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DISPARITIES IN BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS FOR BLACK, INDIGENOUS, AND PEOPLE OF COLOR IN SCHOOLS

Michelle Seiger

Disparities in Behavior Interventions for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in Schools

by

Michelle Seiger

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Starred Paper Committee:
Bradley Kaffar, Chairperson
Marc Markell
Amy Christensen

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Classroom behavior management is a focal point in schools across the country. The topic of race is a crucial component when discussing discrepancies in response to problem behavior in classrooms. School officials and other decision-makers look at how school staff define problem behavior and their responses related to the student's race. When defining problem behavior, staff need to consider students' culture, background, experiences, and languages. Teachers attempt to educate themselves about other cultures to deliver appropriate responses to problem behavior effectively. However, the results of studies indicate that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) still receive more office discipline referrals (ODRs) than White students (Skiba et al., 2002).

The responses to the problem behavior are wide-ranging. School officials focus on identifying whether BIPOC students are engaging more frequently in problem behavior or if school staff are responding more harshly to this population (Rocque, 2010). Studies identify suspension and expulsion as markers for the significance of the reaction to problem behavior. BIPOC students are more likely to be suspended than White students (Skiba et al., 2002).

Microaggressions based on race have contributed to student behavior (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). The full extent of the impact is yet to be fully understood–students who have experienced microaggressions in the classroom self-report the effect. Depression, low self-esteem, defiance, and outbursts were identified as side effects by victims of microaggressions (Suárez et al., 2015). According to Baker (2019), staff interpretation of and response to BIPOC student problem behavior can be a microaggression.

In this paper, the impact of race on behavior interventions in the school setting will be examined. This paper will analyze the impact of microaggressions in the classroom on students

and their behaviors. It will discuss the staff's responses to problem behavior. It will compare the staff responses to BIPOC student problem behavior to that of White students. This paper will investigate factors that influence staff decision-making in determining if a behavior is a problem behavior in need of intervention, then the consequences of the problem behavior.

Research Questions

In this paper, the following questions will be addressed:

1. What is the difference between classroom staff responses to BIPOC student problem behavior versus that of White students?

2. How does race impact and influence classroom management strategies both proactively and reactively?

Historical Overview

It has been no secret that BIPOC students have been treated differently than White students for decades. From segregation to discrimination, BIPOC students have had constant challenges in education. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka* that segregation was unconstitutional based on a student's race. Although the *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka* ruling was seen as progress, BIPOC students were still not welcomed in White schools. In 1957, the National Guard blocked nine African American students from entering their high school. In the 1960s a majority of neighborhoods were segregated. Neighborhood segregation was a contributing barrier to Black students' access to quality education. In 1971, the Supreme Court ruled in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* to uphold the requirement of mandatory bussing programs (MasterClass, 2022). Addressing the bussing programs was meant to allow Black students to be transported out of their neighborhoods to other schools. The fight for equity in education continued through the

1980s and 1990s. White parents and community members continued to resist desegregation. *Board of Education v. Dowell* (1991) and *Freeman v. Pitts* (1992) required schools to follow desegregation steps and demonstrate a commitment to eliminating discrimination practices (MasterClass, 2022). The Court rejected the use of student test scores as evidence of education program quality. In 1996, a federal appeals court prohibited colleges and universities from using race in their admissions processes (*BROWN V. BOARD: Timeline of School Integration in the U.S.*, 2004). The fight for equity in schools continued into the 2000s with rulings such as *Lynn v. Comfort* which affirmed the value of racial diversity in student placements in schools (*BROWN V. BOARD: Timeline of School Integration in the U.S.*, 2004).

Throughout the decades, research has been conducted into the various types of inequities in schools. One identified inequity is the number of Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs) BIPOC students received compared to their White counterparts. Gregory et al. (2010) cited BIPOC discipline referral research dating back to 1975.

The practice of Culturally Responsive Classrooms has developed from conducted research. Brown (2004) gathered data from 13 different urban schools. The data reflected the importance of inclusion in classrooms, student and teacher connection, and classroom management. Later in this paper, I will examine more of Brown's research highlighting these topics and their relationship to responses to problem behavior.

Definitions of Terms

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). I will use the term BIPOC throughout this paper. A portion of the research I reviewed identified and differentiated student race by using the term BIPOC. I examined other parts of the study that referred to students by their

identified race. When specific racial groups are determined from the research, I will use the

specified group term.

     Microaggressions. According to Suárez-Orozco et al. (2015), microaggressions can be

verbal or behavioral incidents that demean a minority person or group. Microaggressions can

occur intentionally or unintentionally. The effects of microaggressions are not fully known.

Groups subjected to microaggressions have reported anxiety, depression, and anger resulting

from the incidents. In this paper, I will specifically target microaggressions in the classroom. The

classroom microaggressions can occur between staff and student, staff and staff, or student and

student.

     Equity and equality. Equity and equality are two terms that are confused for one another.

Equity is when a staff strives to provide students with whatever resources they need to succeed.

Equality is when policies, principles, and procedures, for example, are the same for all (Milner &

Tenore, 2010).

     Culturally Responsive Classrooms. The Culturally Responsive Classroom model is based

on the Culturally Responsive Teaching model. The Culturally Responsive Teaching model is an

evidence-based model in which educators purposefully choose curricula that encompass the

diverse populations in the classroom (Brown, 2004). The curricula are ethnically and culturally

diverse and relevant. The educators using the Culturally Responsive Classroom and Classroom

Management model are intentional in their communication and classroom management

strategies. They use communication and classroom management styles that reflect student

backgrounds, values, and styles. The model is student-centered.

     Problem behavior. Problem behavior refers to behaviors that deviate from the classroom

or school expectations. The definition of problem behavior varies in each of the articles

reviewed. One article defines problem behavior as disruptiveness, physical aggression, or property destruction. Another article will define it as an act of defiance. The definition can be left to interpretation in many situations. It can also be a form of microaggression in that it targets actions outside of the norm, with the norm being defined by White standards. The definition of problem behavior is a problem in itself.

  Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs). Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs) are reports made to school administration or anyone in charge of handling consequences for problem behavior. ODRs generally collect information about student demographics and describe the behavior being reported. ODRs would be made for any behavior that cannot be addressed in the classroom-by-classroom staff.

Focus of the Paper

  My research started with a search for strategies related to handling problem behavior in classrooms. I identified eleven studies for the review of literature for Chapter 2. The studies included were related to classroom management, culturally responsive teaching, discipline gap, and how race is a significant factor in each topic. The number of studies produced was extensive. The studies' focus was too wide-ranging and broad for this paper. I modified my search by using the following keywords: classroom behavior management, microaggressions, overrepresentation, school discipline, proactive behavior strategies, defiance, urban schools, urban teachers, urban classroom management, discipline gap, and disproportionality. As I began reviewing the studies, I identified some authors being cited frequently. To extend the scope of my search, I used the reference lists to locate frequently cited authors' studies. Using this technique, I found *"Reframing the connections between deficit thinking, microaggressions, and teacher perceptions of defiance"* by T. L. Baker (2019). Baker's article became the foundation of this paper.

Importance of the Topic

Race and racism play a role in schools and communities every day. According to a 2017-18 survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, 79% of public school teachers are White. In contrast, 52% of public school students identify as BIPOC. The discrepancy in the number of White teachers compared to BIPOC student populations has been identified as a contributing factor in Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs), suspension, and expulsion rates of BIPOC students (Skiba et al., 2002). White school staff are defining problem behavior using White standards. BIPOC students display common behaviors in their everyday life, background, and culture. White school staff interpret BIPOC student behavior as problem behavior without being knowledgeable, informed, or sensitive to the culture and experiences of their students.

The response to problem behaviors in classrooms is removal discipline. Removal discipline can cause students to feel disengaged from school, they have less instructional time, may be less motivated to succeed in school, and could contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline (Huang, 2016).

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

In Chapter 1, I presented the research questions related to classroom behavior management and responses. The comparison was made between behavior management and responses to the behavior of BIPOC students to that of White students. In Chapter 2, studies examining Office Discipline Referrals, classroom behavior management, and contributing factors to classroom decision-making will be presented and analyzed.

Studies Evaluating Office Discipline Referrals and Suspension/Expulsion Rates

The studies analyzed in the first portion of the review of the literature address the topic of Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs) and suspensions/expulsions for BIPOC students. The studies focus on the frequency of ODRs for BIPOC students, suspension and expulsion discrepancies, and the impact of removal discipline on student performance. Four articles contributed to this section of the review.

School discipline intends to maintain safety and allow a peaceful learning environment (Gregory et al., 2010). Schools rely on the removal of students who disrupt the learning environment. Removals start at the classroom level with Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs). Removal continues at the office level with in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions. In 1975, the Children's Defense Fund first drew attention to the disparity in the number of BIPOC students being suspended. The Children's Defense Fund found that Black students were 2-3 times more likely to be removed from the classroom and school than their White peers. In 2003, the numbers were staggering at 1 in 5 Black students were suspended from school, whereas 1 in 10 White students was suspended (Gregory et al., 2010). In 2008, out of 74,000 tenth-grade students surveyed, nearly 50% of Black students reported being suspended (Gregory et al., 2010). In the 2009-10 school year suspension rate for Black students was 24.3%

and 7.1% for white students (Huang, 2016). The result of removal discipline is a gap in academic and social achievement for students. Students who have been suspended or expelled are less likely to feel connected to school and less motivated to be academically successful. When students do not feel connected to school and are less motivated to be successful, this will lead to more disruptions, therefore, more referrals, which perpetuates the cycle of disruption and removal (Gregory et al., 2010). Reasons for ODRs beyond this cycle cited by Gregory et al. (2010) are teacher and student racial mismatch, interpretation of cultural backgrounds, and teacher interpretation of defiance.

The most cited article in my literature review was by Skiba et al. (2002). Skiba et al. (2002) reported racial and gender disproportionality in school punishments. Along with race and gender, Skiba et al. (2002) identified socioeconomic status as an attribute that could influence school punishments. This study reviewed the discipline records of 11,001 students in 19 middle schools. Demographical information such as race, free or reduced lunch status, gender, special education status, and grade level were used. The results showed that males were substantially more likely than females to be suspended. The socioeconomic status of students, based on free or reduced lunch status, was a contributing factor in ODR rates. Socioeconomic status is a contributing factor when ODRs and suspensions result from the problem behavior. Socioeconomic status is not a statistically significant contributing factor when considering expulsion rates. Overall, students who were Black and male were referred to the office and received suspensions or expulsions more frequently than their White counterparts. Black students were referred to the office for problem behaviors such as disrespect, excessive noise, threats, and loitering. White students were referred for offenses such as smoking, leaving without permission, vandalism, and obscene language. Males were referred for problem behaviors ranging from

minor ones to those as severe as sexual acts. Females were generally referred for minor problem behaviors such as truancy. The disproportion begins at the classroom level instead of the office level. The severity of the punishment applied at the office level is relatively consistent in that the number of days suspended did not vary much from student to student. A conclusion drawn from the findings is that the punishment of BIPOC students is a direct result of racial bias, which begins at the classroom level and causes disproportionality in discipline rates at the office level.

Skiba et al. (2011) research used SWIS behavior tracking data to evaluate referral rates for BIPOC students. In the fall of 2007, four hundred and thirty-six schools reported using a discipline referral tracking system called SWIS. Researchers reviewed SWIS data reporting on 120,148 Elementary students and 60,522 Middle school students. When examining the SWIS data, researchers simplified the referral categories to 27. SWIS reports a staff response to each behavior incident. Researchers found that BIPOC students were referred to the office at a higher rate than their White counterparts. Specifically, African American students were overrepresented in referral reporting and suspension rates compared to the percentage of the student population they represent. White and Latino/a students were underrepresented compared to the overall student population they represent.

A similar study was conducted by Smolkowski et al. (2016). SWIS data from 1,666 elementary schools from 45 states were reviewed. There were 235,542 students, 47% of whom were BIPOC, represented in the SWIS referral data. Researchers' findings were consistent with Gregory et al. (2010), Skiba et al. (2002), and Skiba et al. (2011). BIPOC students received more ODRs than White students. The data showed that students were referred for behaviors defined as subjective or objective and major or minor (Smolkowski et al., 2016). Subjective behaviors were ones such as defiance, disrespect, or disruption. Objective behaviors were behaviors such as

fighting, theft, and truancy. A behavior defined as major was considered a behavior needing administrative action, whereas minor behavior infractions could be handled at the classroom level. Smolkowski et al. (2016) research found that BIPOC students were more likely to receive referrals for subjective offenses than objective. They received referrals more frequently for major-level offenses than minor. Also, BIPOC students received more subjective and major referrals than their White counterparts (Smolkowski et al., 2016).

Table 1

First Group Literature Table

Author(s)	Study Design	Participants	Procedure	Findings
Skiba, R.J., Michael, R.S., Nardo, A.C., & Peterson, R. L. (2002)	Quantitative	· 11,001 students · 19 middle schools (predominantly urban settings) · Student Demographics 　· 51.8% male 　· 48.2% female 　· 56% Black 　· 42% White 　· 1.2% Latino 　· .7% Asian-American 　· .1% Native American 　· 65.3% Free lunch eligible 　· 8.1% Reduced lunch eligible 　· 26.6% meal status not recorded	· Discipline data was pulled from each school. · Incident definition · Action taken · Subcategories · Referral date and time · Who filed a referral · Date of action taken · Parent contact · Gender · Race · Socioeconomic status (via Free/Reduced Lunch status) · Discipline data were compared with population percentages	· Black males were more likely to receive disciplinary actions (referrals suspensions, and expulsions). · BIPOC students from low socioeconomic status are more likely to receive referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. · Differences in the rate of referrals for BIPOC compared to White students plays a significant factor in the results. BIPOC students were more likely to be referred, therefore, more likely to receive punishments.

Table 1 (continued)

Smolkowski, K., Girvan, E. J., McIntosh, K., & Horner, R. (2016)	Quantitative	· 1,666 Elementary schools using School-Wide Information Systems (SWIS) from 45 states · 483,686 Office Discipline Referrals (2011-2012 School year) · 235,542 students · 55% Free/reduced lunch status · Average percent of non-White students is 47%	Data pull of ODR information included: · Student race · Student gender · Referring staff member · Vulnerable Decision Points (VDP) (subjective information reported such as location, severity, time of day etc.)	· African American students were more likely to receive ODRs for subjective offenses than their White counterparts. · African American students were more likely to receive referrals for things considered major offenses compared to minor offenses. · Male students were more likely to receive ODRs than female students. · Rankings for most likely to receive ODRs were: Black males, White males, black females, and lastly, White females.
Skiba, R. J., Horner, R. H., Chung, C. G., Rausch, M. K., May, S. L., & Tobin, T. (2011)	Quantitative	In fall 2007, 436 schools identified as: · Using SWIS · Reporting ethnicity info. · Grades k-6 and 6th-9th · 120,148 Elementary students · 60, 522 Middle school students	· SWIS labeled 27 categories for ODRs. Researchers simplified the 27 categories into minor misbehavior, disruption, noncompliance, moderate infractions, significant violations, use/possession, tardy/truancy, and other/unknown · Researchers looked at consequences implemented by the administration. Categories identified for consequences were: minor consequences, detention, moderate	· Reasons for the Disproportionate number of ODRs for BIPOC students can be initiated at the referral start or the administrative decisions. · African American students are overrepresented compared to the percent of the overall student population they represent. · White and Latino/a students are underrepresented

Table 1 (continued)

			consequences, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension and expulsion, and other/unknown.	compared to their overall student body population. · African American students were overrepresented in the in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension/ expulsion categories.
Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Noguera, P. A. (2010)	Qualitative-Research Synthesis	· Varied	· Collected research related to student achievement and discipline rates	· Research showed BIPOC students received a disproportionate amount of discipline, including removal from the classroom; the result of removal is a gap in achievement.

Studies Evaluating Culturally Responsive Classrooms and Classroom Management

The subsequent studies examined "Culturally Responsive Classroom Management." I analyzed seven studies for this portion of the review of the literature. The studies investigated the factors that influence student behavior within the classroom. The studies relied on checklists, interviews, and demographic characteristics to desegregate the information. One of the main foci was student and teacher race. Specifically, whether the student's race was matched with the teacher's race and how that could affect the student's behavior, each study's participants ranged in age and grade level from kindergarten to 12th grade. The school's location, urban, suburban, or rural, was noted in each study.

One of the themes that emerged when analyzing Culturally Responsive Classroom Management studies was that most teachers were white, while the student body makeup is much more diverse. As noted in Chapter 1, according to a 2017-18 survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, 79% of public school teachers are white. In contrast, 52% of public school students identify as BIPOC. White teachers have a cultural background based on European values, while Black students have a culture and background based on West African values (Downey & Pribesh, 2004). In addition, in the Bryan et al. (2012) study, it was noted that teachers rated students who exhibited European Middle-Class values higher in all behavioral and academic categories. Students who were on time to class, did not skip class, attended school regularly, did not get referred to the office, did not get suspended or put on probation, were considered to exhibit European Middle-Class values. Students who exhibited disruptive or defiant behavior scored lower in behavioral and academic categories and were considered to be displaying non-European Middle-Class values. The results yielded that Black students had 71% greater odds of being referred to the counselor or office than White students ($OR = 1.71$) for disruptive behaviors. Gender was identified as a student characteristic that influenced results. Females were less likely to be referred as male students ($OR = .51$). The resulting disciplinary actions were investigated and will be outlined in upcoming sections of this literature review.

Baker (2019) explained more specific reasoning when discussing teacher interpretations of student behaviors in classrooms. The definition of defiance was the focal point. Baker (2019) demonstrated that the perception of problem behavior is based on the authority's definition of defiance. Defiant behavior is a subjective topic and can be observed as behavior that is contradictory to the expectations of the authority figure or teacher. When investigating further,

Baker (2019) noted that teacher-student race mismatch contributes to the perception of defiance and problem behavior.

Black students exhibit behaviors and expressions that differ from White teachers in how they speak, how they use their voice cadence, volume, and tone, and how they express ideas through their body movements. These factors contribute to a White teacher's definition of defiance. As a result of this discrepancy in definitions between mismatched race teacher and student, Black students are documented as being referred to the office for disciplinary action more frequently than White counterparts. Baker (2019) drew attention to the definition of defiance and, therefore, referral actions to being a form of microaggressions. Microaggressions can be attributed to the overrepresentation of black students in disciplinary measures. The definition of defiance can be defined as a microaggression. When dissecting Baker's (2019) study, subcategories of microaggressions are defined. Microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidation affect how students connect to a teacher, class, peer group, school, and community.

Downey and Pribesh (2004) attempted to answer the question: Is the Black student resisting the institution's norms or that of the teacher-student race mismatch? The participants in the study were in kindergarten or 8th grade. Downey and Pribesh (2004) used the Externalizing Problem Behavior and the Approaches to Learning scales. A high score on the Externalizing Problem Behavior scale would indicate a student exhibits poor behavior. A high score on the Approaches to Learning scale would indicate a student exhibits good behavior. Seventy percent of Black kindergarten students were matched with a White teacher. Only 2% of White kindergarten students were matched with a different race teacher. For 8th-grade students, 64% of Black students were matched with a White teacher, and 3% of White students were matched with

a different race teacher. The teacher ratings showed that Black students were rated as poor

classroom citizens more often than their White counterparts. Teachers rated Black students as

showing more Externalizing Problem Behaviors than White students ($b = .222$, $p < .001$). Black

students were rated lower on the Approaches to Learning scale ($b = -.240$, $p < .001$). When Black

students were matched with a Black teacher, they were rated lower than their White counterparts

($b = -.208$, $p < .001$), however, they were not as poorly as the White teachers had rated them. The

results support that Black students' lower evaluation scores may result from racial mismatching

between teacher and student. To further support the claim that racial matching of teacher and

student matters, Downey and Pribesh (2004) reports on the topic of effort. Black teachers rate

Black students as exhibiting better effort than White teachers reported ($b = .388$, $p < .001$).

Based on Downey and Pribesh's (2004) data, the tension between Black students and White

teachers starts as early as kindergarten and continues throughout their educational careers.

 Creating a Culturally Responsive Classroom where all students belong and have access to

the same learning opportunities is the ultimate goal of schools. Monroe (2005) defined a

classroom set up for student success as one that takes its frame of reference from student values

and cultural backgrounds and integrates community. Creating a Culturally Responsive

Classroom should include a curriculum that connects to students, their cultural experiences,

learning strengths, and expression. Culturally Responsive Classrooms allow students to express

themselves through loud, animated, direct speech and other portions of their heritage. As stated

previously, White teachers often view this form of expression and communication as defiant.

Teachers are challenged to change their points of view. Culturally Responsive Discipline is an

aspect of a Culturally Responsive Classroom. Successful teachers recognize that interpersonal

relationships with students will allow for behavioral guidance instead of punitive punishment.

Glock (2016) cited teacher preparation programs as a starting point for teaching new educators how to develop a Culturally Responsive Classroom through classroom management skill-building. Glock (2016) conducted two studies. In the first, researchers chose a sample size of teachers in training or preservice teachers. The group was given a questionnaire with 14 problem behaviors that occur during a school day. The teachers responded yes or no to whether the behavior was a disruption and a secondary question regarding the need to intervene. The problem behaviors ranged from rustling paper to physical aggression. The teacher's responses were consistent regarding verbal and physical aggression, destruction, talking out of turn, calling out, and using phones. These behaviors were defined as disruptive and needed intervention. The behaviors were viewed as disruptive to the learning environment, which was the reason for intervention. Other behaviors such as disinterest or inattentiveness were not disruptive to the learning environment; therefore, the teachers deemed them unfit for intervention. The interventions for these behaviors were viewed as potentially more disruptive than the behavior itself. Glock (2016) discussed preservice teachers' interpretation of interventions. When synthesized, the interventions highlighted the following themes; suitable interventions must be immediate, appropriate to the behavior intensity, efficient, and lastly, the interventions do not breach the teacher-student relationship. The second study targeted preservice teacher responses to problem behavior based on the intensity of the response. The behavior most noted as a problem behavior in study 1 was talking out of turn. The problem behavior was described in two sentences.

Preservice teachers were provided a description of a student randomly drawn from four options; ethnic minority male, ethnic minority female, ethnic majority male, ethnic majority female. After reading the description of the student and problem behavior, the preservice

teachers were asked to rate on a Likert Scale the level of intervention needed from very mild

(ignore, remind Student of classroom expectations, nonverbal intervention) to very harsh (ODR

or removal from the classroom). Results yielded preservice teachers we less likely to apply harsh

interventions to ethnic majority students. Mild to moderate interventions were applied to ethnic

minority students more often. For instance, male ethnic minority students received mild

intervention strategies with a mean of 4.71 (t (89) = 5.44, $p < .001$, $d = 1.16$) and moderate at

4.78 (t (89) = 3.53, $p < .001$, $d = 0.75$). Whereas, male ethnic majority students receive mild

intervention strategies with a mean of 3.54 (t (89) = 5.44, $p < .001$, $d = 1.16$) and moderate at

4.04 (t (89) = 3.53, $p < .001$, $d = 0.75$). Female subject results showed a much larger

discrepancy between ethnic majority and minority students. For example, harsh interventions

for minority females had a mean of 2.71, where ethnic majority was 4.27 (t (47) = 4.82, $p < .001$,

$d = 1.38$). It is hypothesized that participants did not want researchers to view them as biased or

discriminating against certain groups, resulting in their observed outcomes. Glock (2016) is

included in this literature review to support that educators are aware of racial bias and continue

to unconsciously microaggress toward BIPOC students when evaluating problem behavior and

responses.

   "When the teachers possess (or have the skills and opportunities to acquire) the

knowledge, attitudes, dispositions, beliefs, and skills necessary to meet the needs of and be

responsive to their students, equitable classroom management and learning opportunities for all

students are possible." (Milner & Tenore, 2010, p. 566). Six themes of a Culturally Responsive

Classroom were identified in Milner and Tenore (2010) study and were supported by Brown

(2004). Understanding the difference between equity and equality was a foundational theme

articulated. Milner and Tenore (2010) defined equity as when a staff strives to provide students

with whatever resources they need to succeed. Culturally Responsive Curriculum and assessments are two examples of resources that need to be evaluated for an equitable student experience. Equality is when the policies, principles, and procedures are the same for all students. It is integral to the learning experience for students that educators understand the difference and strive to provide equitable experiences for all students. The second theme Milner and Tenore (2010) identified for a Culturally Responsive Classroom is that a teacher must understand the power structure between students. Power structures between students will influence student behaviors. Peer pressure and bullying are two of the main drivers in power structures. A teacher can utilize relationships with students who are seen as power players to help influence the temperature of the classroom. The third theme is that teachers must be involved in student lives. They need to know about student interests and bring them into the classroom. Teachers should be aware of the student's life outside of school. Outside factors will influence student behaviors in the classroom. Teachers must allow students into their world as well. When both groups see each other as humans, they can understand each other and learn to work together to achieve a positive, culturally responsive learning environment. Lastly, a Culturally Responsive Classroom brings students' outside world and family values to life in the day-to-day interactions in the learning environment. Teachers who utilize these themes create successful and culturally responsive classrooms.

Brown (2004) supports Milner and Tenore's (2010) study. Brown (2004) found relationship building and rapport as keys to Culturally Responsive Classrooms and Classroom Management. Students identified staff who held them to high but achievable expectations and dedicated individual attention to them as caring. In Brown's (2004) study, 13 educators from urban classrooms around the United States were interviewed. Each was asked three questions:

"How do you interact with students? How do you describe your management style? What works well for you in communicating with your students?" (Brown, 2004, p. 274). Themes similar to Milner and Tenore (2010), emerged. Teachers identified the importance of developing relationships with their students. Teachers relayed that the components of those relationships include student interests, home life, taking time to provide individual attention, and bringing student interests and values into the classroom and curricula. Teachers indicated the importance of a safe and business-like environment. The common understanding between teachers and students is that teachers will address student behavior swiftly and fairly, allowing for minimal disruption to the learning environment. Students reported a need for clear and concise expectations to be communicated by the teacher. They wanted to be held to a high standard and have teachers not allow for excuses. The final theme Brown's (2004) study revealed is the vital need for teachers to develop and accept communication styles while adopting a strong emphasis on listening. Communication and listening are foundational concepts in Culturally Responsive Classroom and Classroom Management creation. As stated in previous studies, teachers' misunderstanding of student communication styles is a defining factor in problem behavior. When teachers accept non-European Middle-Class communication styles and listen to students, the unconscious bias issues can be addressed.

Teachers, preservice or experienced, must change the way they view behavior. Johnson et al. (2017) discussed school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The foundational concepts of PBIS are prevention of behaviors, data collection, data reviews to drive decision-making, evidence-based practices, and the use of school activities as incentives to ensure sustainability of the practices. In order to set these things in motion, schools need to define problem behaviors. Educators in charge of this process need to consider cultural and

racial diversity. They need to identify unconscious bias that impact behavior definition. Shifting

teachers' views of culture will influence teachers' view on behavior. When teachers can

understand the student backgrounds and culture, they can better define expected behavior within

schools. They must take into consideration previously stated things such as expression,

communication styles, community, and the importance of family in the education process. PBIS

programs include school staff, parents and guardians, and students in the process of

implementing PBIS. The contributions of these groups help influence and define student

behaviors. Parents and guardians can help teachers understand where the students come from

and their cultural values that influence their behaviors (Johnson et al., 2017).

Table 2

Second Group Literature Table

Author(s)	Study Design	Participants	Procedure	Findings
Downey, D. B., & Pribesh, S. (2004)	Quantitative	Fall 1998 · Kindergarten students · 2,707 Black students · 10,282 White students · 70% of black students were matched with a White teacher · 2% of White students were matched with a different race teacher Eighth Grade students · 1.493 Black students · 7,388 White Students	· Used Externalizing Problem Behavior scale to gather teacher information about how often their students argued, fought, got angry, acted impulsively, and disrupted ongoing activities. · Approaches to Learning scale was used to rate student academic skills · Composite variable for 8th-grade teachers to complete. Three questions for the teachers to answer: 1. Is the student attentive in class	· If a black student has a higher socioeconomic status, White teachers rated them better than black teachers. This could point to socioeconomic status being a solid indicator of teacher perceptions of students than initially indicated in previous studies. · Overall results showed that black students were on the Externalizing Problem Behavior and Approaches to Learning as being

Table 2 (continued)

		· 91% of teachers were White · 64% of black students were matched with a different race teacher · 3% of White students were matched with a different race teacher	2. Does the student perform below their ability? 3. Does the student rarely complete their homework?	"poor citizens" in the classroom compared to White peers. The race of the teacher did not influence these results. · However, when interpreting the results for effort in the classroom, black teachers rated black students higher than their White colleagues. · Further research is needed to generalize the results.
Brown, D. F (2004)	Qualitative · Interviews	· 13 teachers were selected (1st-12th grades) · Identified by colleagues as effective urban educators · Philadelphia- 2 middle schools and two high school · New York City, Harlem- 1 primary · Chicago- 1 primary and one high school · Los Angeles- 1 primary and one school · San Francisco- 2 intermediate · Minneapolis- 1 middle school · Wichita- 1 high school · Average experience 16 years	· Each participant was interviewed (~3 hours in duration) · 34 Questions- classroom practice, student-teacher relationships, curricular emphasis, and management strategies · Three primary questions: 1. How do you interact with students? 2. How do you describe your management style? 3. What works well for you in communicating with students?	Five themes: · Importance of developing personal relationships with students by dedicating individual time for each student. · Importance of a safe and caring environment to nurture relationships, success, and community. · Develop a "business-like community" (i.e., clearly stated expectations, little to no tolerance for excuses, inappro-priate behaviors are dealt with immedia-tely, fairly, safely while upholding student dignity.

Table 2 (continued)

		· Race Breakdown
		   · 1 Sri Lankan
		   · 1 African American
		   · 2 Hispanic
		   · 9 White
		
		· Student populations include African America, Hispanic, Native, Asian Americans, White, and the majority receive free/reduced lunch
				· Development and acceptance of communication styles. A strong emphasis on listening.
				
				· Establish and enforce clear expectations. All participants acknowledged the importance of holding all students to high expectations.

Baker. (2019)	Literature Review	· Multiple modalities	· Collected research involving teacher definition of defiance. · Synthesized research related to the impact of race on classroom management, ODRs, and definitions of problem behavior.	· Teachers' race and background are influencers when making decisions in the classroom. · Race is a significant factor in defining problem behavior. · Definition of defiance is based on a White definition. White teachers want all students to respect and be compliant because the teacher is the authority.
Bryan, J., Day-Vines, N. L., Griffin, D., & Moore-Thomas, C. (2012)	Quantitative	2002 Study of Referrals to School Counselors · 10th-grade students School locations: · 50% Suburban Schools · 25% Rural Schools · 25% Urban Schools	· Researchers collected the samples and desegregated based on student race, student's gender, teacher race, teacher gender, and previously reported problem behaviors. · They compared math and English classes. · Ran the numbers through SPSS	· Females are less likely to be referred than males. · Student's race played a factor in referrals in the English classes. (Black students were 71% more likely to be referred).

Table 2 (continued)

		· 4,607 in English classes · 48.2% Female · 51.8% Male · 66.4% White · 14% Hispanic · 12.5% Black · 3.3% Asian · 3.8% Multiracial · 14.7% referred for Disruptive behavior · 4,981 in math classes · 47.5% Female · 52.5% Male · 65.7% White · 13.6% Hispanic · 13.9% Black · 2.8% Asian · 4.3 % Hispanic · 1.5% Multiracial · 13.8% referred for disruptive behavior		· Race and gender of the student did not play a significant factor in math class referrals. Teacher race and gender were not significant factors either. · Previously identified at-risk behavior awareness was a significant factor in the referral results.
Milner, H. R., & Tenore, F. B. (2010)	Qualitative - Interviews	· Bridge Middle School, Bridge County, Southeastern USA · Two middle school teachers · White teacher with three years of experience · African American, seven years as a teacher but had been with the school for ten total years · Interviewed 2-3 times a year for two years. · Title I School	· Observations of each teacher. · Focused on identifying 4 Culturally responsive classroom management themes in each room.	· Six themes arose as demonstrations of principles of Culturally Responsive Classroom Management. Teachers must: 1. Understand equity and equality 2. Understand power structures among students 3. Immerse themselves into students' life. 4. Understand the self in relation to others

Table 2 (continued)

		Student demographics · 59% African American · 31.6% White · 5.6% Hispanic · 2.8% Asian American · 0.3% American Indian · Total # of students 354 Free/Reduced Status 79% Teacher demographics · 45% African American · 55% White		5. Grant students entry into teachers' worlds 6. Conceive school as a community with family
Monroe, C. R. (2005)	Research Review	· Article topics: African Caribbean students, culturally responsive education, discipline gap	· Topics: · Cultural synchronization in the classroom · Cultural mismatches and the creation of 'disruptive behavior' · Recommendations · Future directions	· Culturally Responsive Classrooms require teachers to build a classroom, use a curriculum, and allow for expression that reflects the students in the classroom, school, community, etc.
Glock, S. (2016)	Quantitative	· Study 1: · 101 preservice teachers · 70 female · Mean age: 23.92 · Mean teaching experience: 27.33 weeks · Study 2: · 140 preservice teachers · 111 female · Mean age: 24.02	· Study 1: · Questionnaire: · 14 student misbehaviors · Question 1: was the behavior a disruption · Question 2: does the behavior require intervention · Study 2: · Chose talking out of turn as the target behavior	· Study 1: Preservice teachers consistently rated verbal and physical aggression, property destruction, talking out of turn, calling out, and using cell phones as disruptive and needed intervention. · Study 2: · Preservice teachers applied intervention

Table 2 (continued)

		· Mean teaching experience: 22.17 weeks	· Talking out of turn was described in two sentences. · Same behavior was described as being performed by an ethnic minority male and female, ethnic majority male and female. · Presented intervention strategies ranging from very mild (ignoring, nonverbal or verbal interactions, etc.) to very harsh (ODR, removing students from the classroom, etc.). · Randomly assigned student demographic to read then rate how they would respond to the problem behavior on a Likert Scale.	strategies to ethnic minority male students more frequently than all other students. · Moderate to harsh interventions were applied most often · Mild to moderate interventions were applied to ethnic minority students than ethnic majority · Some caution needs to be taken due to preservice teachers not wanting to be seen as discriminating against minority students.
Johnson, A. D., Anhalt, K., & Cowan, R. J. (2017)	Literature Review	Variety of Studies	Review of studies related to school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports.	Implementation steps for school-wide PBIS can assist in addressing systemic racism within schools.

Chapter 3: Summary and Discussion

This paper aimed to investigate teacher responses to problem behavior in classrooms, specifically comparing BIPOC students' to White students' problem behavior responses. In Chapter 2, I reviewed 11 studies related to Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs), suspension and expulsion rates, and Culturally Responsive Teaching and Classroom Management. In Chapter 3, I will outline my conclusions, provide recommendations for future research, and describe the implications for current practice.

Conclusion

This section will discuss Chapter 2 findings related to the research questions. I divided this section into two subsections. First, I will discuss ODRs, suspension, and expulsion rates. Second, I will discuss Culturally Responsive Teaching and Classroom Management.

Office Discipline Referrals, Suspensions, and Expulsions

In Chapter 2, four articles related to ODRs and suspension and expulsion rates were reviewed. An interesting fact arose during my analysis. The United States has been tracking data about removal discipline rates for BIPOC and White students since 1975. The data has been followed for as long as it has, and there is little change in rates. In 1975, the Children's Defense Fund found that Black students were two to three times more likely to be removed from the classroom and school than White peers. In 2003, 1 in 5 Black students were suspended from school, whereas 1 in 10 White students was suspended (Gregory et al., 2010). In 2008, out of 74,000 tenth-grade students surveyed, nearly 50% of Black students reported being suspended (Gregory et al., 2010). The findings of the subsequent studies in the subsection of the literature review related to ODRs and suspension and expulsion rates corroborated these results. BIPOC

students were more likely to receive ODRs, which, in turn, meant they had a higher

representation in suspension and expulsion rates (Skiba et al., 2002).

Researchers continued to build on this research. It was found that BIPOC student referral

rates exceeded the percentage of the student population they represent. White student referral

rates were underrepresented compared to the percentage of the student population they represent

(Skiba et al., 2011). The final study reviewed in Chapter 2 investigated ODRs and suspension

and expulsion rates; however, it added a dimension to the offenses' severity. BIPOC students

were referred to the office for behaviors classified as subjective and defined in the behavior

tracking system as major (Smolkowski et al., 2016). The results yielded in the four studies for

this subsection built on one another. Each supports and often cites the previous studies. As

researchers learned more about behavior management and response discrepancies, they dug

deeper into alternative facets of the topic. They were adding layers of understanding and

explanations to each of their studies. Research started with basic investigations into numbers,

expanded into percentages compared to student population percentages, and finally into the

reasons for referrals. I compared the rates for my school to those in these studies and found

similarities.

In 2021-22 school year, my school was comprised of 65% BIPOC students and 35%

White students. According to SWIS data, Asian, Black, and Multiracial student referrals

outnumbered the percent of the total student population they represent. Latinx, American Indian,

and Pacific Islander students were referred at a rate lower than the total percent of the student

body they represent. When considering the referral percentage for Asian students, who make up

8% of the total student body, and found they had 9% of the referrals for the year. Comparing this

to Black or Multiracial students, the discrepancies are larger. Twenty-six percent of the total

student body are Black. Ten percent of the total student body is Multiracial. The referral

percentages for these two groups are 35% and 17%, respectively. White students were the

reverse of these trends. White students make up 35% of the total student body and only 32% of

the total referrals. As I continued to drill down into the referral details for the school, I noticed

similar trends to those stated previously in this paper. For instance, BIPOC students received a

majority of SWIS referrals for subjective reasons such as, disruption, disrespect, defiance, and

inappropriate language. Whereas, White students received a majority of referrals for behaviors

identified as, fighting, physical aggression, and property damage. Our district has dedicated

resources to address these discrepancies. It is definitely a work in progress that needs to be

readdressed frequently to make strides forward.

Culturally Responsive Classrooms and Classroom Management

One of the major themes in this subsection of Chapter 2 is the teacher-student race

mismatch. Teacher-student race mismatch was cited in all 7 of the studies contributing to this

subsection of Chapter 2. As noted in Chapter 1, according to a 2017-18 survey conducted by the

U.S. Department of Education, 79% of public school teachers are White. In contrast, 52% of

public school students identify as BIPOC. White teachers adopt European Middle-Class values.

Black students function with West African values (Downey & Pribesh, 2004). When conducting

their studies, researchers found that White teachers rated students who exhibited European

Middle-Class values higher than students who exhibited other cultural values in both academic

and behavioral categories (Baker, 2019). Examples of European Middle-Class values include

being on time, not skipping class, attending school, no office referrals, and were not suspended

or placed on probation (Baker, 2019). Students who did not exhibit those behaviors were

considered defiant. Defiance is defined by the authority figure (Baker, 2019). As previously

stated, a majority of teachers are White and, therefore, base the definition of defiance on White or European Middle-Class values. Black student behaviors such as how they speak, their voice cadence, volume, tone, and expressive nature, are often interpreted by White teachers as defiant. The interpretation of defiance results in ODRs, which influence removal punishment rates. Downey and Pribesh (2004) found that the tension between Black students and White teachers starts at a very young age and continues through the educational experience.

Creating a Culturally Responsive Classroom where all students belong and have access to the same learning opportunities is the ultimate goal of schools. A classroom set up for student success takes its frame of reference from student values and cultural backgrounds and integrates community (Monroe, 2005). Culturally Responsive Classrooms use Culturally Responsive Teaching to deliver instruction from a curriculum that connects to the students, their cultural experiences, learning strengths, and expression. The creation of Culturally Responsive Classrooms begins at the start of a teacher's career. Teacher preparation programs need to prepare teachers to be racially conscious and culturally responsive. Glock (2016) conducted a study looking at preservice teachers in preparation programs. There were two facets of the study. The first looked at how preservice teachers define problem behavior. Second, which behaviors do preservice teachers interpret as needing intervention. Preservice teachers rated behaviors that disrupt the learning environment (talking out of turn, verbal aggression, physical intervention, etc.) as needing intervention. Behavior such as disinterest, was considered not disruptive to the learning environment and, therefore, did not require intervention (Glock, 2016). Preparatory programs can better prepare future teachers to integrate a Culturally Responsive Classroom Management style.

Themes of Culturally Responsive Classrooms and Classroom Management arose in the final portion of the literature review. When observing a Culturally Responsive Classroom and Classroom Management styles, one will witness some of the following attributes. The foundational concept is that teachers must understand the difference between equity and equality. They must be able to articulate the difference to their students. Equity is when a staff strives to provide students with whatever resources they need to succeed (Milner & Tenore, 2010). Relationship building and rapport are evident in Culturally Responsive Classrooms. Teachers who can allow students a glimpse into their world, understand and are involved in student lives are successful in Culturally Responsive Classrooms (Milner & Tenore, 2010). Teachers who can bring student lives into the classroom demonstrate skills related to being culturally responsive (Brown, 2004). Brown (2004) identifies a teacher whose students understand and witness swift and fair action taken when the classroom is disrupted or becomes unsafe as a teacher who is well-versed in Culturally Responsive Classroom management. Milner and Tenore (2010) and Brown's (2004) studies paralleled one another. Each took a different approach to obtain their research data; however, they made similar conclusions. Teachers' abilities to integrate student lives into the classroom, build rapport, and handle situations swiftly and fairly, will lead to a trusting and Culturally Responsive Classroom.

Implementation of school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) can assist in addressing how teachers view behavior. The process of implementing school-wide PBIS includes the insights of parents and guardians and students. The input from these entities will assist school staff in addressing the implementation of behavior expectations that are more racially conscious (Johnson et al., 2017).

Recommendations for Future Research

Race and the impact of race on education is a topic that is ever-present in education. When considering recommendations for future research, it would be beneficial to look at teacher training programs. Teacher training programs need to emphasize Culturally Responsive Teaching and Classroom management. Future research could investigate teacher training programs that emphasize Culturally Responsive Teaching and Classroom Management to those that do not. Would the teachers entering the teaching profession with Culturally Responsive Teaching and Classroom Management skills be more successful in minimizing the number of ODRs for BIPOC students?

The studies used for this paper included investigations into the impact of the location of the schools being studied. The demographic data included urban, suburban, or rural schools. Future research should vary the location within the U.S. for each of these subsets. For example, rural Minnesota schools ODR information to rural New York or urban Chicago, IL to urban Madison, WI. When conducting a study using this information, the mean income rates should be considered when defining "urban" schools. Conducting research from this perspective will allow researchers to understand the implications of socioeconomic status on discipline rates.

The most critical future study would be on the student success rates in Culturally Responsive Classrooms compared to students in non-Culturally Responsive, focused classrooms. The rate of ODRs and suspensions, and expulsions could be compared. The graduation rates for BIPOC students and, subsequently, dropout rates could be addressed. This type of research could be the driving force for implementing Culturally Responsive Classrooms across the country. It can open doors of opportunity for BIPOC teachers. It could be evidence for districts to enforce

ongoing professional development opportunities for staff to learn more about unconscious bias

and how to prevent it.

Implications for Current Practice

I believe schools are in a constant battle to address equity and alleviate stereotypes of our

BIPOC students. Drawing attention to unconscious bias within each educator and teaching them

how to identify and battle it is crucial to address these trends. Currently, my caseload has six

students on it. All six of my students are BIPOC. As a White teacher, I need to challenge myself

to expand my thinking to be aware of my unconscious bias. I cannot expect my students to adapt

to me. I must adjust my thinking to be inclusive of the world in which my students live.

Teachers and other classroom staff need to recognize that the overrepresentation of

BIPOC students in discipline referrals begins at the classroom level. Teachers need to understand

that the definition of problem behavior and defiance falls on our shoulders as the "authority

figure" in the classroom. As educators, we need to consider our students' backgrounds and values

as we implement the definition of problem behavior and defiance. The definition of problem

behavior and defiance must be based on a culturally conscious perspective. We must find ways

to mutually create a classroom that integrates student opinions, backgrounds, and values into

classroom expectations.

Teachers should be versed in Culturally Responsive Teaching and Classroom

Management. When teachers choose a curriculum that draws upon the experiences of our BIPOC

population's ancestors and current lives, students are more likely to connect and learn. Providing

opportunities for students to witness teachers providing equitable practices in the classroom will

strengthen teacher-student relationships. Building rapport and positive relationships with

students is a foundational piece of Culturally Responsive Classroom Management. BIPOC

students are more likely to engage in the educational process when they feel represented in the

materials and formation of classroom values.

One of the major themes outlined in Chapter 2 was the teacher-student race mismatch and

its impact on student discipline rates. It is integral for the education community to recognize the

benefits of having teacher-student race matches in the classroom. BIPOC students feel connected

to BIPOC teachers differently than they do to White teachers. That is not to say a White teacher

cannot build relationships and be effective in a classroom with BIPOC students in it. Instead, it is

to say BIPOC students connect through inherited background and cultural values with BIPOC

teachers. It is also vital for BIPOC students to see BIPOC teachers in roles in education. BIPOC

teachers can show BIPOC students that a traditionally White profession is not that anymore.

They can motivate BIPOC students to continue to break down traditional barriers and destroy

stereotypes.

Summary

This paper attempted to answer the research questions related to classroom staff

responses to BIPOC student problem behavior compared to White students and how race impacts

and influences classroom management. Overall, the research supported the hypothesis that there

are discrepancies in teacher response to BIPOC student behavior. After completing the literature

review, I concluded it would have been more appropriate to compare teacher response to

behavior instead of problem behavior. The definition of problem behavior lies in the hands of the

teacher. The definition itself plays out as a microaggression.

It was very evident that race impacts and influences classroom management. The concept

of Culturally Responsive Teaching has been in schools for a while. I was unaware of the idea of

Culturally Responsive Classrooms and Classroom Management until conducting this research.

Culturally Responsive Classrooms and Classroom Management are staples to addressing unconscious bias in schools.

Lastly, the removal discipline data has been tracked from 1975 to now, with shockingly little change, which is shocking. Educators have the data yet fail to address and prevent it from continuing successfully. Stressing Culturally Responsive Teaching, Classrooms, and Classroom Management is integral to reversing the ongoing trends.

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