large schools since the district is the largest in Ontario, having new

immigrants to join the diversity of students, making them few among the many. The GTA

receives international migration for young age structures more than the other parts of the

province, having little or no emigration among young adults ("Ontario Population Projections,

2018–2046," 2019). Jane said that to differentiate for our students, there should be differentiation

for the teachers as well to meet the needs for everything purposeful." Mary explained that she

struggled with differentiating resources and available problems to meet the needs of the minority

students as it is hard to help the new immigrant students with their adjustment problems. Fan

explained that differentiation is still a work in progress in her school, but she expressed how she

works to integrate the new students into the school programs to know more about their society.

Fan said, "everyone receives the same program based on overall school data and observations."

Implementing disparities promotes public-school suspensions for the minority and students with

a disability (Puckett et al., 2019). Jane noted that she applies the best practices to orient the new

students by training or meeting teachers to provide new students from the student leaders. Mary

explained how she uses data-driven instruction to analyze the student needs, such as informal

observations for feedback from the students' leaders to know how the new students can gain academic achievement. In Ontario, Canada, some educational administrators overlook the Education Act established in 1980 that demands extensive procedural protections for exceptional students with disabilities ("The Education Act," 2020). Mary said that his school reviews data as the purpose and rationale for adjustments because he wants to provide student-oriented programs to support the minority. Jane said, " I struggle to differentiate and meet the needs of all minority students because there are so many mandates for me to handle, but the teachers help with formal observations as a primary way to differentiate these students' needs." Most educational administrators use out-of-school suspension more as a disciplinary tool, making the minority students and students with a disability experience multiple times suspension than the other peers (Yuan, 2017). Mary said she is currently working on intervention techniques to help the minority students through their classroom instruction to help develop positive school culture. The intervention programs help the administrators manage students' anger, peer mediation, and community recreation ("Prevention and Intervention Programs," 2014). Fan also said that they have minority students in mind in their approach to develop positive school culture. Mary said, "I encourage the new students to find the best multicultural programs and to be aware of the school policy for enrichment.

Theme Four: Leadership Development

The fourth theme to emerge improved knowledge regarding the research question four that sought to address what alternatives to zero-tolerance do administrators in Ontario recommend addressing student discipline and reduce disproportionality rates for student's suspension. Participants shared their administrative experiences with the disciplinary policy in correspondence with the identified themes and how the challenges could impede success in

reducing the increasing suspension rates in the district. The participants also discussed how the leadership development approach influenced their ability to reduce the suspension rate in their school, which included focus, visibility, communication, and involvement.

Teacher and Student leader. The school administrators in this study revealed that they have the best interest of their students at the forefront. Some participants identified how they develop students and teachers to help the needy and isolated students. Mateo said, "I have student leadership, which is structured to meet the students' needs best, and the students are willing to collaborate with the school to attain their common goals." Mateo expressed his focus on student-oriented leadership, knowing that sometimes she could make hard decisions. Mateo stated,

> When I implement rules hoping that the procedure could be passed across by my teachers and the student leaders as the representative, knowing that the decisions I make focus on the students' needs. The school needs in order: students, teachers, and then the school.

Mateo explained that his alternative to ZTP is focusing on the students as she can only get reports directly from the students' leader because the students know that her approach is for their best interest and school success is the primary goal. Paul began his career as a teacher before becoming an administrator; he learned specific leadership styles from his role models that focused on appointing a student-oriented leader. Paul explained that student-oriented focuses all on the students when making any decision such as an alternative to ZTP because it is not practical to build positive school culture. The ZTP is ineffective because it ruins students' lives and creates more work for society; the policies do worse than the right to disruptive behavior (Harris & Linder, 2018). Paul explained that the administrative role is not just doing the paperwork but ensuring that the discipline was under control, focusing on curriculum, but the

procedure is more effortless when there is a student leader representative. Students who experience maltreatment, victimization, neglect, physical or sexual abuse have a wide range of harmful outcomes and risk further problems when they do not integrate within their learning environment (Mallett, 2016). Paul also noted that school administrators could learn to build a good relationship with the teachers and the students when developing any positive school culture, which could be effective by having leaders speak for the principal. Mateo said that the alternative to ZTP is to build a good relationship with the student rather than driving them away through suspension because the no-tolerance disciplinary policy has ruined a lot of students' life. The school system's negative impact on ZTP implementation is the increasing suspension of minority male students (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015). Mateo expressed his abilities to manage the school expectations and responsibilities through student-focused leadership as an alternative to implementing a tolerance policy that negatively affects student's success. Implementing organizational change requires a sensitive approach to encourage diversity in everyday professionalism and mindsets (Slay et al., 2019). Mateo expressed his leadership approach on how he tries to integrate students through student leaders. Mateo explained that minority students or students who feel isolated could learn from others how to socialize. Implementing ZTP within the school districts has an inequitable impact on individual students, not only on minority lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender adolescents (Mallett, 2016). Paul also explained that he involves student leaders in his decision-making because he believed that the student leaders could advocate for the students who violate the disciplinary policy before he directs the penalty on the students. Many students are already vulnerable and are at risk for difficulties because of a specific individual, family, community-based characteristics, experiences, and harms (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015).

Involvement. The school administrators discussed that one of the alternatives to implementing ZTP to reduce suspension rate and improve positive school culture is by involving others in decision-making, especially before implementing any disciplinary penalty. Ada explained that involving others such as the student in planning is imperative for administrators to know the students' outcome. Jane inherited the current administrative structure that was working well for the school, and she could engage in the process with the staff, parents, community, and the students because she knew them while she served as a teacher. Before she went into administration, Jane's vision was that other principals in her career could not perform as she hoped for, such as improving students' success, developing positive school culture, and reducing the suspension rate. Any administrative decision-making that does not involve the students could become a problem of significant disparities because these students could be ignorant of their behavior, resulting in disproportionate minority contact with the juvenile justice system (Mallett, 2016). Ada wanted to have a more significant role in the collaboration process where she involves everyone to come in and fix things. Ada explained that the ZTP affected the disabled and the minority of students in their school because there was no collaboration between them and the previous school principals, resulting from the disproportionate discipline policies penalty (Nance, 2015). Ada currently focuses on building leadership team planning that involves all students, the teachers, and the community to address the need of everyone. Ada noted,

> You can tell me the problem; I want to fix it if something is going wrong. I insist on knowing because I like the school to be functioning. I criticize any misbehavior that requires severe punishment, but they let me know if they are happy or not and what can be better.

Mary works diligently to involve everyone in her administrative plan to help her monitor and receive feedback. Mary's alternative to ZTP is providing resources that help students cope with their behaviors because they could be lacking care from home, and Paul gets these needed resources by involving others to share his vision of developing positive school culture. Mary explained that it is necessary to create a supportive environment that provides feedback structures for dealing with students' behaviors for success. Most schools implement contradicting policy that affects student perspective on affirmative action revealing that racism impacts school decisions on ethnicity (Warikoo & de Novais, 2015). Mary said that developing g healthy relationship with students is the key to implementing an alternative ZTP for the students to successfully and maintain ace positive school culture. Ada shared that creating disciplinary structures that continue to reduce suspension rates is necessary for helping the students feel less isolated and see school as their comfort zone. Mary talked about having a system to help students struggling with their bad behavior to know why education is essential. Educational administrators have implemented the disciplinary policy by considering some factors for students' psychological and academic development to be receptive and knowledgeable about learning environments, such as effective communication to assign proper punishment (Nation et al., 2016). Jane expresses the importance of providing students with everything they need to experience success and said, "these students need a listening ear, not suspension for minor offenses." Also, Mary involves others in his works to let his team know they are valuable to the school's success and said, "We let them know we are thankful that you are here to learn with us. I want to make sure these students have what they need." Implement academic diversity requirements for all students as an alternative to ZTP to inspire a multicultural curriculum demands that the diversity curriculum answers educational and social injustice (Patton et al.,

2019). The participants expressed different ways they involve others in their administrative plans to develop positive school culture.

       Administrative visibility. Another point that the participants mentioned as the alternative policy to replace the ZTP is visible to the followers. Divina's school has weekly meetings where she interacts with her followers. Sara said, "I start my day walking the classroom hallway to monitor the students and talk to my teachers. How are you? Do you need anything from me?" Divina also noted the importance of being visible on the school and said,

       I am always visible here at school during the day and have an open-door policy. I always

       tell them that if they have problems, I have solutions. I will help figure out a solution if

       you bring me your problems." Divina said; she was visible by saying good morning to

       have that positive outlook whether I feel like it or not, I will show my face.

       A visible presence promotes a healthy climate of collaboration where administrators can build positive school culture (Harris & Linder, 2018). Sara expressed her thoughts regarding being visible on her school and said,

       I feel that being visible to give feedback and taking opinions, reports into consideration,

       and being receptive to their contributions helps build that relationship. Although I may

       not have an open-door policy, the students and teachers know that I am approachable

       because we have created a positive learning environment. After, I have moved around to

       know when an environment is not conducive for followers to interact.

       Sara expressed how being approachable could build good relationships and supports a positive school culture. Sara shared her thoughts on being visible as an experience she gained from her previous school administrator and said,

It is helpful to see than hear when you walk down the classroom hallways, even if you are too busy. Allow the students, the teachers, and other staff to see that you are around; just walk around slowly down the hall to greet the students and teachers. Your presence would make them think that you have time for them even though you have much workload at hand.

Participants saw administrator visibility as valuable in the school as an alternative to ZTP and an effective way to build a positive school culture where administrators are approachable and the teachers and the students feel driven to strive for common goals.

Communication. Another point that the administrators saw important as an alternative to implementing ZTP in their school is communicating with the people to impact school performance positively. Angela said she feels that open communication is essential except for emergent situations that do not allow collaboration. Angela said,

I am transparent in everything that does, and I like to get the followers' input through communication because this is their school." I want them to tell me what is working and not working. I also believe that my teachers know they can say anything to me, and I listen. Though I could make a hard and fast decision, I believe in open communication all the time.

Angela also values open communication as an alternative to implementing ZTP because she had experienced principals who were not open communicators in her career and never appreciated that style. Angela said she developed a leadership style of forming healthy relationships with people through communication and listening to understand their needs; then, she implements all the information in his strategies to build positive school culture. Angela

pointed out that she created an open door for communication for everyone to reach out to her before making decisions. Angela said,

> Students commit offensive behavior while at school, and the teachers need to let me know about it while I call the student to hear from their side. The student can bring in the student leader to advocate for them before implementing something because they know that I will check by listening to what they say.

Angela also noted the value of having the teachers who do most of the work because it is easier to communicate with them to know what they need to impact student achievement to be aware of what is happening in the school. She noted that the administration needs to listen to feedback to knows the students' needs or any problem in their learning environment because the information could only flow back and forth through communication to get feedback. Angela noted that working in isolation does not yield a positive result because teachers and students feel comfortable talking about their school experience. Participants shared their experiences that open lines of communication allow teachers and students to develop an understanding of expectations to feel comfortable in expressing concerns to their administrators.

Student Oriented. The school administrators in this study focus on the structures drawn to value students' future as an alternative to implementing zero-tolerance as a disciplinary approach that promoted disproportion in penalty rates. The participants apply the best approach to focus on students to tackle behavioral issues in their school to increase social, economic, and health disparities to plague marginalized communities (Cummings & Bain, 2017). Esha's leadership approach focused on being present to attend to students' emotional need as she expressed the significance of reaching out and listening to them by stating, " most of these students needs attention and being present in those meetings or just sitting there to listen and

contribute to the conversations, showing them that someone cares to help." Cummings and Bain (2017) discussed that there could be challenges if the school is overpopulated, lacking funds, and needed resources for the impoverished community. Fan explained that looking at data helps to decide on the students' needs. Fan said students are the ones who need intervention, and it feels great to attend to their needs in any alternative plans. Educational leaders need to learn the required skills and training to evaluate students' behavioral issues while involving the teachers, students, parents, and the community to organize a behavioral plan (Cummings & Bain, 2017). Esha explained that most students need to learn from others how to speak up about their needs; for example, the students who feel isolated can reach out to the students' leader, the teacher, or the principal. Esha said that her approach to developing positive school culture is student-oriented, demanding that teachers also reach out to students and start conversations. Students misbehaving in class could be because such students could be seeking the teacher's attention to share the trauma they face at home(Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015).

Fan noted that she values the review of data to understand the needs of these students and implement the approach to develop positive school culture. Fan focuses more on using data to improve student academic achievement as an alternative to implementing ZTP in his school. The ZTP contributes to the increasing suspension rates and criminal cases; the administrators create an alternative disciplinary policy to tackle behavioral issues to help restructure poor behavior for school safety by listening to and understand students' stories before releasing the suspension penalty (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015). In the focus group interview, Esha discussed that she reviews data to identify the needs of students and develop a student-oriented approach that supports their needs. School administrators and teachers' training requires functional rehabilitation models to undo the psychological, physical, and material damage incurred on

minority children (Miguel & Gargano, 2017). Fan said, "my employees can testify how I look into data a lot in all school facets to gain ideas to better the educational process. at school." Fan sees herself as a data-driven administrator who hopes never to give up on reducing suspension rates in her school. Cuellar and Markowitz (2015) explained that the best approach to reduce the suspension rate in schools is to evaluate the challenges that school administrators face when designing and implementing disciplinary policies to reduce violence. Fan continued that she opts for perfection in all things that she does to build that positive student by involving the students in all her decision-making instead of ZTP. School administrators need to use radical reform to build an equal learning environment and tackle institutional racism by dedicating time to training teachers to deal with problematic children that result in the school-to-prison pipeline (Cummings & Bain, 2017). Esha focus more on setting a vision that involves students because they are the center of education problem, he helps the isolated students feel comfortable to voice their needs. Educational administrators need to evaluate their decisions on how to discipline students' disorderly conduct before involving law enforcement because excess discipline can ruin the students, teachers, and the lives of the communities (Mallett, 2017). Esha also shared her experience with providing ideas that support her school vision, focusing on the student to encourage them to preserve as an alternative to implementing ZTP in her school. The school administrators that applied excessive discipline, such as suspension, creates an unsafe learning environment, and the only refinement is to developed positive school cultures to support or restore students' dignity with evidence-based discipline practices (Cummings & Bain, 2017).

The figure below presents the mind map to promote a positive school structure that the participants shared. Some participants shared the link to the district showing this mind map, while others talked about the shared link resources.

rates, and disciplinary policy. Fan shared how she put structures that hold students and employees accountable for their actions and responsibility. Fan said that her approach helps her gain more collaborations to achieve the shared goal for the school. Sara expresses how reviewing data guides her with an approach to build positive school culture. For example, reviewing suspension rates, student assessment, and discussing strategies helps Sara know the areas to focus on to achieve the school goals.

Research Question Three

What factors do administrators in Ontario consider when addressing student discipline in their schools? Research question three sought to understand factors that the administrators focus on when addressing disciplinary policy within their school settings. The participants shared their opinion that there are limited resources for their students' size. This research question supports the third theme generated in this study, which includes unequal learning, and three sub-themes identified diversity, population, and minority students. Divina said, "encouraging the students helps them to persevere and develop a positive personality. Divina said, "I use their strengths to help improve the school. I ask the leadership team for input before making decisions." Also, Marion noted that he gets information about the students through the students' leader to make the most significant impact in developing positive school culture. The school administrators face challenges in maintaining their reduced suspension rates because of time, funds, and other necessary resources. Paul explained the building trust is essential for administrators to create a culture to integrate the minority students because people trust you and feel confident to help achieve a shared vision.

Research Question Four

What alternatives to zero-tolerance do administrators in Ontario recommend addressing student discipline and reduce disproportionality rates? The fourth research question sought to know the participants' options to reduce suspension rates without practicing no tolerance in their schools. This theme emerges six sub-themes of student and teacher leadership, involvement, administrator visibility, communication, and student-oriented. Participants expressed their self-identified leadership responsibilities and shared how they support students and teachers. Ada expressed time is a significant factor for planning and implementing approaches to create positive school culture. Jane shared her belief that working together involves the principals being visible, open in the processes to be valued and maintained. Other participants expressed their concern that the minority students and teachers need to take ownership of responsibilities; for example, students with disabilities need more care from their teachers because of their special needs.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to describe the perspectives of school administrators in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. Ten school administrators from Toronto District School Board (TDSB) in Ontario, Canada, shared their experience of successfully reducing their schools' suspension rates. These ten school principals were eight females and two males from secondary schools in the district, from varying school types, grade levels, ethnicity, gender, and education level (Creswell, 2017). This study found out the participant demographics after receiving IRB approval and then contacting the school administrators. This chapter shows the participants' descriptions, participants' experiences, school demographics, and research findings corresponding to the generated themes based on the research questions. This study

presented the answered research questions following the discussion of the identified themes (See Table 7). This first research question was to understand administrators' experience of reducing suspension rates in their schools to build positive school culture. The participants expressed their perceptions of the previous ZTP and how they successfully reduced the suspension rates in their school, generating the ZTP that emerges three sub-themes of disciplinary actions, data-driven focus, common vision.

Table 7

Theme One: Response to Research Question One

Research Question One	Strategic Responses	Sub-themes	Theme One
What are the administrators' perspectives on implementing ZTP in Ontario schools on disproportionality?	Policy Vision| Student achievement| Mission Penalty guidelines| Violation| Integration| Persevere| Adjust vision| Positive culture| Escalate| Collaboration	Participants believe that the school administrators need to adjust their disciplinary action to align with building the positive school culture.	Zero Tolerance Policy
	Dig deep| Discuss strategy| Refinement| Reinforcement| Intervention| Best practices| Data supported	School principals in this study believe that administrators should apply data-driven focus when implementing policy.	

decisions| Alignment| School performance|		
Growth| Responsibility| Believe| Expectations| Focused | Vision| Support| Monitoring| Ownership| Actionable| Shared workload|	School administrators believe that the prior ZTP did not align with the common vision to develop an equal learning environment.	

Table 7: Response to Research Question One

The second research question explored administrators' concerns on the current policy and expressed their concern on the changing of disciplinary policy; which emerges the second theme is the school suspension with four sub-themes: student's role, administrative roles, suspension rates, and disciplinary policy (See Table 8).

Table 8

Theme Two: Responses to Research Question Two

Research Question Two	Strategic Response	Sub-themes	Theme Two
What are the administrators' perspectives on current policy addressing student discipline and	Partial penalty| Intervention| Integration| Vision| Mission| Student population| Learn from Others	School administrators believe that students have a role to play in building positive school culture.	School Suspension

disproportionality in Ontario schools?	Specialized assistance| More time for planning| Resources needed| Awareness| Impact| Policy implementation| Advocate| Involvement	School administrators believe that educational leaders have significant roles to play to build an equal learning environment.	
	School culture| Data| Negativity| Incompetence| Community support Suspension penalty| Data assessment| No parental support| Teachers support.	Participants believe that educational leaders should focus on the suspension data to tackle the increasing rates while building positive school culture.	
	Not believing| Purposeful| Student need| Varied assistant for	School principals in this study believe that policymakers need to align the disciplinary policy with data for	

| | students| Need-based support| Data for decision-making. | building positive school culture | |

Table 8: Response to Research Question Two

The third research question was to understand factors that the administrators focus on when addressing disciplinary policy within their school settings. This research question supported the third theme generated in this study, which includes unequal learning, and three sub-themes identified diversity, population, and minority students (See Table 9).

Table 9

Theme Three: Responses to Research Question Three

Research Question Three	Strategic Responses	Sub-themes	Theme
What factors do administrators in Ontario consider when addressing student discipline in their schools?	Equity| Racial diversity| Positivity| Multicultural curriculum.	The school administrators in this study revealed that educational leaders in their district should focus on the diversity of students when implementing disciplinary policy to develop positive school culture.	Unequal Learning
	Racial diversity| Encourage diversity|	School principals in this study believe that educational leaders in the	

School inequality| Racial privilege| Data	district should consider focusing on the student population when addressing disciplinary policy.
Adjustment problem| Harsh disciplinary action| Racial visibility| Disability differentiation| Isolation| Integration| Intervention| Academic achievement| Student-oriented program.	The participants believe that school administrators should consider helping the minority students to fit in the district and learn while developing positive school culture.

Table 9: Response to Research Question Three

The fourth research question sought to know the participants' options to reduce suspension rates without practicing no tolerance in their schools. This theme emerges six sub-themes of student and teacher leadership, involvement, administrator visibility, communication, and student-oriented (See Table 10).

Table 10

Theme Four: Responses to Research Question Four.

Research Question Four	Strategic Responses	Sub-themes	Theme
What alternatives to zero-tolerance do administrators in Ontario recommend addressing student discipline and reduce disproportionality rates?	Student| Student advocates| Integration| Positive supporter| Listener teamwork| Success| Share knowledge| Empowerment| Build capacity| Trust| Share vision| Collaboration| Input| Provide resources| Challenge staff| Enable others to act.	The participants in this study believe that school principals need to assign leadership roles to teachers and students as representatives to help build positive school culture.	Leadership Development
	Community and parental involvement in the Goalsetting| Planning| Provide resources| Recognition rewards|	School administrators in this study believe that it is necessary to involve others in implementing policy and the penalty to build positive school culture	

	Positive environment| Social integration| Academic integration| Vision| Leadership team|	and reduce the suspension rate in the district.
	Commitment| Dedicated| Data-driven| Contributing| Always present| Public speeches| Good listener| Accessibility| Open-door policy| Positive| Visible| Approachable| Feedback| Advocate.	The participants believe that administrators need to be visible to the students and the staff at all-time in the school environment when developing a positive school culture.
	Transparent| Listening to feedback| Get input|	School administrators believe that communication with the students and others

	Relationships strategies| communication| Giving feedback| Open-door policy.	involved in the policy is the key to developing positive school culture in the district.
	Student needs| Best for students| Programs| In it together| Structures| Curriculum| Fairness for all| Accountability.	Educational administrators believe that disciplinary policy should be student-oriented when building positive school culture.

Table 10: Response to Research Question Four

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the perspectives of school administrators in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. This study narrates the participants' experience gathered from the collection and analysis of data. This study presented the identified themes generated from the 10 school administrators' stories during their participation. This chapter focused on showing the shared participants' experiences explored through individual audio-recorded interviews, reviewed documents, and focus group interviews. The data analysis from this study corresponds with the plan outlined in Chapter Three. In Chapter four, this study showed the detailed analysis of themes and participants' statements. While this chapter includes the following sections: (a) an overview of the chapter, (b) a summary of the findings, (c) a discussion of the findings and the implications considering the relevant literature and theory, (d) an implications section, (e) an outline of the study delimitations and limitations, and (f) recommendations for future research before concluding in summary.

Summary of Findings

This qualitative case study research was in the Toronto area, the Southern Ontario Region, Canada, known as the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) but mainly focused on the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). This study shared the experience of 10 administrators who successfully reduced their schools' suspension rates within the last three years. These 10 school principals were all from different secondary school types in the TDSB (Grade 07 to 12). The study presents four significant themes from the data analysis of participants' experience shared

through the online audio-recorded interview, a focus group, and documents: Zero Tolerance

Policy, School Suspension, Unequal Learning, and Leadership Development in this chapter.

The first central theme is the Zero Tolerance Policy. The first research question guiding

this study addresses the administrators' perspectives on implementing ZTP in Ontario schools on

disproportionality. This research question sought to understand administrators' experience of

reducing suspension rates in their schools to build positive school culture within the past three

years. The first theme, Zero Tolerance Policy, emerges three sub-themes of best approaches (1)

disciplinary actions, (2) data-driven focus, and (3) common vision. The school administrators'

participants express their roles in sustaining their reduced suspension rates, as they discussed

how harsh the previous ZTP affected the TDSB schools. The administrators explained the first

sub-theme that they collaborate with the students to create awareness of the school disciplinary

actions. The participants explained that they still struggle to sustain the reduced suspension rates

and build positive school culture. The participants also explained the second sub-theme that data-

driven focus helps analyze what to include in their practice and policy implementation. The

school principals in this study encourage other educational leaders in the district to work together

to help the minority students feel less isolated, reduce suspension rates in the schools and

improve academic success. The third sub-theme, common vision, is deemed beneficial in

creating a positive school culture that is supportive of a common vision where everyone is

working toward goal accomplishment. In response to research question one, all the

administrators agree that the ZTP was not the best approach to build positive school culture in

their school setting. The chart below shows the shared experiences that demonstrated the

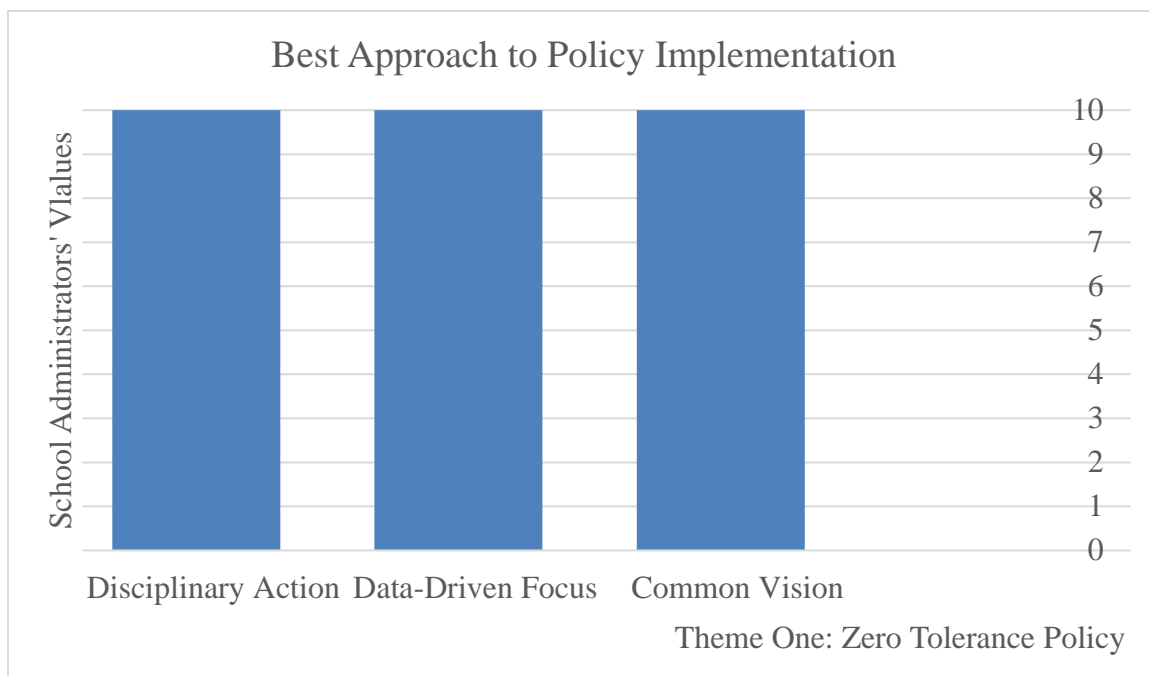participants' belief in the ZTP components.

Figure 2: Frequency of Value for the Best Approach to Implementing Policy

The Second central theme includes School Suspension. The second research question that guides this study was understanding the administrators' perspectives on current policy addressing student discipline and disproportionality in Ontario schools. Research question two explored administrators' experience with the current policy in their school setting. The participants revealed that the current policy had not made any positive change in the district because some principals still practice racial disparity in their schools. The participants expressed their concern on the changing of policy, which emerge; the second theme is the school suspension with four sub-themes: (1) Student's role, (2) administrative roles, (3) suspension rates, and (4) disciplinary policy. The participants shared their approach to putting students and employees accountable for their actions and responsibility to achieve the school goal more effectively. Three school administrators identified students' role as guides to implementing the current policy to build positive school culture. Another three participants contributed an administrative role in the sub-theme when sharing their experience implementing the current policy in the school setting. The

two other school administrators shared how reviewing the suspension rate could guide the current policy. Lastly, the remaining school principals expressed their concern about how the administrators' practice disciplinary policy could be increasing school suspension in their district. The chart below presents the value of the participants' identified sub-themes.
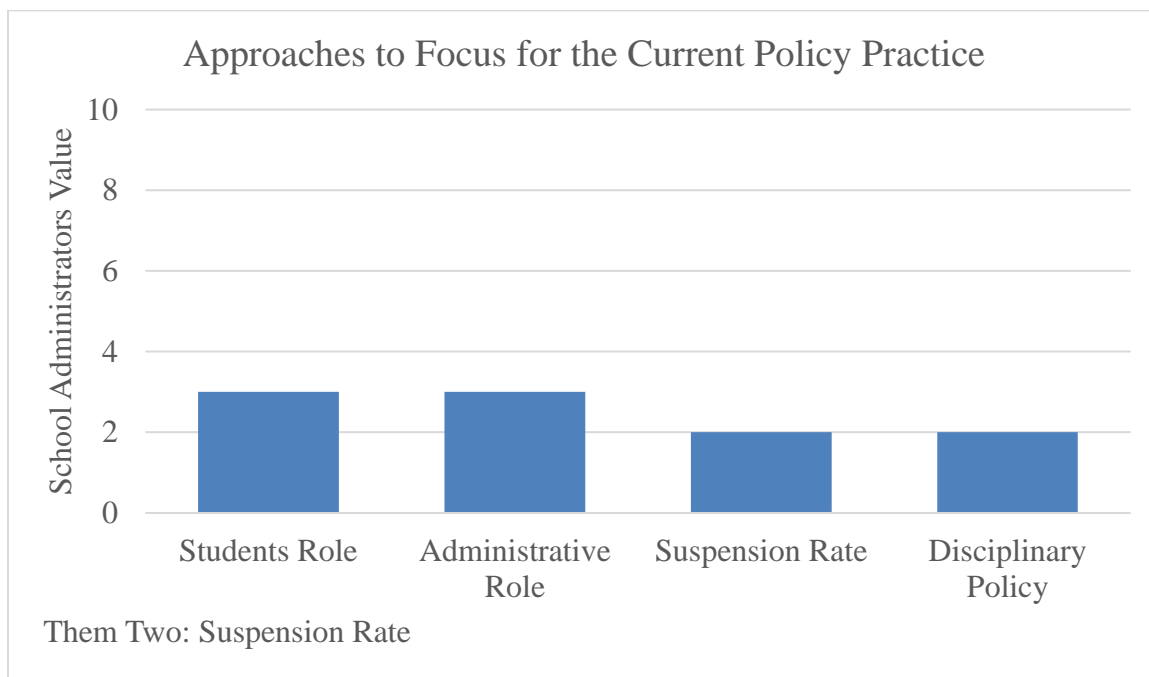

Approaches to Focus for the Current Policy Practice

Them Two: Suspension Rate

Figure 3: Value of the Approaches for the Current Policy Practice

The third central theme includes Unequal Learning. The third research question sought to understand factors that the administrators focus on when addressing disciplinary policy within their school settings. The participants shared their opinions while identifying the third theme, which includes unequal learning, and three sub-themes identified (1) diversity, (2) population, and (3) minority students. Three school administrators identified the sub-theme diversity as one of the challenges to focus on when addressing disciplinary policy. Also, four participants identified the population in their discussion as one factor to consider when implementing disciplinary policy. The other three school administrators identified minority students as the most significant factor to consider when developing positive school culture. The school administrators

face challenges in maintaining their reduced suspension rates because of time, funds, and other necessary resources to create a culture to integrate the minority students into their school settings. The chart below shows the values that the participants identified in the sub-themes.
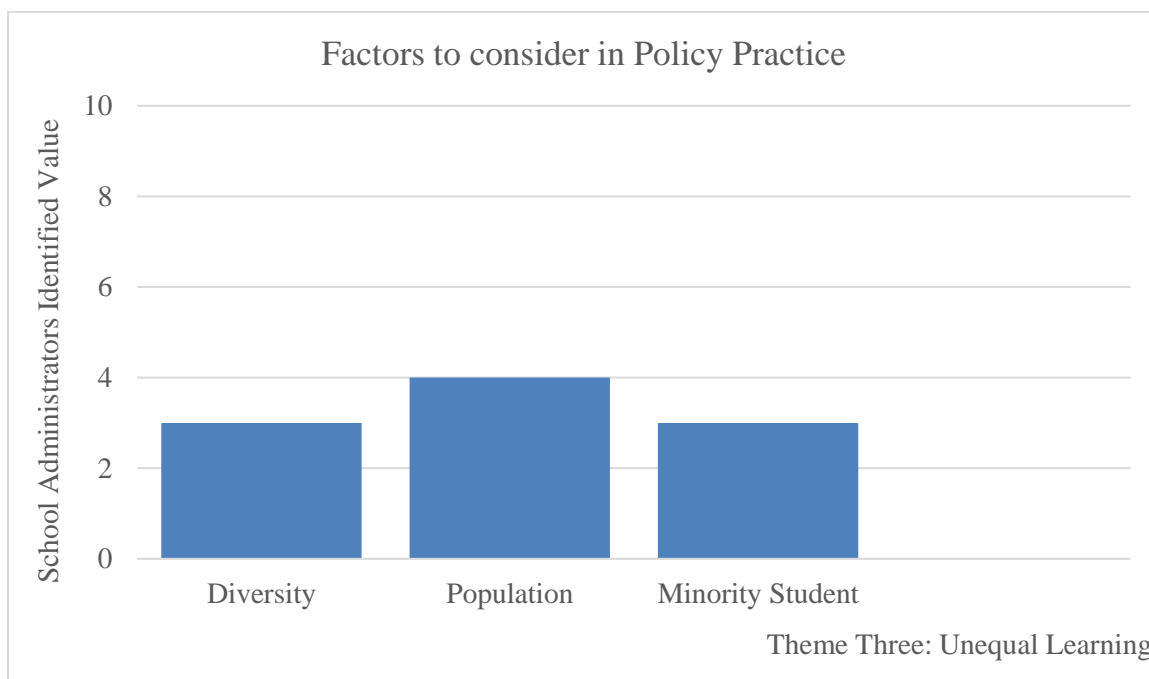

Figure 4: Factors to Consider in Policy Practice

The fourth central theme generated from this study is Leadership Development. The fourth research question guides this study to understand the alternatives to zero-tolerance that administrators in Ontario recommend when addressing student discipline and reducing disproportionality rates. This theme emerges five sub-themes of (1) student and teacher leadership, (2) involvement, (3) administrator visibility, (4) communication, and (5) student-oriented. Participants expressed their self-identified leadership responsibilities and shared how they support students and teachers. Two participants identified teacher and student leaders as sub-theme when expressing their concern that the minority students and teachers need to take ownership of responsibilities; for example, students with disabilities need more care from their teachers because of their special needs. Three administrators identified sub-theme of

involvement with the community and everybody to provide everything necessary to support teachers to educate students. Another two administrators identified sub-theme of administrative visibility as another area where participants noted the importance of encouraging developing positive school culture. One participant identified communication because not all administrators implement an open-door policy or having others contribute to better the school's vision. The last two administrators identified students-oriented as the sub-theme in their experiences of focusing more on the students when implementing policy or addressing other approaches to develop a positive culture within their school settings. The chart below shows the value of the fourth theme generated in this study.
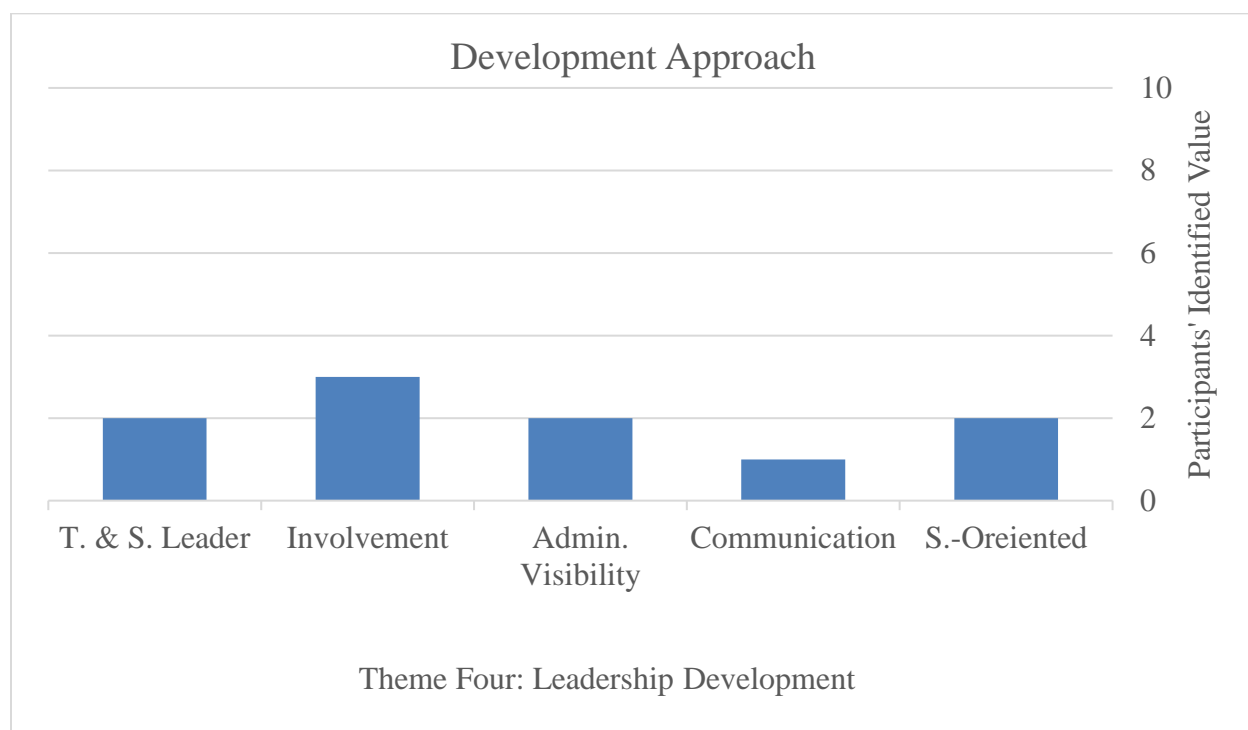

Figure 5: Theme Four: Leadership Development

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of school administrators in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and

suspension rates for minority students. The participants in this study showed excellent

knowledge as their roles are enlightening in reducing the increasing suspension rates and

developing positive school culture for minority students. The findings in this study align with

Cross's (1971) nigrescence theory that later developed into the Black identity development

theory (Ritchey, 2014), encouraging the minority students to identify and internalize positive

thoughts in their school.

Empirical Literature

This research was minimal on school administrators' experiences with Ontario policies

and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for

minority students. When educational leaders promote an atmosphere to encourage and empowers

teachers, they could develop a positive school culture such as academic and social integration to

create an equal learning environment (Bush et al., 2016). Empowering teachers and minority

students pave the way to effectively accomplish responsibilities with a shared approach (Bottiani

et al., 2017). Mateo expressed, "success comes through collaboration from teachers and students

or anyone in the leadership." Mateo's leadership encourages teachers to help students manage

their behavior rather than issuing penalties for their violation. School principals need to build a

mutual relationship of trust, caring, and a positive attitude to prevent or tackle students'

behavioral issues (Bush et al., 2016). Divina explained that there are accessible resources and

meetings for school administrators to continue improving their employees to build positive

school culture. A trustworthy school administrator can create environments focused on common

goals and build capacity by tapping into various strengths staff members possess (Puckett et al.,

2019). Esha expressed the importance of trusting before tackling any issues, and Divina shared

that "empowering others to act makes work easier like relying on the teacher leaders to work

when there is trust." Implementation of approaches for positive school culture is the responsibility of school administrators (Nyirenda et al., 2020).

Jane said that "putting the structures in place is the role of the school principal to create a positive learning environment and is important to be visible." Sara expressed the benefit that school administrators could gain for making out time to recognize the teachers and students to encourage them to do more, and Ada shared how her behavior establishes the tone for the school. School principals should create a welcoming learning environment for minority students by collaborating with teachers to support these students when they feel isolated to improve the school culture (Ritchey, 2014) efficiently. Mateo explained how most minority students feel isolated and misbehave; at this point, the teachers and other employees find it challenging to collaborate with such students when they loath others while they feel isolated from their community (Ritchey, 2014). Esha shared how her approach solidifies her knowledge of the minority students' experience because she analyzes these students' work to develops plans for positive school culture. Understanding the needs of minority students demands a mission development that incorporates analysis and discussion of how to remove suspension as a penalty option to focus more on helping these students feel less isolated (Cherkowski, 2016). Mary suggested that school principals involve their teachers in collaboration meetings to pay attention to student needs and establish instructional leadership abilities. Guidance from district leaders allows school principals to perform their leadership abilities and develop better approaches to tackle educational issues such as the increasing suspension rates that they could share for other schools to adapt (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond, 2018).

All the participants spoke of the value of enacting school principals to act when the need arises without restrictions from the policy, for example, creating approaches or programs to save

isolated students within the school. Paul noted, "the policy is there to guide, but the school principals need to put effort to get tackle issues around if they focus on how to help these minority students and not focusing on what the paper says" Policy implementation had increased students' suspension to keep students with poor academic performance at home (Harris & Linder, 2018). Participants shared the value of purposeful meetings where school principals are reflective in practice and make plans to support minority students. The participants' reflective practice could improve student achievement, reduce suspensions and develop positive school culture because employees can assess what is working and what may need attention and then discuss these ideas with their colleagues (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). Effective leadership is an integral component of sustaining professional development where followers recognize and share their ideas (Gaikhorst et al., 2017). Participants remarked on the necessity of making minority students feel valued and welcomed as part of the school family. Ada acknowledged that the minority students are immigrants who have chosen to be in the school area where they are enrolled, and they choose to be there, so helping these minorities feel less isolated is essential to society. Principals can more readily engage with minority students in small group settings academically and socially as the best way to reduce the suspension rate (Nation et al., 2016). The school principals' approach to developing positive school culture supports academic and social integration where administrators collaborate with the teachers, employees, or community for common goals. Participants shared the importance of involving others in creating an equal society and a healthy learning environment. These positive relationships among minority students with other students and staff members can promote a school culture that positively impacts student achievement (Chen, Lee, Lin, & Zhang, 2016).

School administrators shared the value of building trust with minority students and among staff members for equal learning environments involves trust that helps create a culture of respect where principals can support all school goals (Owen, 2016). Sustaining suspension rates in these school settings were achieved because participants appreciated the need to pay attention to teachers and minority students to analyze data and develop positive school culture. Creating enough time and sufficient approaches to complete essential tasks supports sustainment (Hairon & Tan; 2017). The participants confirmed that developing a vision for reducing suspension rates for minority students involves teachers' active roles and reaching out to the isolated in their schools. To develop a positive school culture, administrators need to allow sufficient time for an approach that focuses on collaboration, trusting, and engaging with the process (Buttram & Farley-Ripple, 2016). This study shows that the participants felt a great responsibility to tone-set their school and recognize the importance of integration in their approaches. School administrators need support from the superintendents, staff members, community, and stakeholders as the critical component of reducing and sustaining suspension rates for minority students to improve their practice (Christ, Arya, & Chiu, 2017). All participants shared that they do receive significant support from their staff members and community.

Theoretical Literature

One theoretical framework guiding this study was the Black identity development theory (Ritchey, 2014). Creating positive school culture to maintain a reduced suspension rate for minority students requires developing positive thinking by becoming selfless, extending to awareness for equality in a diverse society (Ritchey, 2014). None of the participants specifically expressed their neglect to address the challenges across cultural student development for minority students, yet their stories support the desire to reduced and maintain suspension rates in

their district. The school administrators expressed thoughts about how their district believed the policy reduces the suspension rate with high expectations for the principals to maintain a positive school culture. Fan stated, "I always believe that the policymakers are us; we school principals should decide where something goes concerning discipline, the policy has not changed anything." Ada indicated that "the suspension penalty is more punitive to black students than any other racial group."

In contrast, Fan and Ada identified various approaches that they implemented to reduce the suspension rate. The Black identity development theory involves simultaneous steps to internalize positive thoughts about other racial groups or how Black immigrant and indigenous students perceive diversity (Ritchey, 2014). Sara stated that " the most significant of marginalized students suffer from the administrator's lack of leadership, particularly for urban school districts." The Black identity development theory model a change process that includes a re-socializing and socialization experience of preexisting identity into a more Afro-centric character (Ritchey, 2014). Mateo said that "school principals should learn to complement one another as visionaries, to serve as role models and show consideration for others." The Black identity development theory model is the ultimate transformation of someone achieving a racial identity in the society resulting in race-related issues at the educational, individual, and institutional levels (Ritchey, 2014). Angela explained that "some school principals lack training for folks working with communities that do not look like themselves." An individual's attitudes range from low salience to race neutrality and anti-Black, depicting their identity that needs changing (Ritchey, 2014).

At the encounter stage of Black identity development theory, some Black people are anti-Blacks, loathing other Blacks while they feel isolated from their Black community as potential

people (Ritchey, 2014). Paul stated that "Some colleagues and students are racist, and their actions are extremely noticeable." The Black Identity development theory stated that Black people are at a disadvantage through societal constructions of overt and covert forms of institutionalized racism (Ritchey, 2014). Ada believed that "most of us principals focus less on organizational objectives and more on the followers." Minority students are subverting their identity to get involved in the mainstream culture as they struggle to maintain a cultural connection to their racial identity (Griffin et al., 2016). The school administrators should make resources available for minority students to connect with others through a students' association or a safer space to seek support to succeed outside of the classroom (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). School administrators can utilize practical leadership skills to develop a positive school culture by learning from those who have successfully reduced the suspension rate to enact meaningful impact plans (Rocque & Snellings, 2017). School administrators who have confidence in their abilities develop excellent approaches that allow collaboration from their shared vision for learning and goal setting (Harris & Linder, 2018). Some school principals who have not successfully reduced suspension rates strive to overcome deficits instead of believing their strength. Mary noted that teachers are excited about successfully reducing the suspension rate and are motivated to develop positive school culture. Motivation is essential in promoting people's strength to act and maintain a shared vision (Griffin et al., 2016). The Black identity development theory encourages positive thinking of becoming a selfless one that extends awareness of creating an equal society when everyone acknowledges the value of cultural diversity (Ritchey, 2014).

Implications

This study examines the perspectives of school administrators on policies addressing disproportionality in discipline minority students can provide understanding to stakeholders and policymakers on how to maintain a positive school culture. Also, school district leaders such as superintendents can benefit from this knowledge by making them aware of how they can support principals and teachers in sustaining a healthy learning environment for every student. The findings of this study demonstrate the value of sustaining disciplinary policy and practice that promotes positive school culture and student discipline. Results show that school administrators value implementing disproportionate policy and practice that encourages the reduction of suspension rate for minority students to support equal learning environments. The knowledge revealed in this study is valuable for current and future school administrators that intend to implement similar approaches in their school settings.

Theoretical Implications

The Black identity development theory encourages the minority to identify and internalize positive thoughts in the society (Ritchey, 2014). The participants in this study expressed the need to develop positive thinking when practicing any disciplinary policy and extend awareness of disproportionate suspension rate for some racial groups, creating an equal society that acknowledges the value of cultural diversity. While the participants expressed their varying perceptions of how they successfully reduced the suspension rate in their schools, each participant shared the importance of providing school administrators with resources and skills to succeed while maintaining a positive school culture. Educational leaders such as district superintendents and directors must create an equal learning environment where principals could confront the disproportionate penalty as a team effort to identify personal and professional

growth for internalizing positive thoughts in society (Ritchey, 2014). School Administrators'

experiences demonstrated their desire to promote these positive schools' culture where

suspension or expulsion is not an option to discipline students. The school administrators'

participants revealed that maintaining a reduced suspension rate requires the continuous culture

of the practical approach to developing an equal learning environment for all school races

(Russell & Markle, 2017). Also, the participants put their trust in their employees who served in

varying roles in supporting minority students in the school. When principals develop a positive

school culture that supports collegiality for the minority students to identify and internalize

positive thoughts, the principals are self-assured to meet the needs of these students (Ritchey,

2014). When working together for a common goal, minority students can feel better and behave

positively to learn and get motivated to achieve set goals (Arday, 2018). Developing positive

school culture promotes an environment to learn with goals in a collaborative setting (Ritchey,

2014). Participants' collaborative nature allows for a focus on goals that can measure students'

behavioral expectations, thus reducing suspension penalty. For example, healthy racial identity

development is progressive when individuals eliminate their thoughts, feelings, or behaviors

idealizing whites' beliefs (Ritchey, 2014).

Empirical Implications

The findings in this study imply that school districts need to provide training, funding,

and resources support to assist principals in their approach to maintain positive school culture by

reducing suspension rates for minority students. School administrators who participated in this

study revealed that they appreciate working in school districts that allow personal skills and

training to control students' behavior as they value collaborative work structures (Woodland,

2016). Superintendents and other educational leaders should model these administrations'

approaches to reduce suspension rates in-district meetings and work collaboratively for district goals through data analysis (Creswell, 2018). Several participants in this study mentioned that although there have been policy changes to discipline students in Ontario, the school administrators in TDSB still struggle to maintain the suspension rate because most school environment employees lack the training to control students' misbehavior. The participants in this study confirmed that these employees in the school implement the policy penalty as an immediate option to overlook how to tackle the students' misbehavior and reduce suspension rate (Cummings & Bain, 2017). This study revealed a need to establish behavioral control training in the district to assist these employees; such training should match the policy and practice to enhance positive school culture (Vue et al., 2017). The principals in this study saw the value of sorting candidates with excellent communication, empathy, and transparency skill in the school system. School administrators should share their vision on maintaining the reduced suspension rate, for example, sharing and reminding the employees of implementing the sensitive approach to encourage diversity in everyday professionalism and mindsets (Slay et al., 2019).

Practical Implications

Creating a shared vision and goals for the school is essential for reducing the suspension rate for minority students in any large district with a diversity of culture (Slay et al., 2019). Participants in this study agreed that implementing the sensitive approaches involves excellent communication skills with empathy and transparency in the school goals and instruction that positively benefit minority students. Educators should focus on tackling the consequences attached to negative ratings of the increasing suspension penalties because most of these policies and practices are ineffective in enacting change (Patton et al., 2019). On the contrary, the penalty

of suspension contributes to racial disparities in school, disrupting students' opportunity to learn and create unequal environments (Aarthun & Yan, 2015). Each participant in this study spoke of the benefits of their implemented approaches and how they have impacted student performance as they hope to gain positive school culture (Mallett, 2016). These school administrators acknowledged that the sensitive approaches work to reduce the suspension rate but failed to empower their teachers and employees to educate minority students while building positive school culture. This empowerment is possible with collaboration built on engagement that promotes knowledge and solidarity for minority students (Bottiani et al., 2017). All participants in this study support empowering and developing their teachers and other employees in the school to advocate for minority students and develop positive school culture (Bhopal & Chapman, 2018). School administrators should realize to increase professional subject matter knowledge through specialized methods associated with positive student outcomes to promote teacher development (Bush et al., 2016). For example, school administrators should involve community centers for students' recreational programs as additional outlets to improve leadership skills as a penalty alternative instead of suspension (Warikoo & de Novais, 2015). Involving the community as a policy penalty would serve as an intervention technique to bring students back to school with improved behavior (Tyner, 2017).

Delimitations and Limitations

This study has delimitations to work with only ten school administrators from TSDB in Ontario who had successfully reduced the suspension rate within three years. Also, this study purposefully sampled participants from the most prominent district school board in Ontario, Canada. This study selected TDSB because it is the most populated district school board in the province with disproportionate school suspension. This study's benefits could be direct to only

the school administrators in the TDSB because they shared their experience for other principals to learn from their experience of reducing suspension rate and develop positive school culture. The other school administrators who did not participate in this study but had the same experience could be losing the benefits of sharing their success stories of how they reduced suspension rates.

This study's limitations are the Covid-19 pandemic that prompted the lockdown of schools for months, followed by a reopening with the mandatory social distancing, and the only option for collecting data was through online audio recording. The interview was online audio, and this social distancing created a problematic scenario for the researcher to build a close relationship with the participants. Also, the school administrators were not comfortable with the online focus group interview with others for personal and other reasons. Only four participants finally agreed to engage in the focus group interview, and only five administrators submitted documents illustrating any disciplinary policy with approaches to developing positive school culture. Connecting with the participants through their school email addresses took three to five weeks and was challenging. Therefore, the timeframe for data collection spanned several weeks.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results generated from this study support the reviewed literature that shows the components that were necessary to understand the perspectives of school administrators in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. However, this study was limited to only a few cites within the TDSB region; it could be to understand other school administrators' perspectives if the settings of the study were from other areas within Ontario or another province or country. Also, participants in this study were only school administrators in the TDSB who successfully reduced their school suspension rates within three years. Therefore, exploring other school districts where

other school administrators and teachers have successfully reduced suspension rates or expulsion may generate varied experiences. Maintaining confidentiality without the guise of participants' anonymity during the online audio interview might have discouraged sincere communication. The Covid-19 Pandemic caused limitations that promoted more type of anonymous to which the participants' responses may have generated varied data results. Thus, to further develop a larger scale of understanding the school administrators' perspective on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline, more studies may want to include the strategies administrators implemented to sustain reduced suspension rates for minority students. This study sorted permission to gather copies of the administrator's school discipline policy and document illustrating approaches to develop positive school culture and improve students' discipline. The permission had limitation for study to observe if there are implementation of the approaches in the schools.

Nevertheless, if this study had permission to use the instrument anonymously on a larger scale, this study could have generated many administrators' perceptions from their practices. The study had limitations to principals' experience, but the participants spoke to the value of their leaders in the TDSB. The participants in this study had limitations of their practices as instructed by their school board; therefore, the school administrators' persecutions on obligations than their practice and experience. The study revealed the school administrators' experience of reducing suspension rates based on their mandatory practices successfully; the TDSB norms could promote the school administrators' perceptions.

Summary

This study presents the need to develop positive thinking when practicing any disciplinary policy and extend awareness of disproportionate suspension rate for some racial

groups, creating an equal society that acknowledges the value of cultural diversity. Developing positive school culture promotes an environment to learn with goals in a collaborative setting (Ritchey, 2014). Although there have been policy changes to discipline students in Ontario, the school administrators in TDSB still struggle to maintain the suspension rate because most school environment employees lack the training to control students' misbehavior. When working together for a common goal, minority students can feel better and behave positively to learn and get motivated to achieve set goals (Arday, 2018). There is a need to sort school administrative candidates with excellent communication, empathy, and transparency skill in the school system. Some TDSB school administrators with higher suspension rates implement the policy penalty as an immediate option to overlook how to tackle the students' misbehavior and reduce suspension rate (Cummings & Bain, 2017). The sensitive approaches worked to reduce the suspension rate but failed to empower their teachers and employees to educate minority students while building positive school culture. The TDSB school struggling to reduce the suspension rate could focus on progressing healthy racial identity development to help minority students eliminate their thoughts, feelings, or behaviors idealizing whites' beliefs to feel less isolated (Ritchey, 2014). Educational leaders such as district superintendents and directors must create an equal learning environment where principals could confront the disproportionate penalty as a team effort to identify personal and professional growth for internalizing positive learning culture. To maintain a reduced suspension rate requires the continuous culture of the practical approach to developing an equal learning environment for all school races (Russell & Markle, 2017).

REFERENCES

Aarthun, S. & Yan, H. (2015, October 27). Student's violent arrest caught on video, officer under investigation. *CNN News.* Retrieved from http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/26/us/south-carolina-spring-valley-high-school-student-video/

Africentric Secondary Programs (2014). *Toronto District School Board*. Retrieved from https://www.tdsb.on.ca/High-School/Going-to-High-School/Specialized-Schools-and-Programs/Africentric-Secondary-Programs.

Anderson, K. P. (2020). Academic, attendance, and behavioral outcomes of a suspension reduction policy: Lessons for school leaders and policymakers. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 56*(3), 435–471. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X19861138

Anderson, L. (2020). The effect of school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports on disciplinary exclusions: A conceptual replication. *Behavioral Disorders Journal of the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders., 46*(1), 42–53. https://doi.org/10.1177/0198742919896305

Arday, J. (2018). Understanding race and educational leadership in higher education. *Management in Education, 32*(4), 192-200. https://doi.org/10.1177/0892020618791002

Barley, R. & Russell, L. (2019) Participatory visual methods: exploring young people's identities, hopes, and feelings. *Ethnography and Education,* 14(2), 223-241, https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2018.1441041

Bailey, J. (2015) *From "zero tolerance" to "safe and accepting": Surveillance & equality in the evolution of Ontario's education law & policy*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press

Berlowitz, M. J., Frye, R., & Jette, K. M. (2017). Bullying and zero-tolerance policies: The school to prison pipeline. *Multicultural Learning and Teaching, 12*(1), 7-25. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1133316

Bhopal, K., & Chapman, T. (2018). International minority ethnic academics at predominantly White institutions. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 40*(1), 98-113. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2018.1486698

Block-Lerner, J. (2021). Associations between child and administrator race and suspension and expulsion rates in community childcare programs. *Early Childhood Education Journal., 49*(1), 125–133. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-020-01049-1

Bottiani, J., Bradshaw, C., & Mendelson, T. (2016). Inequality in Black and White high school students' perceptions of school support: An examination of race-in-context. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 45,* 1176 –1191. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-015-0411-0

Bottiani, J., Bradshaw, C., & Mendelson, T. (2017). A multilevel examination of racial disparities in high school discipline: Black and White adolescents' perceived equity, school belonging, and adjustment problems. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 109*(4), 532-43. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000155

Breetzke, D., & Hedding, W. (2017). The changing demography of academic staff at higher education institutions (HEIs) in South Africa. *Higher Education, 76*(1), 145-161. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-017-0203-4

Bugden, T. B. (2017). Addressing Utah's school to prison pipeline. *Utah Law Review, 2017*(5), 1061. https://dc.law.utah.edu/ulr/vol2017/iss5/5

Bush, L., Haygood, D., & Vincent, H. (2016). Student-Run communications agencies: Providing

students with real-world experiences that impact their careers. *Journalism & Mass

Communication Educator, 72*(4), 410-424. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695816673254

Buttram, J. L., & Farley-Ripple, E. N. (2016). The role of principals in professional learning

communities. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 15*(2), 192-220. https://doi.org/10.1080/

15700763.2015.1039136

Caring and Safe Schools Report 2016-17 TDSB.pdf (2018). Retrieved from

https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/docs/Caring%20and%20Safe%20Schools%20Report%2

02016-17%20TDSB.pdf.

Carla, C., R (2017) Becoming a "Foreigner": The principle of equality, intersected identities, and

social exclusion in the Norwegian school, *European Education, 49* (2-3), 151-

165, https://doi.org/10.1080/10564934.2017.1335173

CensusFactSheet (2013). TDSB Students and Families: Demographic Profile.

https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/research/docs/2011-12CensusFactSheet1-Demographics-

17June2013.pdf

Chen, P., Lee, C., Lin, H., & Zhang, C. (2016). Factors that develop effective professional

learning communities in Taiwan. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 36*(2), 248-265.

https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2016.1148853

Cherkowski, S. (2016). Exploring the role of the school principal in cultivating a professional

learning climate. *Journal of School Leadership, 26*(3), 523-543.

https://doi.org/10.1177/105268461602600306

Christ, T., Arya, P., & Chiu, M. M. (2017). Relations among resources in professional learning communities and learning outcomes. *Teaching Education, 28*(1), 94-114. https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2016.1212826

Creswell, J. W. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.) [Kindle edition]. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J., W., & Poth, C., N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Cross, W. E. (1991). *Shades of Black: Diversity in African American identity.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Cuellar, A. E., & Markowitz, S. (2015). School suspension and the school-to-prison pipeline. *International Review of Law & Economics, 43,* 98-106. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.irle.2015.06.001

Cummings, W. & Bain, O. (2017). Modeling strategies for enhancing educational quality. *Research in Comparative and International Education, 12*(2), 160-173. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745499917711546

Diversity is a Fact; Inclusion is a Choice (2017, September 22) Government of Canada. Retrieved from https://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/germany-allemagne/highlights-faits/2017/2017-09-26-diversity_fact-diversite_fait.aspx?lang=en.

Education facts, 2018-2019 (2020). *Ontario Ministry of Education*. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/educationFacts.html.

Education for persons with disabilities in Ontario (2000) *Ontario Human Right Commission.* Retrieved from http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/consultation-paper-education-and-disability human-rights-issues-ontarios-education-system/iv-education-persons-disabilities-ontario#fn7

Feldman, D.B., Davidson, O.B., Ben-Naim, S., Maza, E., & Margalit, M. (2016). Hope as a mediator of loneliness and academic self-efficacy among students with and without *learning disabilities during the transition to college. Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 31(*2), 63–74. https://doi.org/10.1111/ldrp.12094

Gaikhorst, L., Beishuizen, J. J.J. Zijlstra B. J.H. & Volman, M. L.L. (2016). The sustainability of a teacher professional development programme for beginning urban teachers, *Cambridge Journal of Education, 47*(1), 135-154, https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2015.1125449

Griffin, A., Cunningham, L., & Chrystal, A. (2016). Defining diversity: Ethnic differences in Black students' perceptions of racial climate. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 9*(1), 34-49. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0039255

George Mwangi, A., Fries-Britt, R., Peralta, M., & Daoud, N. (2016). Examining interracial dynamics and engagement between native-born and foreign-born Black collegians in STEM. *Journal of Black Studies, 47*(7), 773-794. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934716658860

Hairon, S., & Tan, C. (2017). Professional learning communities in Singapore and Shanghai: Implications for teacher collaboration. Compare: *A Journal of Comparative & International Education, 47*(1), 91-104. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2016.1153408

Harris, J., & Linder, C. (2018). The racialized experiences of students of color in higher education and student affairs graduate preparation programs. *Journal of College Student Development, 59*(2), 141-158. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/688368

Heilbrun, K. Goldstein, N. DeMatteo, D., Newsham, R., Gale-Bentz, E., Cole, L., & Arnold, S. (2017). The sequential intercept model and juvenile justice: Review and prospectus. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law, 35*(1), https://doi.org/10.1002/bsl.2291

Huang, F. L. (2020). Prior problem behaviors do not account for the racial suspension gap. *Educational Researcher, 49*(7), 493–502. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X20932474

Jean-Pierre, J., & Parris-Drummond, S. (2018). Alternative school discipline principles and interventions: An overview of the literature. *McGill Journal of Education (Online), 53*(3), 414-433. https://mje.mcgill.ca/article/view/9547/7381

Kalvesmaki, A. & Tulman, J. B. (2017). A systems theory analysis for ending the school-to-prison pipeline: Using disability rights laws to keep children in schools and out of courts, jails, and prisons. *Advances in Race and Ethnicity in Education, 4,* 169-194. https://doi.org/10.1108/S2051-231720160000004009

Lalvani, P., & Bacon, J. K. (2019). Rethinking "we are all special": Anti-ableism curricula in early childhood classrooms. *Young Exceptional Children*, *22*(2), 87–100. https://doi.org/10.1177/1096250618810706

Lazar, J. Feng, J. H., & Hochheiser, H. (2017). *Research methods in human-computer interaction* (2nd ed.). Elsevier B.V: ScienceDirect Inc.

Lester, J., Evans, K., & Shapiro, H. (2018). *A historical account of the discursive construction of zero tolerance in print media*. [Online]. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Linder, C., & Simmons, W. (2015). Career and program choice of students of color in

student affairs programs. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 52*(4), 414-426. https://doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2015.1081601

Lynch, C., G. (2017). *School resource officers and the school-to-prison pipeline: A mixed methods application of the behavior of law in schools.* Norfolk, VA: Sociology and Criminal Justice

MacAllister, J. (2016). *Reclaiming discipline for education knowledge, relationships, and the birth of the community.* Informa UK: Routledge.

Mallett, C. A. (2016). The school-to-prison pipeline: Disproportionate impact on vulnerable children and adolescents. *Education and Urban Society, 49*(6), 563–59. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124516644053

McCarter, S. (2017). The school-to-prison pipeline: A primer for social workers. *Social Work, 62*(1), 53-61. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/sww078

McGrew, K. (2016). The dangers of pipeline thinking: How the School-to-prison-pipeline metaphor squeezes out complexity. *Educational Theory, 66*(3), 341–367. https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12173

Mcintosh, K., Davis, J., Garraway, R. & M Burt, J. (2018). Every student succeeds (Except for Black males) Act. *Teachers College Yearbook*. Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/40214403/Every_Student_Succeeds_Except_for_Black_Males_Act.

Middelkoop, D., Ballafkih, H., & Meerman, M. (2017). Understanding diversity: A Dutch case study on teachers' attitudes towards their diverse student population. *Empirical Research in Vocational Education and Training, 9*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40461-016-0045-9

Miguel, C., & Gargano, J. (2017). Moving beyond retribution: Alternatives to punishment in a society dominated by the school-to-prison pipeline. *Humanities, 6*(2), 15. https://doi.org/10.3390/h6020015

Morais, M., & Miranda, L. (2021). Creative practices in the classroom and the creativity of teachers: an exploratory study in elementary schools. *Revista Electrónica Iberoamericana Sobre Calidad, Efficacy Cambio Educación., 19*(1), 61–76.

Morgan, Y., Sinatra, R., & Eschenauer, R. (2015). A comprehensive partnership approach is increasing high school graduation rates and college enrollment of urban economically disadvantaged youth. *Education and Urban Society, 47*(5), 596-620. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124514536437

Naccarato, L. (2017, April 11) Almost half of the TDSB students expelled over the last five years are Black, report says. *CBC News*. Retrieved from https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/almost-half-of-tdsb-students-expelled-over-last-5-years-are-Black-report-says-1.4065088.

Nance, J. P. (2015). Students, police, and the school-to-prison pipeline. *Washington University Law Review, 93*, 919. http://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law_lawreview/vol93/iss4/6

Nation, D., Henderson, D., & Monell, J. (2016). The interrelationships of politicization of school shootings, focal concerns & racial disproportionality in school discipline policies. In Crews, G. (Ed.). *Critical Examinations of School Violence and Disturbance in K-12 Education* (pp. 39-61). Hershey PA: Information Science Reference (an imprint of IGI Global).

Nowicki, J. M (2018*) K-12 education: Discipline disparities for Black students, boys, and students with disabilities.* Washington, DC: GAO publication.

Nyirenda, L., Kumar, M.B., Theobald, S., Sarker, M., Simwinga, M., Kumwenda, M., Jothnson, C., Hatzold, K., Corbett, E., Sibanda, E., & Taegtmeyer, M. (2020). Using research networks to generate trustworthy qualitative public health research findings from multiple contexts. *BMC Med Res Methodol 20,*13 https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0895-5

Promoting a positive school climate: A resource for schools 1 (2013) Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/IntroDocEng.pdf.

Review of the roots of youth violence: Research papers (2016). *Ontario Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services*. Retrieved from http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/professionals/oyap/roots/volume4/compara tive_analysis.aspx#!

Russell, J. & Markle, R. (2017). Continuing a culture of evidence: Assessment for improvement. *Educational Testing Service (ETS) Research Report Series, 2017* (1), 1-10 https://doi.org/10.1002/ets2.12136

Ontario Population Projections, 2018–2046 (2019) *Ontario Ministry of Finance*. Retrieved from https://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/projections/.

Owen, S. (2016). Professional learning communities: Building skills, reinvigorating the passion, and nurturing teacher wellbeing and "flourishing" within significantly innovative schooling contexts. *Educational Review, 68*(4), 403-419 https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2015.1119101

Owens, E. G. (2017). Testing the school-to-prison pipeline. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 36*(1), 11-37. https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.21954

Patton, L. D., Sánchez, B., Mac, J., & Stewart, D. (2019). An inconvenient truth about "progress": An analysis of the promises and perils of research on campus diversity

initiatives. *The Review of Higher Education, 42*(5), 173-198.

https://muse.jhu.edu/article/724915

Prevention and Intervention Programs (2014). Toronto District School Board. Retrieved from

https://www.tdsb.on.ca/High-School/Caring-Safe-Schools/Prevention-Programs.

Puckett, T., Graves, C., & C. Sutton, L. (2019). Redefining school discipline: Illinois and other

states' responses to negative impact. *Journal of Scholarship & Practice,16*(1),20-

47. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1214597

Ray, V., Randolph, A., Underhill, M., & Luke, D. (2017). Critical race theory, afro-pessimism,

and racial progress narratives. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, 3*(2), 147-158.

https://doi.org/10.1177/2332649217692557

Ryan, C. (2012), "Cross-Case Analysis – Introduction," Hyde, K.F., Ryan, C. and Woodside,

A.G. (Ed.) Field Guide to Case Study Research in Tourism, Hospitality, and

Leisure (Advances in Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research, Vol. 6), Emerald

Group Publishing Limited, Bingley, pp. 497-499. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1871-

3173(2012)0000006030

Reimer, K. (2018). "The kids do a better job of it than we do": A Canadian case study of teachers

addressing the hypocritical application of restorative justice in their school. *Australian*

*Educational Researcher,*1-15. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1007/s13384-018-

0286-7

Reporting of Suspected Wrongdoing (Whistleblowing) (2014). *Toronto District School Board.*

Retrieved from https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Contact-Us/Whistleblowing.

Ritchey, K. (2014). Black identity development. *The Vermont Connection, 35*(1),

https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/tvc/vol35/iss1/12

Rocque, M. & Snellings, Q. (2017). The new disciplinology: Research, theory, and remaining

    puzzles on the school-to-prison pipeline. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 59* (2018), 3–11.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2017.05.002

Safe Schools: Statistics on Suspension and Expulsion (2019). *Ontario Ministry of Education.*

    Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/statistics.html.

Salleh, H. (2016). Facilitation for professional learning community conversations in Singapore.

    Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 36(2), 285-300.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2016.1148855

Senabre, E., Ferran-Ferrer, N., & Perelló, J. (2018). Participatory design of citizen science

    experiments. *Comunicar, 26*(54), 29-38.

    http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.3916/C54-2018-03

Seroczynski, D., A & Jobst, A., D. (2016). Latino youth and the school-to-prison pipeline:

    Addressing issues and achieving solutions. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences,*

    38(4) 423–445. https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986316663926

Shewchuk, S., & Cooper, A. (2018). Exploring equity in Ontario: A provincial scan of equity

    policies across school boards. *Canadian Journal of Education, 41*(4), 917.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F2161251354%3Faccou

Slay, K., Reyes, A., & Posselt, J. (2019). Bait and switch: Representation, climate, and tensions

    of diversity work in graduate education. *The Review of Higher Education, 42*(5), 255-

    286. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/724918

Steele, J. L., Steiner, E. D., & Hamilton, L. S. (2021). Priming the leadership pipeline: school

    performance and climate under an urban school leadership residency program.

Educational Administration Quarterly, 57(2), 221–256.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X20914720

Stout, R., Archie, C., Cross, D., & Carman, C. A. (2018). The relationship between faculty

diversity and graduation rates in higher education. *Intercultural Education, 29*(3), 399-

417. https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2018.1437997

Suspension and expulsion facts, 2014-2017 (2019). *Ontario Ministry of Education.* Retrieved

from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/facts1516.html.

Thacker, E. S. (2017). "PD is where teachers are learning!" High school social studies teachers'

formal and informal professional learning. *Journal of Social Studies Research, 41*(1), 37-

52. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jssr.2015.10.001

The Education Act (2020). *Ontario Ministry of Education.* Retrieved from

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/edact.html.

The Ontario Safe Schools Act: School discipline and discrimination (2020). Retrieved from

http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/book/export/html/2471.

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research.

Review of Educational Research, 45(1), 89–125.

https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543045001089

Toronto District School Board (2014). Retrieved from https://www.tdsb.on.ca/EarlyYears.

Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight "Big-Tent" criteria for excellent qualitative

research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*(10), 837-851.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121

Tyner, A. (2017). The emergence of the school-to-prison pipeline. *American Bar Association,*

3(11).

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/gpsolo/publications/gpsolo_ereport/2014/june_2014
/the_emergence_of_the_school-to-prison_pipeline/

Vanblaere, B., & Devos, G. (2016). Relating school leadership to perceived professional learning
community characteristics: A multilevel analysis. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 57*,
26-38. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.03.003

Vue, R., Haslerig, S., & Allen, W. (2017). Affirming race, diversity, and equity through Black
and Latinx students' lived experiences. *American Educational Research Journal, 54*(5),
868-903. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831217708550

Wang, D., Wang, J., Li, H., & Li, L. (2017). School context and instructional capacity: A
comparative study of professional learning communities in rural and urban schools in
China. *International Journal of Educational Development, 52,* 1-9.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2016.10.009

Wang, T. (2016). School leadership and professional learning community: Case study of two
senior high schools in Northeast China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 36*(2), 202-
216. https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2016.1148849

Warikoo, N. K., & de Novais, J. (2015). Colour-blindness and diversity: Race frames and their
consequences for White undergraduates at elite US universities. *Ethnic and Racial
Studies, 38*(6), 860–876. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2014.964281

William, A. (2015). *Conducting semi-structured interviews*. In book: Handbook of Practical
Program Evaluation (4th ed.). Boulder, CO: Jossey-Bass

Wilson, A. (2020). Factors potentially influencing discipline referral and suspensions at an
affiliated charter high school. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice., 10*(1).
https://doi.org/10.5590/JERAP.2020.10.1.08

Winton, S. (2012). From zero tolerance to student success in Ontario, Canada. *Educational Policy XX*(X) 1–32. https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904812453994

Woodland, R. H. (2016). Evaluating PK-12 professional learning communities. *American Journal of Evaluation, 37*(4), 505-521. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214016634203

Yaluma, C.,B., Little, A., P., & Leonard, M., B. (2021). Estimating the impact of expulsions, suspensions, and arrests on average school proficiency rates in Ohio using fixed effects. *Educational Policy*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904821999838

Yang, J., Anyon, Y., Pauline, M., Wiley, K., Cash, D., Downing, B., Greer, E., Kelty, E., Lee Morgan, T. & Pisciotta, L. (2019). "We have to educate every single student, not just the ones that look like us": Support service providers' beliefs about the root causes of the School-to-prison-pipeline for the youth of color. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 51*(3-4),1-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2018.1539358

Yin, R., K. (2014). *Case study research design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yuan, H. (2017). Respond to diversity: graduate minority students' perceptions of their learning experiences in an American university. *IAFOR Journal of Education, 5*(1). https://doi.org/10.22492/ije.5.1.02

Zero-Tolerance Policies and the School to Prison Pipeline (2018, January 18) *Shared Justice*. Retrieved from http://www.sharedjustice.org/domestic-justice/2017/12/21/zero-tolerance-policies-and-the-school-to-prison-pipeline

APPENDIX A: IRB Letter of Approval

CITI PROGRAM

ANNASTASIA ORAEGBUNEM
ID 8394495

Records
Liberty University (ID 2446)

Show Records for:

Liberty University	Show All

Liberty University Records (ID 2446)

Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher - Social & Behavioral Researchers (ID 60489)

Stage	Record ID	Passing Score	Your Score	Start Date	Completion Date	Expiration Date	Gradebook	Completion Record
Basic Course	33098317	80%	83%	04-Sep-2019	11-Nov-2020	11-Nov-2023	View	View-Print-Share

Humanities Responsible Conduct of Research (ID 60503)

Stage	Record ID	Passing Score	Your Score	Start Date	Completion Date	Expiration Date	Gradebook	Completion Record
RCR	33098318	80%	83%	05-Sep-2019	05-Sep-2019	04-Sep-2023	View	View-Print-Share

CITI Conflicts of Interest - Conflicts of Interest (ID 62554)

Stage	Record ID	Passing Score	Your Score	Start Date	Completion Date	Expiration Date	Gradebook	Completion Record
Stage 1	33098319	80%	90%	11-Nov-2020	11-Nov-2020	10-Nov-2024	View	View-Print-Share

Biosafety Officer Training - Basic/Initial (ID 103551)

11/11/2020 CITI - Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Stage	Record ID	Passing Score	Your Score	Start Date	Completion Date	Expiration Date	Gradebook	Completion Record
Basic Course	33098320	80%	84%	03-Sep-2019	Due Now	-	View	-

Export Compliance (ID 118973)

Stage	Record ID	Passing Score	Your Score	Start Date	Completion Date	Expiration Date	Gradebook	Completion Record
Stage 1	33098321	80%	80%	05-Sep-2019	05-Sep-2019	04-Sep-2022	View	View-Print-Share

Animal Care and Use - IACUC: Researchers (ID 127105)

Stage	Record ID	Passing Score	Your Score	Start Date	Completion Date	Expiration Date	Gradebook	Completion Record
Basic Course	33098322	80%	84%	07-Sep-2019	07-Sep-2019	06-Sep-2022	View	View-Print-Share

Essentials of Research Administration (ID 186247)

Stage	Record ID	Passing Score	Your Score	Start Date	Completion Date	Expiration Date	Gradebook	Completion Record
Basic Course	33098323	80%	96%	06-Sep-2019	06-Sep-2019	05-Sep-2022	View	View-Print-Share

SUPPORT

888.529.5929

8:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m. ET

Monday – Friday

Contact Us

LEGAL

Accessibility

Copyright

Privacy and Cookie Policy

Statement of Security Practices

Terms of Service

CITI
PROGRAM

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this <u>Requirements Report</u> reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** ANNASTASIA ORAEGBUNEM (ID: 8394495)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Liberty University (ID: 2446)
- **Institution Email:** oraegbunem.annastasia@gmail.com
- **Institution Unit:** Higher Educational Administration: Educ Lead
- **Phone:** 4165097013

- **Curriculum Group:** Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** Social & Behavioral Researchers
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

- **Record ID:** 33098317
- **Completion Date:** 11-Nov-2020
- **Expiration Date:** 11-Nov-2023
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 83

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Belmont Report and Its Principles (ID: 1127)	04-Sep-2019	3/3 (100%)
Liberty University (ID: 15111)	04-Sep-2019	No Quiz
Populations in Research Requiring Additional Considerations and/or Protections (ID: 16680)	04-Sep-2019	4/5 (80%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	04-Sep-2019	4/5 (80%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	04-Sep-2019	5/5 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	04-Sep-2019	4/5 (80%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	04-Sep-2019	4/5 (80%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	11-Nov-2020	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	05-Sep-2019	3/5 (60%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928)	05-Sep-2019	3/5 (60%)
International Research - SBE (ID: 509)	05-Sep-2019	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/?kf47bf630-8c36-4b05-9c49-f5b718703f9c-33098317

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)
Email: support@citiprogram.org
Phone: 888-529-5929
Web: https://www.citiprogram.org

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2
COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT**

** NOTE: Scores on this <u>Transcript Report</u> reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** ANNASTASIA ORAEGBUNEM (ID: 8394495)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Liberty University (ID: 2446)
- **Institution Email:** oraegbunem.annastasia@gmail.com
- **Institution Unit:** Higher Educational Administration: Educ Lead
- **Phone:** 4165097013

- **Curriculum Group:** Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** Social & Behavioral Researchers
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

- **Record ID:** 33098317
- **Report Date:** 11-Nov-2020
- **Current Score**:** 68

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Liberty University (ID: 15111)	11-Nov-2020	No Quiz
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	04-Sep-2019	5/5 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	04-Sep-2019	4/5 (80%)
Belmont Report and Its Principles (ID: 1127)	04-Sep-2019	3/3 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	04-Sep-2019	4/5 (80%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	11-Nov-2020	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	11-Nov-2020	0/5 (0%)
Research with Prisoners - SBE (ID: 506)	05-Sep-2019	2/5 (40%)
Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507)	05-Sep-2019	3/5 (60%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)	05-Sep-2019	4/5 (80%)
International Research - SBE (ID: 509)	05-Sep-2019	5/5 (100%)
Research and HIPAA Privacy Protections (ID: 14)	06-Sep-2019	2/5 (40%)
Internet-Based Research - SBE (ID: 510)	05-Sep-2019	3/5 (60%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928)	05-Sep-2019	3/5 (60%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	04-Sep-2019	4/5 (80%)
Populations in Research Requiring Additional Considerations and/or Protections (ID: 16680)	04-Sep-2019	4/5 (80%)
The IRB Member Module - 'What Every New IRB Member Needs to Know' (ID: 816)	04-Sep-2019	2/5 (40%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/?kf47bf630-8c36-4b05-9c49-f5b718703f9c-33098317

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)
Email: support@citiprogram.org
Phone: 888-529-5929
Web: https://www.citiprogram.org

APPENDIX B: Recruitment Letter for Administrators

Research Participants Needed

A Case Study of School Administrators' Perspectives in Ontario on Policies and Practices Addressing Disproportionality in Student Discipline

Are you a school principal in Toronto District School Board (TDSB) who has a reduced suspension rate from 2015 to 2018 or in the past three years?

If you answered **yes** to this question, you might be eligible to participate in the research study.

The purpose of this research study is to understand the perspectives of school administrators in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students.

The study will be conducted Online (Virtual recording)
at the participants' convenience
Anywhere in Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Annastasia Onyinyechukwuka, Oraegbunem, a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.
**Please contact Annastasia Onyinyechukwuka Oraegbunem at
or   @liberty.edu for more information.**

Dear Fellow Educator,

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am researching as part of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Higher Education Administration, emphasizing Educational Leadership requirements. The purpose of my research is to understand the perspectives of school administrators in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students, and I am writing to invite ten eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be school principals in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) who had a reduced suspension rate from 2015 to 2018 or in the past three years. If willing, participants will be asked to complete a 45- to 60-minute virtual interview (See attached file) on school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. Participants will be interviewed individually and in a focus group. There will be two focus groups involving 5 participants each. The focus groups will last for 45 to 60 minutes (See attached file). Participants will also be asked to provide a copy of their school discipline policy and any documents illustrating their approach to developing positive school culture and to student discipline. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please contact me at ▓▓▓▓▓ or ▓▓▓▓▓@liberty.edu to schedule an interview.

A consent document is attached to this letter. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me before or at the interview.

Yours sincerely,

APPENDIX C: Follow-up Recruitment Letter for Administrators

|
Upon IRB Approval
School Principal,
Toronto District School Board
5050 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario M2N 5N8
 Email Address

Dear _____,

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am researching as part of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Higher Education Administration, emphasizing Educational Leadership requirements. Last week, a letter was sent to you, inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up letter is being sent to remind you to respond if you would like to do so. The deadline for participation will be disclosed upon IRB approval.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete a 45- to 60-minute virtual interview on school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students. Participants will be interviewed individually and in a focus group. There will be a focus group where the 10 participants will be in two pairs. The focus group will last 45- to 60-minutes. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please contact me at ~~████████~~ or ~~████████~~@liberty.edu to schedule an interview.

A consent document is attached to this letter. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me before or at the interview.

Sincerely,

Annastasia Onyinyechukwuka Oraegbunem
Ph.D. student (School of Education at Liberty University)
Phone: ~~████████~~
Email: ~~████████~~@liberty.edu
Address: ~~████████~~,
Mississauga, Ontario

APPENDIX D: Interview Questions

Semi-Structed Open Ended Questionnaire Interview

1. Please introduce yourself.

2. Please walk me through your administrative perception of policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline for minority students in Ontario?

3. Of the professional experiences you identified, in your opinion, which would you say were the most significant?

4. What are your perspectives on the previously implemented zero-tolerance policy in Ontario schools?

5. What are your perspectives on the current policy addressing student discipline and disproportionality in suspension rates between minority and non-minority students in Ontario?

6. What alternatives to zero-tolerance do administrators in Ontario recommend to address student discipline and reduce disproportionality rates in suspension?

7. Ideally, part of becoming an administrator involves the process of examining and evaluating leadership practice. Where are you in that process?

8. What strategies or advice do you have to offer other school administrators for reducing disproportionality?

9. This next question is unique in that it will invite you to look ahead. How do you expect your perception to change or develop over the next several years?

10. We have covered a lot in our conversation, and I appreciate your time. One final question is, What else do you think would be essential to know about school suspension?

Focus Group Interview Question

1. In a group discussion, what is your administrative perception of policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline?

2. What are your administrative perspectives on current policy addressing student discipline and disproportionality on suspension in Ontario schools?

3. What factors do administrators in Ontario consider when addressing student discipline in their schools?

4. What strategies or advice can other school administrators learn from you in collaboration to address issues for the future growth of education in Ontario?

5. What else do you think would be essential to know about your successful reduction of the suspension in your school within the past three years?

APPENDIX E: Consent Forms

Consent

_____

Title of the Project: A Case Study of School Administrators' Perspectives in Ontario on Policies and Practices Addressing Disproportionality in Student Discipline
Principal Investigator: Annastasia Onyinyechukwuka Oraegbunem, Ph.D. student (School of Education at Liberty University)

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a school principal in a Toronto District School Board (TDSB) who had reduced suspension rate from 2015 to 2018 or in the past three years. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research project.

What is the study about, and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to understand the perspectives of school administrators in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:
1. Complete a 45- to 60-minute virtual, recorded interview on school administrators' perspectives in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students.
2. Participate in a focus group of five school administrators, which should last 45 to 60 minutes.
3. Provide a copy of your school discipline policy and any documents illustrating your approach to developing positive school culture and to student discipline.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include an understanding by parents and the community of the perspectives of school administrators in Ontario on policies and practices addressing disproportionality in student discipline and suspension rates for minority students.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential using codes. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews and a focus group will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision about whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address or phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Annastasia Onyinyechukwuka Oraegbunem. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at 4165097013 or aooraegbunem@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Ackerman, at mackerman@liberty.edu.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515, or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you agree to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The

researcher will keep a copy of the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to **audio record** me as part of my participation in this study.

_____   _____
Printed Subject Name   Signature & Date

Legally Authorized Representative Permission

By signing this document, you are agreeing to the person named below participating in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy of the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I agree with the person named below to take part in this study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to **audio record** the person named below as part of their participation in this study.

_____
Printed Subject Name

Annastasia Onyinyechukwuka Oraegbunem (Principal Investigator)
Printed LAR Name and Relationship to Subject

_____
LAR Signature   Date