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**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER, SCHOOL, AND STUDENT-
RELATED FACTORS ON THE DISCRETIONARY PLACEMENT OF AFRICAN
AMERICAN STUDENTS IN DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION
PROGRAMS**

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Education in the Graduate School
of Texas Southern University

By

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2023

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER, SCHOOL, AND STUDENT-RELATED FACTORS ON THE DISCRETIONARY PLACEMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS IN DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

By

Nina R. Roberts, Ed.D.

Texas Southern University, 2023

Professor Ingrid Haynes-Traylor, Advisor

Exclusionary disciplinary consequences are imposed on students as early as preschool. Students receive punishments such as in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and placements in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs. African American students are most impacted by exclusionary discipline practices isolating them from the environment most conducive to learning. Many negative outcomes are associated with the loss of instructional days including poor academic performance and behavior problems.

The purpose of this study is to examine if a relationship exists between teacher, school, and student-related factors on the discretionary placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEPs) in Texas P-12 public schools. This quantitative correlational study uses Pearson r correlation coefficient and multiple regression statistical analysis to measure the relationship and degree of predictability of student placement in DAEPs concerning three independent variables:

teacher, school, and student-related factors and six sub-variables: ethnicity, gender, enrollment, teacher-to-student ratio, socioeconomic status, and attendance. The study will provide insight into the number of students removed from the traditional instructional setting by way of DAEP placement and an analysis of the demographic factors that may or may not have involvement in those placements. This study seeks to bring awareness to the need for structural reform, equitable purposeful school funding, and professional development diversity training to minimize the time students spend outside of the traditional instructional setting and maximize equitable educational opportunities.

Keywords: Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, school funding

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

During the 1980s violent crime rates were overwhelmingly high in many major United States cities which trigger a change in gun legislation (Pigott et al., 2018). President William Clinton initiated several gun control policies at the time of his administration. The Gun Free School Act of 1994 was passed condemning students to a minimum one-year expulsion for bringing a weapon to school. In addition to the mandatory sentence, schools receiving federal funds must also develop policies that refer students to the criminal justice system or juvenile justice system for in-school weapons violations. The policy directly linked school offenses with judicial consequences (Gregory et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2012; Rios, 2011). In efforts to minimize negative academic and social outcomes, the Texas Safe Schools Act was adopted in 1995 requiring Texas public school districts to provide Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEPs) to serve students temporarily removed from the conventional instructional setting.

Under Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code (TEC, 2005), school districts must meet the educational and behavioral needs of students assigned to DAEPs. Students are assigned to an alternative campus for a specific period. A violation of the Student Code of Conduct determines the placement of students in DAEPs. Mandatory placements include serious violations that are considered felonies under the law such as aggravated assault, sexual assault, and murder. Discretionary placements in DAEPs are contentious in that the decision is subjected to the opinion of the teachers and administration for minor infractions such as defiance, frequent tardiness, and dress-code violations. Students

are often placed in school settings that mimic prison with a forced conformity approach and an expectation of reform (Hines-Datari, 2020). Standardized punishments are in place for all violators when assigning consequences for mandatory placements.

Discretionary placements are subjected to perceptions, opinions, emotions, egos, biases, and stereotypes of the accuser (Zimmerman, 2018). One teacher may view a student's defiance as severe whereas another may conclude the behavior as a minor disruption.

Keeping students in the traditional instructional setting is instrumental in academic achievement and development (Algozzine et al., 2011). Of course, many factors affect academic performance, but nothing will impact academic growth more than attendance (Gershenson et al., 2015). The opportunity to learn and to achieve is limited when students are not in the traditional instructional setting (Bradley & Renzulli, 2011; Shedd, 2015). Students who are removed from the traditional academic environment by way of in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, DAEP or JJAEP placement, and expulsion are more likely to face academic struggles (Bell & Puckett, 2020). Those struggles tend to progress to more serious problems when exclusionary disciplinary consequences are frequently used as forms of punishment. More than often, harsher discipline practices deter students' involvement in school and school activities. It discourages camaraderie. Exclusionary discipline impedes students' opportunity to learn by limiting their exposure to educational experiences whether cognitive, social, or emotional. Research suggests a correlation between students' absence from the instructional setting and the increased probability of underperforming academically, being labeled with a learning disability, withdrawal from school, unemployment, arrest, and incarceration (Wolf & Kupchik, 2017). Exclusionary punishments are not positively

impacting students' behavior but negatively impact students' cognitive, social and emotional development. According to Losen and Whitaker (2018), during the 2015-2016 school year, 11 million days of instruction were lost due to disciplinary consequences. African American students are most impacted by exclusionary disciplinary consequences sacrificing the most instructional days. The cost of students being removed from the classroom comes with detrimental communal effects. Fiscally, Texas has endured costs in lost wages in excess of \$9 billion over the lifetime of a group of students whose behavior was associated with withdrawal from school (Marchbanks III et al., 2015).

Research indicates that discipline practices excluding students from the traditional instructional setting are associated with many negative outcomes including experiences in the judicial system (Anderson & Ritter, 2017). Students' academic performance diminishes with each absence, with each break in learning, creating a gap in academic achievement (Walton, 2020). Students may begin to experience academic frustrations and become withdrawn from school. Some exhibit behavior problems to conceal learning abilities while others physically remove themselves from the instructional setting by skipping school or having excessive absences. Students encounter idle time with minimal adult supervision. Either way, the path may lead to negative behavioral consequences that increase the likelihood of involvement with law enforcement. Research has suggested this path as the school-to-prison pipeline (Hines-Datari, 2020).

It is important to examine factors that may contribute to disparities in disciplinary practices because of the negative communal effects related to the associated outcomes. Teacher factors of ethnicity and gender are key to examine because there are almost twice as many White teachers as minority teachers which may lead to misunderstandings and

miscommunication due to cultural differences. Male teachers were just shy of 24% of the regular classroom teacher population during the 2018-2019 school year according to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Employed Teacher Demographics Report. School factors of enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio are principle as studies have shown that schools with higher enrollment tend to have larger class sizes and harsher discipline policies to combat classroom management problems due to overcrowded classrooms (Filges et al., 2018). Additionally, socioeconomic status and class attendance are also crucial factors to examine (Sullivan et al., 2013). Generally, students with access to superior and unlimited resources tend to outperform students with limited resources. Undoubtedly, continual student attendance, involvement, and camaraderie are essential to academic, social, and emotional development in youth.

The researcher investigated the relationship between teacher, school, and student-related factors and the discretionary placement of African American students in DAEP. The research was conducted to increase awareness for the need to decrease the probability of students withdrawing from school, being unemployed, and being incarcerated contributing to the drawbacks that will ultimately affect an individual's ability to positively contribute to the prosperity of the family and community.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between teacher, school, and student-related factors and the predictability of those factors on the discretionary placement of African American students in DAEPs. African American students are often placed into alternative education programs unjustly and siphoned into a cycle of negative consequential effects. Minorities have faced disparities and

discrimination in education since the first African soul was forced into the way of life determined by their oppressors. Education was not a choice provided to Africans who then became African Americans literally at the hands of the persecutor. The illegalization and punitive consequences of slaves who learned to read are telling of the intent of educating the “negro”. Over the years, minorities shed blood, sweat, and tears in the continuous fight for equal and equitable educational opportunities, so it is imperative to disrupt any structures that continue to systematically deny the prosperity of African Americans. Some factors are controllable by school districts that may affect the placement of African Americans such as enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio. School districts determine the guidelines for the student-teacher ratio which is driven by funding. The more students are allotted per teacher, the fewer districts need teachers, and resources can be utilized elsewhere. If high percentages exist between school enrollment, student-to-teacher ratio and the number of students placed in DAEPs, awareness of the analysis can be justification for funding to support smaller class sizes. Socioeconomically disadvantaged students can also receive support through funding and additional resources.

The goal of this research was to determine African American students’ likelihood of being removed from the traditional educational setting by way of DAEP by examining factors of teacher gender and ethnicity, school enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio, student attendance, and socioeconomically disadvantaged status. The purpose of the study is to bring awareness to teachers, administrators, community partners, and P-12 stakeholders for the need for discipline policy reform, equitable school funding, and

professional development diversity training to minimize the time students spend outside of the traditional instructional setting and maximize equitable educational opportunities.

Statement of the Problem

Minority students removed from the traditional school setting are more likely to experience negative outcomes than their peers (Dameron et al., 2019). Punitive exclusionary discipline practices tend to lead to consequences that may include involvement in the criminal justice system (Skiba et al., 2014). Extensive research has correlated negative outcomes such as dropping out of school and the inability to maintain employment with exclusionary discipline practices as well as the likelihood of becoming a repeat criminal offender (Fabelo et al., 2011; Hjalmarsson, 2008; Skiba et al., 2014) are all associated with suspension and expulsion. According to a study of all public schools in Texas, Fabelo et al. (2011) found African American males were disproportionately penalized for minor offenses. Perzigian et al. (2017) posited that African American students with emotional or behavioral disabilities are overrepresented in discipline alternative education programs and overrepresented in suspensions nationwide (Okonofua et al., 2016). Furthermore, Anderson and Ritter (2017), suggested there is also a disproportionate overrepresentation of African American males from low socioeconomic communities. Considering that White students are less likely to be suspended from school than African American and Hispanic students, the dilemma requires national attention (Goings et al., 2018).

In addition to students' performance in school before being placed in a DAEP, a recent study found that students in alternative high schools have lower attendance, lower grade point averages, and earn fewer credits than students attending traditional schools

(Wilkerson et al., 2016). Research suggests that although class sizes are smaller, teachers provide little instruction and have lower academic performance expectations (McNulty & Rosenberg, 2009). Academic performance is dependent upon quality instruction (Novak, 2019). It is important to explore any trends associated with teacher, school, and student-related factors that may contribute to African American students' overall placement in discipline alternative education programs to deter the probability of minority students' entanglement in the school-to-prison pipeline system.

Significance of the Study

This study provides insight into the number of African American students disciplined out of the traditional instructional setting and the relationship between contributory teacher, school, and student-related factors. This study is instrumental in discovering patterns that may have influenced the overrepresentation of African American students' discretionary placement in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs which may call for reform of policies and practices to ensure all students are provided with a fair and equitable education. Disparities in policies affecting minorities have migrated into the educational system causing negative long-term effects for students that bring forth difficulties graduating high school, maintaining employment and avoiding the criminal justice system. Economic stability is imperative for the growth and well-being of the community. By utilizing the factors in the study to identify the predictability of African American student placement in DAEPs, Texas school-board and school administrators, teachers, and P-12 stakeholders can recognize any factors negatively impacting the disciplining of African American students out of the traditional

instructional setting and produce a plan of action to promote and provide fairness for all students to maximize educational opportunities.

Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in the Critical Race Theory (CRT) whose founders include Derrick Bell, Kimberle Crenshaw, Richard Delgado, Alan Freeman, Mari Matusda, Patricia Williams, and the work of Gloria Ladson-Billings among others. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), initiated critical race theory (CRT) as a conceptual framework in the educational field although the historical foundation is rooted in the field of law. Ladson-Billings and Tate published the article “Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education” to bring awareness to the limitations of educational applications of Critical Legal Scholars (CLS). The argument was that inequities in educational policies and practices in the U.S. often lead to negative outcomes for students of color which is a rational ramification of greater inequitable social and political systems that cause cultural conformity of people of color (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

CRT recognizes that race impacts all systems of life and experiences and generally manifests negative outcomes for people of color. The theory has been used to acknowledge that racial disparities exist amongst a variation of structural outcomes (Crenshaw, 2011). According to Beachum et al. (2008), the major tenets of CRT include:

1. Racism is a permanent aspect of American life.
2. Skepticism toward legal-based claims of “neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy.”
3. The challenging of historical and support of contextual/historical analyses.
4. The recognition and importance of the voice and stories of people of color.
5. The emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches.
6. The dismantling of racial oppression

as well as the elimination of oppression in all of its forms. 7. Whiteness as property (p. 9).

This study is based on the tenet that racism is a permanent aspect of American life and the tenet of skepticism toward legal-based claims of neutrality. The critical race theory concept of racism as a permanent aspect of American life and neutrality is important in understanding factors that contribute to the placement of African American students in DAEPs such as suspension and expulsion policies and practices in place that target African Americans such as hairstyles, dress code, and disruptive policies. Some forms of exclusionary disciplinary infractions include being disruptive and disrespectful or too loud and aggressive. According to Rector-Aranda (2016), students of color, specifically African Americans are labeled as unsavory, inferior, and undesirable when they act in opposition to the dominant culture. Research suggests that African American students are also in danger of being disproportionately disciplined for these minor discretionary infractions that are subjective to interpretations (Beachum, 2018) by school officials.

Students are judged by the way they are perceived by teachers, counselors, and school administration. Based on the critical race theory of neutrality, the standard of right behavior is rooted in white behavior. “Neutrality” is a problem because whiteness is considered the norm. The result is the “whiter” a person appears and acts, the better.” (Bergerson, 2003, p. 53). Furthermore, as theorized by the tenet that racism is a permanent aspect of American life, research has discovered differential rates in misbehavior do not explain racial/ethnic disparities (Owens & Mclanahan, 2019; Skiba et al., 2014), yet differential treatment (Owens & Mclanahan, 2019), and implicit bias

(Riddle & Sinclair, 2019), are remarkably associated with racial/ethnic discipline gaps.

Rudd (2014) defines implicit bias as:

the mental process that causes us to have negative feelings and attitudes about people based on characteristics like race, ethnicity, age, and appearance. Because this cognitive process functions in our unconscious mind, we are typically not consciously aware of the negative racial biases that we develop over the course of our lifetime (p. 3).

Racism in schools manifest through disciplinary and instructional practices (Grace & Nelson, 2019). Nelson (2016a) suggested institutional racism is so deeply imbedded in educational systems, it forces scholars to contemplate overt racism intentions. Institutionalized racism has long-term impacts on minorities that include inaccessible quality education, low teacher expectations, biased testing practices, overrepresentation of African American males in special education, and the disproportionate distribution of disciplinary consequences (Grace & Nelson, 2019). According to Rector-Aranda (2016), “Because education is foundational to culture, it is crucial that educators recognize how the things that happen in schools affect the outcomes and practices of other public institutions and the larger society” (p. 3). Although policies may not be intended to marginalize a specific race, they are still contributing to institutionalized racism if they are proven to do so (Grace & Nelson, 2019). A major component of CRT is understanding that racism maintains an institutional power that minorities have yet to be able to dominate (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Research Questions

The essential research questions for the study are as follows:

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between teacher factors of gender and ethnicity and the dependent variable of the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs?

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between school factors of student enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio and the dependent variable of placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs?

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between student factors of attendance and socioeconomic status and the dependent variable of the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs?

RQ4: Is there a significant interaction effect among the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs in relation to teacher factors of gender and ethnicity, school factors of enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio, and student factors of attendance and socioeconomic status?

Null Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no statistically significant linear relationship between teacher factors of gender and ethnicity and the dependent variable of the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs.

- Ho₂: There is no statistically significant linear relationship between school factors of student enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio and the dependent variable of placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs.
- Ho₃: There is no statistically significant linear relationship between student factors of attendance and socioeconomic status and the dependent variable of the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs.
- Ho₄: There is no statistically significant interaction effect among the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs in relation to teacher factors of gender and ethnicity, school factors of enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio, and student factors of attendance and socioeconomic status.

Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions were made for the research study:

It is assumed that the information obtained from the Texas Education Agency accurately reflects the gender and ethnicity of Texas teachers in each district of the sample population during the 2018-2019 school year.

It is assumed that the information obtained from the Texas Education Agency accurately reflects the enrollment and student-teacher ratio of each district in the sample population during the 2018-2019 school year. It is further assumed that the information obtained from the Texas Education Agency accurately reflects the average daily

attendance and socio-economic status of each district in the sample population during the 2018-2019 school year.

It is assumed that the information obtained from the Texas Education Agency accurately reflects African American student placement in disciplinary alternative education programs in each district in the sample population during the 2018-2019 school year.

Limitations of the Study

The parameters of the study are limited to the following:

1. Public school districts in Texas during the 2018-2019 academic school year with student discretionary placement in DAEPs.
2. Texas public school districts will be utilized in the study because of the Texas Education Codes that mandate the establishment of DAEPs.
3. The study can be duplicated in states with similar mandates and demographics.

Delimitations of the Study

The researcher identified the following delimitations to establish the parameters of the study:

1. There are factors other than those outlined in this study that may contribute to the placement of African American students in DAEPs.
2. The study cannot be replicated in other states because the data specifically reflects information about Texas public school districts.
3. The findings may not apply to current school districts in Texas as the study does not reflect the most recent discipline data.

Definition of Terms

The following variables and terms are operationally defined for clarity throughout the study:

Academic Performance- refers to the measurement of student achievement across various academic subjects.

Chapter 37 of Texas Education Code (TEC)- Texas Education Code is a document governing the rules and regulations for all educational institutions in Texas.

Critical Race Theory (CRT)- refers to the theory of cultural and societal disparities in all systems of life including education, housing, and law.

Cultural mismatch- refers to the culture of the teacher being different than that of the student.

Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEP)- refers to students' mandatory or discretionary placement in programs on or off campus for both major and minor offenses.

Discretionary placement- refers to the subjective placement of students in disciplinary alternative education programs.

Exclusionary discipline- disciplinary punishments and policies that remove students from the traditional instruction setting.

In-School Suspension (ISS)- refers to the disciplinary practice that removes students from the traditional instructional setting for violation of the student code of conduct. Students are removed from the general classroom setting but are still in the traditional school setting.

Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs (JJAEP)- refers to alternative education programs offered by the county to accommodate juveniles who have committed more serious penal code violations such as murder or sexual assault.

Mandatory placement- refers to the objective placement of students in disciplinary alternative education programs.

Minorities- refers to non-white people.

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)- refers to the disciplinary practice that removes students from the traditional school setting for violation of the student code of conduct. Students are placed outside of the school.

Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS)- refers to the system that collects discipline data about the schools in Texas from the Texas Education Agency.

School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP)- refers to the systematic practice that excludes students from the traditional school setting pushing them out of the school and into the streets and ultimately involvement in the criminal justice system.

Socioeconomic status (SES)- refers to the classification of one's economic status based on education, income, and occupation.

Student-to-teacher ratio-expresses a relationship between the number of students enrolled in a school district and the number of full-time equivalent teachers employed by the school district.

Teacher Gender- gender refers to male and female.

Teacher Ethnicity- refers to African American, Hispanic, White, Asian, Native Alaskan, and Two or More Races demographics.

Texas Education Agency (TEA)- Texas Education Agency refers to the governing body of all schools in the state of Texas.

Traditional instructional setting- refers to the general education classroom environment without restrictions.

Zero-tolerance policies (ZTP)- refers to the government practice that includes strict and harsh punishment for students in violation of major and minor offenses of the student code of conduct.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized by chapters. Chapter 1 includes the introduction, purpose of the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and definition of terms used in the study. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature. The Literature Review is arranged by topics that contribute to the understanding of the research in the following order: historical analysis of discipline practices, disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEPs), overrepresentation of African Americans in DAEPs, academic performance, school-to-prison pipeline, teacher gender and ethnicity, school enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio, student attendance, and socioeconomically status as each relates to school discipline. Chapter 3 presents the methodology used in the study. The chapter gives an overview of the research design, population and sample selection, data, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. In chapter 4 the results of the statistical analysis are presented. Finally, in chapter 5 the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The review of the literature provides scholarly perspectives about topics relevant to the nature of the study. Past and present works are examined to provide a more in-depth understanding of the focus of the study. The literature review is organized into three major sections. Section one discusses the history of the disparities in punitive exclusionary discipline policies. Section two centers on the overrepresentation of minorities in DAEPs, academic performance and achievement, and the school-to-prison pipeline. The final section is an examination of the literature for the variables of study as they relate to student achievement and discipline practices: teacher ethnicity and gender, school enrollment/class attendance, and student socioeconomic status and class attendance.

History of Discipline Policies and Practices

Educational opportunities have been unfortunately less accessible to certain ethnic groups of people than others. The best education opportunities are afforded to the white and the wealthy. Other cultural groups must fight for the opportunity to succeed academically. To attain success, other cultures are forced to assimilate into a society that continuously fights against their acceptance. History sings of the struggle of the minority in education. After all, education was not intended for the minority and was forbidden in the eyes of the law. Life for African Americans has been filled with racial inequities and disparities in education that begin with the plight of the enslaved Africans learning to speak, read, and write the English language (Anderson, 1988).

History is long-winded in disparities of disciplinary consequences to minorities in both the education and judicial systems (Ramsey-Jordan, 2020). Education for African Americans was forbidden by law in southern states. In fact, there were slave codes designed and implemented from 1640-1860 with the intent of maintaining control over the race. Restrictions such as slaves could not be away from their owner's premises without permission; they could not assemble unless a white person was present; they could not own firearms and could not be taught to read were established to sustain social control.

In Texas, more specifically Galveston, TX, in 1856 the state would not allow any free African Americans or African Americans who had been released from slavery to enter the state. In fact, in 1858, the Texas legislature passed an act requiring all free African Americans to either leave the state, select a slave owner, or be sold into slavery. The number of free African Americans declined significantly from an already trivial number of 15 in 1858 to 2 in 1860.

Many discriminatory laws were in place to oppress the growth of African Americans after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. Jim Crow laws such as Separate but Equal hindered the educational and economic growth of African Americans and introduced many to the judicial system. The resilience of intertwining races was so strong that many laws were put in place to try to maintain the traditional way of life, especially in the south. Separate but Equal laws such as Plessy vs. Ferguson found that segregation was not unconstitutional if the facilities for each race were equal. Therefore, it was not illegal to have separate diners, gas stations, grocery stores, libraries, and schools amongst other things. The separate part was accomplished precisely, but the

equality of the law has yet to reveal itself. Quite naturally, the facilities for whites were in better condition than those for African Americans. The Civil Rights Act of 1875 provided African Americans with equal enjoyment accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of public conveyances on land or water are only subjected to the conditions and limitations established by the law regardless of previous condition or servitude. The Supreme Court declared the law unconstitutional in 1888. During the period between Reconstruction and World War II, over 4,700 African Americans were lynched according to The Tuskegee Institute in Alabama (Bailey & Tolnay, 2015).

The intolerable treatment and racial injustices experienced by people of color led to the Civil Rights Movement. “The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s was not just a movement about its leaders advocating for an end to discriminatory laws and social customs. It was also movement powered by its foot soldiers working towards justice” (Bickford & Clabough, 2020, p. 39). During the Civil Rights Movement, ground breaking cases such as *Brown vs. the Board of Education* attempted to desegregate public schools. Although many fought against desegregation, to receive federal funding, schools were forced to integrate. The education of African Americans began to decline when schools were forced to integrate. African American students were sent to White schools that fought against their admission and surrounded by White teachers who devalue their capabilities and students who deem themselves superior. African American faculty was little to none. Although there has been some progress towards equal opportunities, Ashford-Hanserd et al. (2020), remnants of *Plessy v. Ferguson* are still present today in the form of inequalities in educational facilities and services as compared to White counterparts due to discriminatory policies that marginalize minorities’ quality of

education, social, political, and economic power. According to Grace and Nelson (2019), desegregation mandates set out to equalize educational access for African American students, but the current obstacles that impede graduation often reside in the school itself.

A lengthy history of racial prejudice has contributed to the creation of policies and practices of disproportionate punitive disciplinary action (Bell & Puckett, 2020) for students of color. Instead of schools becoming more effective, violence in school is on the increase and academic performance is on the decline. According to Bell and Puckett (2020) schools are structurally violent institutions with discipline practices that marginalize Black children by impeding their ability to obtain an equitable education.

Minority communities are flooded with drugs and violence which is also very prevalent in schools. Because of the increase in violence within minority communities, stricter federal mandates were passed that handed out harsher punishments to offenders. These zero-tolerance policies spilled over into the school's student code of conduct making serious offenses committed at school punishable by the judicial system. This action created a connection between the laws of the land and the laws of the school. Particularly, the demand for harsher weapon policies was incited by well-known school shootings in the 1990s, such as the Columbine massacre that took the lives of 15 people and injured 24 others (Pigott et al., 2018). In response to the increase violence in schools, "zero tolerance, three strikes, you are out policies" such as the Gun Free School Act of 1994 was passed under the Clinton administration requiring that states receiving federal funds implement a one-year minimum mandatory expulsion for students determined to have brought a weapon to school. The perception is that schools are safer with zero-tolerance policies, however; according to Reynolds et al. (2008), the American

Psychological Association's Zero Task Force concluded that there was a stronger probability of future misbehavior if subjected to zero-tolerance exclusionary policies.

Presently, the scope of "zero-tolerance" policies has expanded to include major and minor offenses that occur on school grounds commonly resulting in out-of-school suspension, expulsion (Hines-Datari, 2020), or placement of students in disciplinary alternative education programs. Schools have inflated zero-tolerance policies to incorporate minor behaviors including insubordination, disruptions, and disobedience although they constitute no safety concern, indicating their usage to eliminate students with poor grades and low academic achievement (Pigott et al., 2018). The removal of students from the instructional setting would not help to rehabilitate students who have committed an offense but only increase their chances of dropping out of school entirely resulting in a host of other negative outcomes including arrest and incarceration. In response to the federal mandate, Texas passed the Safe Schools Act in 1995 which required school districts to provide alternative educational settings for students who have been removed from the mainstream educational setting. This was the beginning of Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEPs).

Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs

Following the Texas Safe Schools Act, Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 37 mandated the establishment of disciplinary alternative schools for students in elementary through high school who are removed from the traditional instructional setting for mandatory or discretionary discipline offenses. However, the program design is determined by the district. Mandatory infractions that result in student placement in DAEP include felony offenses such as aggravated or sexual assault, carrying a weapon on

school grounds, and any other consequential criminal behavior (Fabelo et al., 2011). Serious felonies such as murder, assault, or terroristic threats are also offenses considered mandatory under zero-tolerance policies (Cortez & Robledo, 1999). When compared to the population demographics of African Americans, they are disproportionately represented in discretionary placements but are proportionately represented in mandatory placements. Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs were born out of zero-tolerance policies and are often used to cage students who have violated the student code of conduct by housing them in an alternative school setting (Dunning-Lazano, 2018) to keep them away from other students. Exclusionary discipline practices are not in place to reinforce positive behavior but to reassure parents, teachers, and administrators that robust actions are in place to prevent disorder (Pigott et al., 2018).

The perception is that other students will be safer with the removal of violators. The intent is to offer students who would otherwise receive no type of academic stimulation, instruction, or support an alternative setting that is to combat the hiatus and provide students with educational developmental opportunities while maintaining the safety of the students and staff who comply with the set student expectations (Fowler & Lightsey, 2007).

Past research reported by the Hogg Foundation (2006) found 70% of placements in DAEPs in Texas were discretionary in 2005-2006. Mendez and Knoff (2003) also revealed African American students were disproportionately suspended more for discretionary offenses such as disruptive or inappropriate behavior; whereas, White students were disproportionately suspended more for mandatory offenses including possession of alcohol or drugs. Discretionary placements are punishments that are

subjective to the perceptions and opinions of those in the authority of mostly minor infractions and more subjective infractions such as willful defiance (Jacobsen et al., 2019). Gradually, exclusionary discipline became a consequential response to minor offenses such as excessive tardiness, disruptiveness, disrespect, and even dress code violations (Jacobsen et al., 2019).

Texas Education Agency (2020), report indicated more than 3.5 million students were impacted by discipline policies during 2011-2014. Reports revealed over 8 million assignments to ISS, OSS, and DAEPs. Students who are sentenced to in-school-suspension and out-of-school suspension are usually eventually placed in a DAEP (NAACP Legal Def. and Educ. Fund, 2005). The findings of the study conducted by Lendermen and Hawkins (2021) divulged the disparities in discipline practices.

Generally, African American and Latinx males that are considered at-risk or enrolled in special education and come from low socioeconomic backgrounds have a higher chance of being placed in ISS, OSS, and DAEPs. An equitable education cannot be achieved if there are disparities in discipline practices that lead to an overrepresentation of minority students receiving punishments that exclude them from the traditional instructional setting. Discipline practices such as in-school suspension attempt to keep students in the school setting, but the classroom environment is much different. Students are watched while they quietly complete the day's assignments. Social interaction and instructional input are minimal. Alternative education programs are similar to in-school suspension in that they offer some type of classroom environment and instructional access but the confinement to the alternative school is usually a much longer sentence. Out-of-school suspension excludes students from involvement with the school. Each punishment creates

an interruption in learning development making it difficult for students to stay on target academically. Students are held to the guidelines of the district's Student Code of Conduct. As stated by Stormont et al. (2011) approximately one in five students in the U.S. will display trouble behaviors.

DAEPs were developed to address students' violent behavior in school but are more commonly used as punishment for nonviolent behavior (Simson, 2014). Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs have been used to dismiss students who do not conform to the standards of conduct set by the school district. Poor and minority students are funneled out of the classroom and then out of the school into the prison system (Rivkiin, 2008). Disciplinary alternative education schools have become hideaways for poor, minority, and disabled youth (Hadderman, 2002). Schools fail to adequately prepare students because they are often underfunded and lack a culturally responsive staff. Instead of dealing with the difficult students, their behavior is criminalized, and they are pushed out of the educational system (Advancement Project & The Civil Rights Project, 2006). Students are perceived and labeled as problem students and habitually wrongfully placed in DAEPs. According to a study of graduation rates and DAEP placement, Lendermen and Hawkins (2021) found only 44% of students who have been placed in a disciplinary alternative education program will graduate high school, and only 25% of students with multiple placements.

Despite being deemed as programs to deter violent behavior, according to Hines-Datari (2020), there is zero-tolerance for what is considered unacceptable behavior in the classroom. Suspensions and expulsions have increased considerably under zero-tolerance policies (Dutil, 2020) and have become a legalized form of disciplining students (Hines-

Datari, 2020). More specifically, research has shown that African American students are disproportionately more likely to be affected by exclusionary discipline policies and practices (Dutil, 2020). Although disciplinary alternative education programs were designed as punishment for major violations of the student code of conduct, they have become havens to house students who cause frequent interruptions in instruction (Booker & Mitchell, 2011). Rehabilitation is not the objective of DAEPs but to manage and/or correct student behavior (Aron, 2003; Aron, 2006; Raywid, 1995). The goal is to return students to the traditional educational setting, yet, 25% of school districts allow only some students placed in DAEPs to return, and 1% that do not allow any student to return (Kleiner et al., 2002).

According to a study conducted by Ratanavivan and Richard (2018), results indicate positive changes in student behavior when counseling interventions were implemented during elementary students' placement in DAEPs. Research supports Discipline Alternative Education Programs have been adopted by 48 states in the U.S. but currently 36 of those states do not offer any type of rehabilitation, counseling, or social services while students are in attendance (Geronimo, 2011). Students are forced into an alternative setting with different teachers, administration, staff, students, policies, and procedures without individualized interventions to deter future behavior equating the experience to a supervised hiatus (Eyberg, et al., 2008; Mathur & Nelson, 2013) from the environment best conducive to learning and development. The reoccurrence of student placement in DAEPs rate is nearly 30% and although, these programs are to avert negative student behavior, students are five times more likely to drop out of a DAEP than that in traditional education programs (Fowler & Lightsey, 2007). The study conducted

by Fabelo et al., 2011) uncovered a 27-day average student sentence to DAEPs. A statewide study in Texas concluded students assigned to DAEPs were 20% more likely to be reassigned (Blackmon, 2016). Additionally, a study of two districts in Texas revealed that minority students were more likely to be reassigned to DAEPs than White students (Booker & Mitchell, 2011).

Furthermore, a study conducted by Mendez and Knoff (2003) indicated African American students were disproportionately represented in exclusionary discipline punishments than both White and Hispanic students (Costenbader and Markson, 1998). Not only are school districts with high poverty and high minority rates more subjected to DAEPs, but minority students have an increased probability of being placed in DAEP than White students who display similar conduct (Zweig, 2003). Skiba et al. (2014) suggests students who are subjected to multiple forms of exclusionary discipline have an increased probability of experiencing negative outcomes such as withdrawal from school or entanglement in the judicial system. Researchers also express concerns about the effectiveness of such techniques considering the ramifications of the likelihood of student involvement in the criminal justice system and mental health risks (Lendermen & Hawkins, 2021).

Although disciplinary alternative education programs are expected to meet the behavioral and educational needs of students, DAEPs rarely offer the same benefits as the traditional educational setting. The facilities where students are warehoused are very similar to detainment centers where students are subjected to more extreme security measures such as property and body searches. A nationwide survey of alternative schools and programs for children at risk conducted by the United States Department of

Education indicated that there is a shortage of schools to meet the needs of DAEPs. During the 1999-2001 school year, over 50% of disciplinary alternative schools were overpopulated (Kleiner et al., 2002). Many students have difficulty flourishing under such conditions and oftentimes discontinue their education because of mediocre education and overcriminalization (Geronimo, 2011). Conversely, according to Rutherford and Quin (1999), disciplinary alternative education programs are beneficial to students by offering individualized instruction and setting for students who are unable to perform in a mainstream classroom.

Some DAEPs offer social services to address the social and emotional problems that may trigger negative behaviors which will help students to return to the mainstream classroom. It is reported that the quality of teachers at DAEPs is less than that of teachers in the traditional educational setting and DAEPs are nuisance grounds for ineffective teachers. The risks of placement of minority students are greater because they receive stricter punishments for identical infractions ultimately intensifying the risks of potentially becoming a product of the criminal justice system (Reyes, 2006). Conclusively, the education provided at DAEPs is of poor quality resulting in high drop-out rates (Murray, 2009). Society bears the burden of not educating its youth through diminished productivity, higher taxes to support the growing incarcerated population, and potential employment opportunities (Geronimo, 2011).

Overrepresentation Trends in Discipline Practices

According to the Civil Rights Data Collection 2018, more than 2.7 million students will experience in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension which includes temporary placement in an alternative classroom or being expelled permanently.

Research has established that urban school districts with higher populations of ethnic minority students exhibit severe disciplinary practices (Rios, 2011, 2017; Shedd, 2015.) In comparison with White students, African American students receive exclusionary discipline at higher levels (Bottani, 2017), and infractions and office referrals as early as elementary school (Rocque & Paternoster, 2011). Students begin to receive exclusionary consequences for behavior violations as early as preschool. Over 50,000 preschoolers were suspended at least once and over 17,000 were expelled in 2016 (Malik, 2017). Most offenses committed by preschoolers are not infractions that cause mandatory ostracization, so the decision to remove them from the traditional instructional setting is often a subjective one. The behavior of preschool students can lead to suspension and expulsion removing them from the traditional learning environment in early childhood (Clayback & Hemmeter, 2021) during the most crucial academic and social developmental stages. More importantly, the decision to remove even preschoolers is at the discretion of teachers and school leaders (Gilliam & Reyes, 2018).

The Government Accountability Office report of 2018 identified that Latinx students are 1.3 times more likely, Native American students are 2.0 times more likely, and African American students are 3.2 times more likely to be suspended or expelled than White students. Research supports that even the length of suspension is likely longer for Black students (Huang, 2018; Huang & Cornell, 2017; Kinsler, 2011). More so, white students are less likely to receive infractions than African Americans for behaviors that are considered problematic (Skiba et al., 2002). Surprisingly, African American males are often outnumbered in the overrepresentation of arrests and exclusionary discipline

practices by African American females (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014; Walker, 2020).

Children of color are often on the receiving end of unjust disciplinary practices motivated by negative stereotypes about African American students (Kunesh & Noltmeyer, 2019). Societal stereotypes have contributed to the portrayal of African Americans as violent and unintelligent (Okonofua et al., 2015) which may cause non-minority teachers to interpret their behavior as problematic (Okonofua et al., 2015; Skiba et al., 2002). Students and families are subjected to the automatic, unconscious, perceptions and attitudes of teachers and administrators (Neitzel, 2018). “With a predominantly White educator workforce and the presence of other discriminatory practices in schools and school districts, the implicit bias appears in schools as teachers’ favorable interactions with White students as compared with their interactions with students of color” (Crutchfield et al., 2020). The influential behaviors and decisions of persons involved in governing disciplinary actions such as suspension and expulsion may be impacted by implicit bias (Giordino et al., 2021).

Substantial research identifies extremely negative academic and social outcomes for students in response to disproportionality in disciplinary consequences (Gregory et al., 2010; Harry & Klingner, 2014; Skiba et al., 2002). Further research suggests that minority students are also subjected to inordinate punitive educational environments (Anderson & Ritter, 2020; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Kinsler, 2011; Skiba et al., 2014). Disparities in discipline practices correspond with the overrepresentation of students of color in disciplinary alternative education programs ultimately disproportionately restricting their access to a free and equitable public education

(American Civil Liberties Union, 2019). Recent studies have concluded that the inequality in discipline policies makes a significant contribution to the discipline gap (Anderson & Ritter, 2020), and has been found to prevail not only across school districts but within school districts as well (Barrett et al., 2019; Gopalan & Nelson, 2019; Owens & McLanahan, 2019). On the contrary, according to self-reported data, there are no racial differences in exclusionary discipline practices and White students account for higher rates of serious offenses (Musu-Gillette et al., 2018).

Academic Performance/Academic Achievement and Discipline

Extensive research has been conducted on the correlation between race and achievement but research between discipline and achievement is limited (Huang, 2018; Morris & Perry, 2016). Academic performance measures the cumulative process of students' success in meeting learning objectives. The learning feeds off previous skills covered usually measured by students' overall summative performance grades and grade point average (Palmu et al., 2018). Achievement gaps are generally measured by student performance on standardized test scores and other cognitive assessments. According to Fryer and Levitt (2004), achievement gaps appear as soon as elementary school and continue through high school and college (Libassi, 2018). Gaps tend to expand as students matriculate throughout each grade (Reardon et al., 2015).

As a consequence of exclusionary punitive practices, dissimilar effects and limitations are placed on the availability of academic resources and educational opportunities, particularly for minority students (Bradley & Renzulli, 2011; Shedd, 2015). Morris and Perry (2016) argue scarce information about discipline and achievement exists; additionally, there are also meager studies about the relationship

between discipline and race. The past few decades have uncovered troubling findings concerning the growing Black-White and Hispanic-White achievement gaps in the U.S. (Reardon et al., 2019). Pupils' academic development and identity are hindered because of excessive levels of suspension and expulsion (Walton, 2020). On average, students who are subjected to frequent punitive consequences perform worse academically than students who avoid this experience (Arica, 2006; Hwang, 2018); however, the chance of independent effects that lead to negative outcomes increases when the ramifications are exclusionary (Losen et al., 2015). Specifically, placement of students in short-term and long-term educational settings such as in-school and out-of-school suspension and alternative education discipline campuses restricts access to necessary classroom instruction (Kim et al., 2012; Losen & Skiba, 2010; Marchbanks III et al., 2015).

During the 2011-2012 school year, the removal of students from the instructional setting by way of suspension resulted in the loss of 18 million days of instruction (Losen et al., 2015). The effects of loss of instructional time not only impact the student who violates the code of conduct but adversely interrupt the learning environment for other participants in the class ultimately negatively affecting the achievement of other students (Carrell & Hoekstra, 2010; Figlio, 2007). Other students are considered collateral damage in environments with extremely punitive disciplinary practices resulting in an inequitable education for all students (Perry & Morris, 2014). The opportunity for an equitable education is hindered and arguably gives credit to researchers who view educational disparities and academic achievement through the lens of the "opportunity gap," (Mooney, 2018). The consequences of unfair punitive exclusionary discipline practices

forced on minority students directly align with the concept of an opportunity gap (LaForett & De Marco, 2020).

An abundance of research has discovered the intensification of the underperformance of African American males and the correlations between low expectations of teachers, increased rates of suspensions and expulsions, and the disproportionate representation of placements of students in special education programs (Liou & Rotherman-Fuller, 2016; Losen et al., 2015; USGAO, 2018). Substantial research indicates a correlation between severe school discipline policies and a causal sequence of academic failure, drop out potentiality, and exposure to the juvenile justice system (Bradley & Renzulli, 2011; Gregory et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2012; Rios, 2011; Shedd, 2015).

Students begin to be defiant by avoiding assigned tasks as early as elementary school contributing to a decrease in academic performance (Metsapelto et al., 2015). Implicit research has uncovered students between the ages of 6 and 11 that exhibit externalizing behaviors such as bullying, impulsiveness, assault, and theft can foreshadow math and reading high school test scores (Breslau et al., 2011). As stated by Reardon et al. (2015), the progression of closing achievement gaps has fluctuated over the last 50 years narrowing during the 1970s and 1980s but remaining stationary in the 1990s; eventually tapering again in reading and math scores from the 1990s to the present. Academic achievement gaps in reading and math have been disproportionately consistent between Black and White students as well as between White and Latinx students (Crutchfield et al., 2020). According to McFarland et al. (2018), African American and Latinx students are two years behind White students by the closing of the

fourth grade. Conversely, various studies have concluded that students display aggressive behavior when they are academically unsuccessful (Yavuzer, 2011). Although student disruptions, disrespect, aggression, and time spent off task are considered minor infractions, they place restraints on learning and reduce student academic achievement (Walker et al., 2005). Aggressive behaviors exacerbate the school climate which becomes an international threat to social health (Akiba et al., 2002).

More present-day studies indicate the plight of the African American male is highly correlated with policies and educational practices rather than effort and ability or lack thereof (Bottiani et al., 2016; Gershenson & Papageorge, 2018; Harry & Klingner, 2014; Wood et al., 2018). Recent evidence indicates that disproportionate suspension rates of African American students account for roughly one-fifth of the academic achievement gap (Morris & Perry, 2016). Statistical research indicates the probability of African American males being suspended or expelled is 2 to 5 times more likely than that of White students (Loveless, 2017). Disproportionate suspensions and expulsions executed towards African American males detrimentally effect academic performance, mainly because of the restricted access to the traditional instructional setting (Walton, 2020).

A study conducted by Morris and Perry (2016), unearthed an alarming school suspension rate which accounted for as much as 20% of the Black-White achievement gap as reported from a single district in the U.S. Black males are gentrified out of the traditional school setting by way of exclusionary disciplinary policies and practices more than any other race or ethnic group (USGAO, 2018; Wood et al., 2018). A reduction in time spent in the classroom impedes academic achievement and commonly ushers

African American males to withdraw from school (Bottiani et al., 2016; Gregory et al., 2010). Misconceptions of African American students learning abilities alter the quality of education offered, conversely, negatively impacting potential academic outcomes (Walton, 2020). Negative perceptions of African American males continue despite meeting rigorous academic standards (Lynn et al., 2010).

Inequitable instruction and implicit biases promote the removal of students from the traditional instructional setting (Walton, 2020). The combination of racial disproportionality in suspension and the relationship between suspension and negative academic outcomes systemically create and sustain racial and ethnic achievement gaps (Chu & Ready, 2018). Research has established a positive enhancement in academic outcomes for students that show improved behavior (Algozzine et al., 2011) and for students diagnosed with behavior and emotional disorders (Sanford & Horner, 2013).

School-to-Prison Pipeline

The United States held the crown in incarceration rates between 1970 and 2009. It incarcerated more people than any other nation in the world (Wacquant, 2009; Western, 2007; Western et al., 2013). Failure to adhere to standardized normative behavioral expectations is a strategic exclusionary disciplinary practice for punishing, removing, and criminalizing students of color and often begins the transition into the school-to-prison pipeline (Hines-Datiri, 2020). The NAACP (2016) reported African Americans account for 2.3 million incarcerated people which corresponds with the existing trend in the juvenile justice system. In comparison with White students whose rate of suspension is 15% and Hispanic students at 20%, African American students account for 35% of suspensions in grades 7-12 (NAACP, 2016).

Initial interactions with authority and discipline outside of the home begin at school. Students often enter the process through unfair discretionary exclusionary consequences such as infractions, suspension, and expulsion disguised as discipline derailing their academic development (Welfare et al., 2021). Fabelo et al., (2011), concluded in a statewide study in Texas that students who are suspended or expelled are considerably more likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system. Extensive research implicates that imposing suspensions, expulsions, and juvenile justice referrals obstruct students' access to education and hinder social and emotional development (Brown et al., 2018) while increasing the probable path of involvement in the criminal justice system (Dutil, 2020).

Disciplinary measures legally allotted under zero tolerance policies have been used by schools to connect students of color to the criminal justice system and house them in facilities modeled after prisons (Hine-Datari, 2020), with the expectation of an equitable academic experience. The correlation between exclusionary discipline in schools and the criminal justice system is referred to as the school-to-prison pipeline. The school-to-prison pipeline has also been described as a system in which adolescence receive judicial punishments for behavior committed in school that would otherwise be considered innocuous, potentially aligning them with subsequent interactions with the criminal justice system (Pigott et al., 2018). The school-to-prison pipeline is best explained by Tuzzolo and Hewitt (2006):

“Instead of creating safe and positive learning environments where students with behavioral challenges are equipped with the tools they need to be successful in

society, school districts around the country have adopted policies and procedures that actually force these students out of school” (p. 66).

Research suspects that a paramount element through which racial disparities in the “school-to-prison pipeline” materialize is the overrepresentation of minority children subjected to punitive school discipline practices (Barnes & Motz, 2018; Dong & Krohn, 2020). African Americans are consistently more likely to receive unequal punishment at school, (Cholewa et al., 2018; Gregory et al., 2018). Complications of clarity arise when attempting to distinguish between serious and minor policy violations. Offenses such as running away from home and truancy are criminalized offenses that would not warrant a criminal charge for an adult. Pigott et al. (2018) have discovered most school referrals to the juvenile courts are mild offenses minor in nature.

Hirschfield (2018) reported that an increasing amount of literature in criminology supports that exclusionary discipline has been determined to be an important element of the school-to-prison pipeline cycle. African American students experience the highest rates and percentages of disparities in school discipline and more specifically, out-of-school suspension (Cholewa et al., 2018). According to Anderson and Ritter (2017), in 2014 African American students made up 44% of suspensions, and 36% of expulsions but were only 15% of the total population of students based on the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights. As reported by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (2014), African American female suspension rates were 10% higher than that of White girls and 8% higher than White males. In a study conducted using New York City public schools, African American students accounted for 90% of suspensions but only 28% of the population. Intriguingly, there were no white female

students suspended during that academic school year (Walker, 2020). African American females were suspended more frequently for minor student violations such as excessive noise, disrespect (Blake et al., 2015), and hairstyle and dress-code violations (George, 2015).

Zero tolerance policies and the disproportionate usage of exclusionary punishment assist in criminalizing school infractions and contributes to the development of a passage from the traditional school environment to the criminal justice system (Hirschfield, 2018). Students who receive biased punitive exclusionary consequences have the perception that White students are held to lower behavioral expectations and feel unwelcomed in school (Ispa-Landa, 2018). The use of unjust and inequitable discretionary treatment by an authority at school may also lead students to look at the unjust and inequitable treatment by the authority in their community perpetuating a system of defiance (Amemiya et al., 2019).

Presently, many school practices promote school surveillance plans that disproportionately target African American students for disciplinary measures (Ramsey-Jordan, 2020). Not only have schools adopted many of the surveillance patterns of law enforcement but community organizations and partnerships also practice policing policies of the criminal justice system (Rios, 2011). The criminalization of students has become more frequent as a result of exclusionary school discipline practices legalized under zero-tolerance policies (Hirschfield, 2008). The growing influence of the criminal justice system in schools has transformed the foundation of discipline practices into a system that criminalizes disorderly behavior without offering transparency about student rights and the process of appealing removal from the traditional school setting (Pigott et al.,

2018). Challenges such as disparities in discipline practices, overrepresentation in special education programs, and underrepresentation in gifted and talented programs work in conjunction with African American students (Grace & Nelson, 2019). The disproportionate denial of educational opportunities to minorities leads to the disproportionate representation of minorities that drop out of school, the disproportionate representation of minorities that are unemployed or work in low-income jobs, and the disproportionate representation of minorities in the criminal justice system.

Teacher Gender and Discipline

In accordance with Madkins (2011), by 1950 almost half of the Black professionals were teachers which created a pathway for Black students to attend Black colleges and universities in preparation to become leaders to help develop Black communities. The transformative *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court case of 1954 that found segregation to be unconstitutional had many academic effects on students and teachers of color. Du Bois (1973) predicted the disappearance of the “negro” teacher when schools were forced to segregate. Black teachers and principals were exodus out of the profession when the integration of Black students into White schools began (Rogers-Ard et al., 2013). Following the decision to desegregate schools in 1954, over the next decade, 38,000 African American teachers were eliminated from their positions (Lutz, 2017).

According to Tillman (2004), many African American men who attempted to remain in the profession were forced to seek employment in other fields because of the disparities in treatment and compensation when compared to their White counterparts. In comparison with the number of teachers employed in the U.S., the number of African

American males is diminutive (NCES, 2016). Black male teachers account for less than 2% of the teaching population (Goings & Bianco, 2016). Research suggests that Black male teachers are at a deficit because of their test scores and the likelihood of graduating from college. Furthermore, only a few of those who graduate have elected to pursue a teaching career (Lewis & Toldson, 2013). The implementation of certification examinations often creates a barrier for African American men which perpetuates the continuation of a white female-dominated profession (Sandles, 2020). More Black males are choosing traditionally “male” professions resulting in the continuous decline of male teachers (Lutz, 2017). White male teachers are more prevalent at the collegiate level.

The lack of Black male teachers perpetuates the stereotypical discriminatory thinking of Black men as ignorant, violent, and lazy (Embrick & Henricks, 2013). Similarly, Latinx men are also underrepresented in the teaching profession (Chillag, 2019). Former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan provided the following comment on an alarming injustice: “Less than 15 percent of our teachers are Black or Latino. It is especially troubling that less than two percent of our nation’s teachers are African American males. Less than one in 50! It’s unacceptable” (Duncan, 2010, p. 2).

Gender-related stigmatization, lower status, and poor pay are a few reasons men decide to choose occupations that are not female-dominated (Torre, 2018). In addition, negative stereotypes associated with improper relationships and pedophilic associations often deter males from even entering the profession (Skelton, 2010). Men tend to display attitudes of aggression, power, leadership, and control (Buschor et al., 2014). Elementary school male teachers are also subjected to the scrutiny of being too harsh or uncompassionate when displaying traditional masculine behavior (Crisp & King, 2016).

Consequently, 99 % of teachers in grades 1-3 are women resulting in a gender-segregated, female-dominated occupation (Alvinius, 2019). According to Sampaio (2006), female teachers are expected to show more concern, compassion, and leniency toward student dilemmas. Women are stereotyped as nurturing supportive, polite, unassertive, and indirect (Holmes, 2006).

The shortage of African American male teachers is so severe that many students may never experience a Black male teacher (Bianco et al., 2011). This is a tragic dilemma considering the positive outcomes associated with the presence of African American male teachers including a decrease in school suspensions (Wright, 2015). Typical masculine strategies include directness, criticism, control of the conversation (Cameron, 2007), and the ability to think without emotion. Stereotypes that boys often behave worse than girls lead to the presumption that more male teachers are needed because they are better equipped to maintain discipline in their classrooms (Kearney et al., 1984). Due to the increase in single-mother households internationally, policy has called for a push to recruit male teachers to serve as role models and mentors to troublesome boys (Harper & Associates, 2014; Odih, 2002; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011; Goral, 2016).

On the contrary, extended research supports the opposite plea that male teachers enhance achievement and motivation in boys (Carrington et al., 2008). A study conducted by Read (2008), found both men and women practice disciplinary speech in direct and assertive ways to exert control, power, and authority over students. The findings of her study contradict the notion that men provide more effective discipline management in the classroom.

Teacher Ethnicity and Discipline

It has been documented that African American and Hispanic teachers in the U.S. collectively account for about 13% of the national teaching population while White teachers account for 85% of staffed teachers (NCES, 2016). Furthermore, during the 2014-2015 school year, White students accounted for 50% of the public-school student population; however, White teachers accounted for 80% of public-school teachers. Currently, the population of minority students has exceeded the population of White students for the first time in the educational history of the United States (Maxwell, 2014). Positive outcomes of racial congruency include the decline of students subjected to exclusionary discipline (Lindsay & Hart, 2017) and an incline in the number of minority students referred to gifted and talented programs (Grissom & Redding, 2016). Schools that have higher demographics of teachers of color encounter lower rates of disciplinary referrals (Meier & Stewart, 1992). Research suggests race has impacted the education of African American children throughout history, yet the analysis of racial disparities and discipline is fairly new (Ramsey-Jordan, 2020). Cultural misunderstandings between White teachers and minority students often lead to negative evaluations. Evidence suggests these negative misunderstandings may aggravate teacher-student interactions (Rasheed et al., 2020). The placement of African American and Latino students in classrooms of teachers of a different race or ethnicity potentially elevates the possibility of students receiving discipline office referrals and exclusionary disciplinary consequences for being perceived as more disruptive (Wright et al., 2017). The U.S. Department of Education (2019) reports that African American students accounted for 49% of suspensions yet were only 16% of the total K-12 national student population

during the 2015-2016 school year. Academically, as reported through extensive research, non-Black teachers' expectations of Black students graduating from high school and college are deficient (Boser et al., 2014; Gershenson et al., 2016; Gershenson & Papageorge, 2018). Teachers' negative perceptions of students' behaviors may shape their relationships with students, and in turn impact children's educational futures (Zimmerman, 2018).

According to Ramsey-Jordan (2020), the lack of a diverse faculty creates a cultural mismatch between teachers and students limiting relatable instructional opportunities. It has been argued that minority teachers have more connections to cultural and personal experiences with students which heeds a greater understanding and increased tolerance toward children's behavior (Acosta et al., 2018; Burciaga & Kohli, 2018). According to Gershenson et al., (2016), the Black/White achievement gap may be amplified by the imbalance in the distribution of ethnically congruent experienced teachers between and within schools. Literature indicates that the perception of a teacher by race differs by student race resulting in positive outcomes for minority students when they are instructed by minority teachers (Fish, 2019).

Research suggests greater levels of Reading and Math achievement have been reported when students are taught by teachers of the same race (Banerjee, 2017) as well as ameliorate emotional-behavior outcomes (Wright et al., 2017).

Culturally relevant training and professional development have been implemented in some schools to address the cultural mismatch between minority students and White teachers (Williams et al., 2020). Various educator preparation programs have revised their curriculum resulting in more diverse and multicultural awareness and

responsiveness for pre-service teachers (Williams & Glass, 2019). However, according to Milner (2020), there has only been minimal change in the percentage of African American teachers since the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court case in 1954 which desegregated schools and forced many African American educators out of the profession. Undisputedly, teachers bring diverse outlooks to education, but evidence proposes many policies and procedures imitate historical and sociocultural traditional foundations of educational institutions (Ramsey-Jordan, 2020).

School Enrollment and Discipline

Jacob et al. (2016) observed that “across the globe, trends in education have reflected a significant increase in student enrollment” (p. 8). Enrollment in Texas public schools has increased by more than 10% over the last two decades according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2018). Consequently, class size has increased (Chimbi & Jita, 2021). Class size refers to the number of students present in a classroom. Many studies support an association of class size with behavior and academic achievement. It is assumed that smaller class sizes execute result in more student engagement and participation, better assessment, and fewer behavior problems (Fliges et al., 2018). Although current research is insubstantial, previous literature reported through polling (Robinson et al., 1986) suggested positive correlations between student performance, discipline, and motivation as well as a decline in crime and drug use (Phelps, 2011). According to Molnar (2000), smaller class sizes promote more engaging learning experiences as the teacher can shift the focus from discipline to providing more effective instructional educational opportunities. The teacher-student relationship shows many advantages of smaller class sizes such as individualized instruction and more positive teacher-student interactions. Although the effect on secondary and post-

secondary levels is somewhat inconclusive, the benefits for students have been linked to constructive academic outcomes including narrowing academic achievement gaps, decreasing drop-out rates subsequently improving graduation rates, especially for minority and underperforming students (Boozer and Rouse, 2001; Nye et al., 2001).

In 1979, Glass and Smith conducted a study analyzing the effects of class size. Glass and Smith (1979) stated that “the notion is widespread among educators and researchers that class size bears no relationship to achievement. It is a dead issue in the minds of most instructional researchers” (p. 2). Their findings indicated an increase in student achievement in class sizes with less than 15 students. Pioneering research by Glass and Smith (1979) conveyed positive outcomes on student achievement inclusive of student interest and engagement and increased teacher moral and attitudes. The Tennessee STAR (Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio) study reinforced the association between class size and student achievement and also determined that participants of the study received fewer discipline referrals. As documented by Krueger (1999), class size reduction is most beneficial to minority students and students from socioeconomically disadvantage households in closing the academic achievement gap (Mathis, 2017). Considering the results of various studies that concluded positive outcomes in connection with small class sizes, Congress adopted and funded a \$12 billion proposal by former President Bill Clinton to support a class size reduction initiative (Mathis, 2017).

The popularity of smaller class sizes was unanimous among students, parents, teachers, and lawmakers because of the association with improved student achievement (Jepsen, 2015). However, few studies imply class size has little to no effect on student performance and achievement (Hattie, 2009). Many studies yield contradictory results.

According to Filges et al. (2018), Campbell Systematic Review revealed smaller class sizes had a small positive effect on reading but a negative effect on math achievement. Conversely, research also indicates the adverse effects of smaller class sizes regarding socioemotional development by limiting time for social and academic peer interactions (Bondebjerg, 2021). According to Chimbi and Jita (2021), in an international study, most countries have reduced the amount of funds allotted for education making it extremely difficult to meet the needs of increasing enrollments. To comply with federal mandates, the current class size maximum imposed by the Texas Education Agency is 22 students. Hanushek (1998) concluded class size reductions do not stimulate student achievement and funds allocated to reductions should be used more sufficiently (Laitsch et al., 2021). During the U.S. economic recession in 2001, many people entered the teaching profession by way of alternative certification which narrowed the teacher supply gap (Strauss, 2015). As the economy rebounded, many people decided to pursue careers outside of education.

Presently, some states in the U.S. are facing teacher shortages. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, there were more than 120,000 vacancies during the 2018-2019 school year (Wiggin et al., 2021). Additionally, the rates of teacher retention are also on the decline. In conclusion, the teacher shortage not only presents a fiscal challenge but a difficult task of attaining and retaining qualified teachers (Ertefaie et al., 2018).

Student-to-Teacher Ratio and Discipline

Student-to-teacher ratio relates to the number of students per teacher in an educational setting (Bondebjerg et al., 2021). Research on the student-to-teacher ratio is limited as it is a controversial issue. No studies have been found to reflect an examination

of student-to-teacher ratio and disciplinary consequences whether ISS, OSS, DAEP, or JJAEP before a study conducted by Jones in 2017 that explored the relationship between student-to-teacher ratio and in-school and out-of-school suspension in east Missouri schools. The results of the study concluded there was no impact on ISS or OSS based on the student-to-teacher ratio. The results of the research indicate a need for further research between educational variables that explore student-to-teacher ratio relationships.

Student Attendance and Discipline

Student attendance has been a concern since the 17th century. To put things in context, the first school attendance legislation passed in 1852 was done to combat child labor in Massachusetts. According to Gleich-Bope, (2014), by 1918 all states had adopted a school attendance policy because of the societal shift toward educating children. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016), students are categorized as “chronically absent” once they have missed more than 15 excused or unexcused days of school. There are variations in the term “chronically absent” as some students are considered chronically absent after missing more than 18 days of school. Of the 77.2 million students enrolled in schools in 2016, over 7 million students were considered chronically absent or “truant” missing more than 15 school days. Truancy is defined as “the willful unexcused refusal of a pupil to attend school in defiance of parental authority and violation of an applicable compulsory school attendance law,” or the failure of a parent to “cause the child to attend school as required by a compulsory attendance statute when there is no valid excuse for the absence” (Amendola et al., 2012) according to common law.

In Texas, the truancy policy allows schools to not only refer students to the criminal justice system but also to hold parents accountable for children's immoderate absences (Sun & Valenzuela, 2021). The purpose of truancy laws in the 20th century was for students to spend more time in the instructional setting; however, there were not many intervention programs in place to address the underlying problems that may be associated with the overrepresentation of minority student absences. Based on the U.S. Department of Education (2019), all races have been included in excessive student absences, but the disparities amongst minorities as compared to White students are unbalanced, especially when referring to African American students who are 40% more likely to be chronically absent than White students. Moreover, high school students are inclined to have a greater chance of carrying this label than elementary and middle school students (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The average secondary school student misses three school weeks per year according to Snyder and Dillow (2013).

Van Wert and colleagues (2018) suggested truancy is also a tool used to criminalize students and push them into the school-to-prison pipeline ignoring the impact of discrimination, inequitable academic structures, and disparities in school discipline. Factors within schools, such as a positive and safe school environment and an effective, supportive, and engaging teacher, are also likely to influence absences (Liu & Loeb, 2021). Chang (2017) expressed that school-based barriers youth encounter such as a lack of resources and relevant curriculum, disproportionate discipline practices, and extracurricular activities fail to meet the needs and interests of students that catalyze student absences. Students who truant are declared as unmotivated, problematic, and incapable of learning (Baskerville, 2019) and are often associated with juvenile

delinquents and drop-outs. Not only has low attendance been a predictor of reduced learning (Stainburn, 2014), but it has also been associated with suspension and drop-out rates (Balfanz and Byrnes, 2012). In a study conducted in New Zealand, it was found that Maori students chose to remove themselves from situations where they felt the treatment was unfair and untenable to circumvent negative social perceptions and estranged relationships (Thompson, 2011). Other negative school experiences may contribute to frequent absences such as bullying (Kearney, 2021), and social isolation.

The national average of African American students attends schools where there are twice as many socioeconomically disadvantaged, low-income students compared to White students (Williams, 2016). The literature reflects that students who are routinely absent are commonly from socioeconomically disadvantaged households (Morrissey et al., 2014; Ready, 2010). African American, Hispanic, and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds convey the most noticeable chronic absenteeism exacerbating the achievement gaps (Liu & Loeb, 2021). According to the research of Kearney and colleagues (2020):

School absenteeism is often associated with lower socioeconomic youth who experience multiple community based barriers to attending school such as domestic and neighborhood violence, crowded living spaces, frequent mobility/evictions or homelessness, lack of access to health care, unsafe or inadequate/unreliable transportation to school, trauma, exposure to pollutants, nonrandom school assignments, involvement with social service or juvenile justice systems, and restricted Internet, computer, software, bandwidth, headphone, and electricity access (p. 708).

School attendance problems are associated with many negative long and short terms outcomes including academic deficits, grade retention, socioemotional impairments, and substance abuse (Ansari et al., 2020; Gakh et al., 2020). Gottfried (2015), proposes that student absences are impacted by different factors within the family, community, and school environment. Imperative research by Allison and Attisha (2019) outlined the relationship between academic achievement, earning potential, better mental and physical health, and regular school attendance. A multitude of experimental evidence suggests that compared to students who have better attendance in school, students who have excessive absences perform worse than their peers academically (Chang & Romero, 2008; Gershenson et al., 2015; Morrissey et al., 2014).

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged and Discipline

Extensive research suggests socioeconomic differences among racial groups are predictive of the type of disciplinary consequences utilized in the school (Mendez et al., 2002; Noltemeyer & McLoughlin, 2010; Sullivan et al., 2013). Students of color from low socioeconomic backgrounds experience elevated surveillance and castigating sentences for minor non-violent discretionary offenses (Deitch et al., 2009; Feld, 1999; Paik, 2011; Rios, 2011). African American children who come from households with low socioeconomic status are more likely to experience multiple suspensions in the same year (Barrett et al., 2017).

The economic classification of people in the United States determines their quality of life. The type of education and healthcare accessible tend to be directly related to socioeconomic status. Many negative outcomes have been associated with living in poverty. As reported by Fryer and Levitt, (2004), socioeconomic factors between races

account for almost all the Black-White achievement gap when students enter kindergarten and 60% when entering the third grade. Learning expectations of other students of color and students from low socioeconomic environments are similar to that of African American students (Boser et al., 2014).

Poverty has been associated with family difficulties including harsher disciplinary practices and parental depression. The quality of parenting and characteristics of parents have been correlated with high rates of behavior and emotional problems (Conger et al., 1994). In comparison with students who have a higher socioeconomic status, less fortunate students may experience behavioral and emotional problems as well as poorer physical health and cognitive development (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). More commonly, schools with extreme levels of poverty are urban schools (Peguero et al., 2020). According to Peguero et al. (2020), higher unemployment, poverty, and crime rates have been associated with urban neighborhoods as well as having characteristics of debilitated family structures, and underfunded and overcrowded schools. The dynamic of neighborhood schools is usually reflective of the community's socioeconomic resources (Berkowitz et al., 2017; Varela et al., 2018). Not only are students burdened with fulfilling school behavior expectations but many high-poverty communities force children to learn survival techniques that establish their acceptance in the community (Shedd, 2015).

Harding (2010) suggested young adults from low socioeconomic neighborhoods develop relationships with older community members who offer protection and street advice that conflict with perspectives regarding schooling. Students who reside in violent neighborhoods are pressured to develop a persona of resistance and hardened behavior

(Anderson, 2000; Jones 2009). Though these behaviors may increase their credibility to survive in the streets, the two very different codes of conduct create friction between students and staff at school and ultimately influence academic performance (Devine, 1996). “Disparities with socioeconomic resources significantly contribute to the distribution of key educational resources, opportunities, and advantages that are crucial to continued educational progress and success” (Peguero et al., 2020, p.78).

Although socioeconomic status may contribute to the difference in the discipline gap, many studies have indicated that socioeconomic status is not the only factor to consider (Wallace et al., 2008). A study conducted in North Carolina reveals that demographic characteristics and racial differences explain a portion of the variance when accessing student infraction rates but cannot explain the variance after controlling for factors such as parental education (Beck & Muschkin, 2012).

Additionally, Black-White achievement gaps are largely explained by multigenerational low socioeconomic status (Rothstein & Wozny, 2013). Research has also shown a strong correlation between the SES variation of predominately Black and White schools and achievement gaps (Duncan & Murnane, 2011; Reardon et al., 2019). Furthermore, Reardon et al. (2019) findings indicate considerable differences across local, state, and national educational institutions as it relates to the achievement gaps between Black and White students. Parental income, educational levels, and racial inequalities account for three-fourths of differences in achievement gaps. Additionally, the socioeconomic status shows a similar correlation (Reardon et al., 2016b). In conclusion, students from comparable socioeconomic households with different ethnic

backgrounds have differences in rates of infractions that are unexplained (Beck & Muschkin, 2012).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between teacher, school, and student-related factors and the predictability of those factors on the discretionary placement of African American students in DAEPs. More precisely, the student examined the influence of teacher gender and ethnicity, school enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio, and student attendance and socioeconomic status. Chapter 3 is organized beginning with the design of the study, population and sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and statistical analysis procedures.

Design of the Study

This quantitative study used correlational research design to measure the relationship between teacher, school, and student-related variables on the discretionary placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs. Correlation does not imply causation. It cannot determine whether an independent variable is the direct cause of the dependent variable. Unmanipulated, existing archival research data was used to measure each variable. The independent variables in the study: teacher, school, and student-related factors each contain two sub-variables. Each sub-variable was measured against the dependent variable of discretionary placements of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs.

Population/Sampling Procedures

The researcher used purposive sampling to select school districts with at least one student discretionary enrollment in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program during

the 2018-2019 academic school year. The population of the study utilized P-12 school districts' archival data in Texas. There are 1,201 school districts in Texas. Of those districts, there are 166 school districts identified as having at least one discretionary placement of an African American student in DAEP which account for about 13.8% of the total Texas P-12 school districts population. Before performing any analysis, data were cleaned and retained only relevant entries in multiple datasets. Consequently, 75 districts were identified that were available in all datasets. By using the data from all remaining school districts after eliminating outliers, the results are more generalizable to school districts in the nation with similar demographics. Once the sample population was determined, the researcher analyzed the data of each selected school district. There was no use of animals or human subjects in the study.

Instrumentation

The study included Texas P-12 archival data from the 2018-2019 school year acquired through the Texas Education Agency's numerous district reports and summaries at the request of the researcher. It is assumed the reports are both valid and reliable. The use of archival data is strong in external validity since the participants are unaware of the researcher's intentions. However, archival data may pose a threat to the internal validity of the study as it may be difficult to control all plausible explanations of relationships between variables.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher collected archival data from various reports accessible through the Texas Education Agency (TEA) website for the school year 2018-2019 to obtain information about each variable. The Texas Education Agency's Employed Teacher

Demographics Report provided data that measures the teacher-related factors of the study, ethnicity, and gender. Texas Education Agency's Enrollment Trends Report provided the number of student enrollment in the district and the teacher-to-student ratio for each district was accessible through Texas Academic Performance Report/Texas Performance Reporting System. Student attendance was available on the Average Daily Attendance Report and socioeconomic status data was retrieved from the Economically Disadvantage Status Report provided by TEA. The continuous dependent variable data, the number of discretionary placements of African American students in DAEP, was accessible utilizing the TEA's Discipline Reports and Discipline Action Group Summaries.

Data Analysis Procedures

The study utilized Pearson r correlation coefficient statistical analysis and multiple regression analysis to investigate the relationship between teacher factors of gender and ethnicity, school factors of enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio, and student factors of attendance and socioeconomic status on the discretionary placements of African American students in DAEP. Statistically, Pearson correlation coefficient denoted by " r ", also called bivariate correlation or simply correlation coefficient, measures the linear relationship between two variables. It is a normalized covariance as it equals the ratio of covariance between two variables and the product of their corresponding standard deviations. The value of correlation coefficient would always range between -1 and +1. A correlation coefficient of -1 implies a perfectly negative relationship between two data set while a +1 suggests a perfectly positive correlation between the two variables understudy. Overall, Pearson r determines if a linear

relationship exists between variables and the strength of that relationship. Whereas multiple regression statistical analysis was employed to examine the extent of predictability of the relationship between teacher, school, and student-related factors and the discretionary placement of African American students in DAEP. Linear Regression model predicts the relationship between two variables. However, if the number of independent variables is more than one then multiple linear regression model is used to predict the model for dependent variable. In other term, multiple linear regression model is by large an extension of simple linear regression model. Multiple regression is used when the researcher seeks to examine the predictability of the dependent variable from each independent variable while controlling the other independent variables. Research data collected for the study through Texas Education Agency's archival data were inserted in a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. In this study, the researcher seeks 95% confidence that the results are statistically significant. A confidence level of 95% was selected which in turn defined a significance level of 5%, denoted by " α ". There is a 5% risk of concluding a relationship between predictor X and response Y when no relationship exists. The .05 probability level was established as the criterion utilized to reject or accept the null hypotheses.

Summary

This chapter presented the methodology for the research investigation including the design of the study, population/sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. The procedures and data collection methods were chosen to obtain accurate, valid, and reliable results for analyzing the data.

CHAPTER 4

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between teacher, school, and student-related factors and the predictability of those factors on the discretionary placement of African American students in DAEPs. The research questions investigated are as follows:

- RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between teacher factors of gender and ethnicity and the dependent variable of the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs?
- RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between school factors of student enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio and the dependent variable of placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs?
- RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between student factors of attendance and socioeconomic status and the dependent variable of the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs?
- RQ4: Is there a significant interaction effect among the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs in relation to teacher factors of gender and ethnicity, school factors of enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio, and student factors of attendance and socioeconomic status?

Prior to performing the statistical analysis, it was necessary to clean the data and retain only relevant entries in multiple datasets received. During the process, incorrect, poorly formatted and incomplete data was deleted from the data set and multiple data files were merged into one. All other variables among multiple datasets were matched with each district. Entries were retained for districts that were available in all datasets. Consequently, 75 districts were identified in all datasets. Furthermore, entries having values -999 and 0 were removed and were set as blank in the merged final dataset. Data was analyzed using Pearson r correlation coefficient and multiple linear regression statistical analysis in SPSS. The data analysis for this research work is presented in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Means and Standard Deviations of Research Variables

Table 1 below presents the means and standard deviations of independent variables teacher, school, and student-related factors and the dependent variable discretionary placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs. Analysis of teacher factors ethnicity and gender revealed the following means and standard deviations: Asian teachers 22.38 (SD = 59.91), White teachers 545.63 (SD = 757.32), Hispanic teachers 359.50 (SD = 592.96), African American teachers 140.96 (SD = 397.67), American Indian Alaskan teachers 3.42 (SD = 6.95), Native Hawaiian Pacific teachers 1.60 (SD = 5.73), and Teachers of Two or More Ethnic Backgrounds 13.74 (SD = 25.46). Additionally, the means and standard deviations of female teachers 795.41 (SD = 1,079.52) and male teachers 291.81 (SD = 419.53) per district were noted.

The means and standard deviations of school factors reflect the average student-to-teacher ratio was 14.52 (SD = 2.09) and the mean of the number of students enrolled in the district was calculated as 3,655.39 (SD = 7179.75). The high variability in the number of students enrolled, as depicted by high standard deviation (7,179.75), can be considered as a contributory factor for the low mean value. Analysis of student factors suggested the following means and standard deviations: socioeconomically disadvantaged 13,023 (SD = 21,049.84) and average daily student attendance 21,071 (SD = 27,460.98).

Categorical variables for teacher factors were numerically coded for the purpose of the statistical analysis. Gender was coded as “0” for male and “1” for female. Ethnicity was coded as “0” Asian, “1” Black African American, “2” Hispanic, “3” American Indian Alaskan, “4” Native Hawaiian and Pacific, “5” Teachers from Two or More Ethnic Backgrounds, and “6” for White teachers.

Table 1

Distribution Table of Means and Standard Deviations of Teacher Factors, Student Factors and School Factors

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation
Placement of African American Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs	162.62	177.32
Asian Teachers	22.38	59.91
Black African American Teachers	140.96	397.67
Hispanic Teachers	359.50	592.96
American Indian Alaskan Teachers	3.42	6.95
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Teachers	1.60	5.73
Teachers from Two or More Ethnic Backgrounds	13.74	25.46
White Teachers	545.63	757.32

Male Teachers	291.81	419.53
Female Teachers	795.41	1079.52
Number of Students Enrolled in Each District	3655.39	7179.75
Student/ Teacher Ratio of Each District	14.52	2.09
Student Attendance in Each District	21071.61	27460.98
Number of Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Students	13022.97	21049.84

Correlations Between Predictor and Criterion Variables

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated for the relationship between teacher gender and ethnicity, school enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio, student attendance, and the number of socioeconomically disadvantaged students and DAEP placements. Table 2 Pearson r analysis revealed that both male teachers ($r = .671$, $p < .05$) and female teachers ($r = .643$, $p < .05$) depicted a strong positive correlation with placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEP) which is statistically significant as respective p -value=0.000 denoted by Sig. (2-tailed) is less than significance level $\alpha=0.05$. These findings suggest that any particular gender of teachers may not have significantly determined the placement of African American students in DAEP since both male and female teachers were strongly associated with the dependent variable and neither indicated a statistically significant lower association with DAEP than the other.

Correlation analysis revealed that placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs depicted a strong positive correlation with teachers of Asian ethnic background ($r = .664$, $p < .05$), African American ethnic background ($r = .797$, $p < .05$), American Indian Alaska ethnic background ($r = .639$, p

< .05), and teachers from two or more ethnic backgrounds ($r = .760, p < .05$). A moderate positive correlation was observed between the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs and teachers of Hispanic ethnic background ($r = .411, p < .05$) and teachers of white ethnic background ($r = .446, p < .05$). However, a weak relationship existed between teachers of Native Hawaiian Pacific ethnic background ($r = .280, p < .05$) and placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs. Their relationships were determined as statistically significant. The results suggested that Hispanic, White and Native Hawaiian Pacific teachers were not strongly associated with placement of African American students in DAEP when compared to teachers from other ethnic backgrounds who all depicted a strong relationship with DAEP placements of African American students.

Correlation analysis between the total number of students enrolled in the district and the discretionary placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs revealed ($r = .868, p < .05$), which suggested a statistically significant strong positive correlation between the two variables. Therefore, it can be concluded that if more students are enrolled in a particular district, more African American students would have been placed in DAEP.

Analysis also revealed that no relationship existed between the student/teacher ratio of each district and the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs as indicated by ($r = -.002, p < .05$). This suggests that student-to-teacher ratio may not be a defining factor for placing African American students in DAEP. Therefore, African American students had similar chances of being

placed in DAEP regardless if the student-to-teacher ratio was of a desired level or not.

Correlation between student attendance and the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs depicted a statistically significant strong positive association ($r = .665, p < .05$). Analysis also revealed a statistically significant strong positive correlation ($r = .734, p < .05$) between the number of socio-economically disadvantaged students and placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs. This suggests that socioeconomically disadvantaged African American students had the higher chances of being placed in DAEP.

Table 2

Pearson Correlations between Teacher, School, and Student Factors and

DAEP Placement

Factors	Placement of African American Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs	
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Teacher Factors		
Asian Teachers	.664**	.000
Black African American Teachers	.797**	.000
Hispanic Teachers	.411**	.000
American Indian Alaskan Teachers	.639**	.000
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Teachers	.280*	.014
Teachers of Two or More Ethnic Backgrounds	.760**	.000
White Teachers	.446**	.000
Male Teachers	.671**	.000
Female Teachers	.643**	.000

School Factors

Number of Students Enrolled	.868**	.000
Student/Teacher Ratio	-.002	.986

Student Factors

Student Attendance in Each District	.665**	.000
Number of Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Students	.734**	.000

* Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .01 level

Results for Research Question One

Prior to conducting the regression analysis, it was deemed essential to test for the assumptions of normality of residuals, homoscedasticity and linearity. Normality of the residuals is mostly used to determine the normal distribution of the variance while homoscedasticity refers to variance of residual values along entire range of the predictive values. Linearity is the relationship, usually a straight line, between the dependent and independent variables. Since no major violation of assumptions of normality of residuals, homoscedasticity and linearity were observed, the data was subjected to a regression analysis to study the variance in the discretionary placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs in relation to teacher factors, student factors, and school factors.

The following is the first research question examined in the study: Is there a significant relationship between teacher factors of gender and ethnicity and the dependent variable of the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs? In addressing this research question, the study tested the following null hypothesis: There is no statistically significant linear relationship

between teacher factors of gender and ethnicity and the dependent variable of the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs.

A regression analysis was used to predict the relationship between teacher factors of ethnicity and gender and DAEP placement. Table 3 model summary calculations resulted in a multiple correlation coefficient (r) of .883. The independent variables accounted for an adjusted 78% of the variance of the discretionary placement of African American students in DAEP.

Table 3

Multiple Linear Regression Model Summary for Teacher Factors

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.883 ^a	.780	.754	87.954

Table 4 indicates a significant linear relationship between DAEP placements and teacher gender and ethnicity, $F(8, 66) = 29.731$, $p < .05$.

Table 4

ANOVA Table from Regression Analysis of Teacher Factors

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1839984.670	8	229998.084	29.731	.000 ^b
	Residual	518309.265	66	7735.959		
	Total	2358293.934	74			

* Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .01 level

Specifically, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander, and male teachers were not significant predictors of DAEP placement with t-values of -.615, 1.161, -1.754 whereas Asian, African American, American Indian Alaskan, teachers who identify ethnically with two or more races and female teachers were significant predictors of DAEP placements of African American students with t-values of -4.634, 6.721, -2.267, 4.308 and 3.091 as shown in Table 5. Therefore, hypothesis one was rejected. The researcher concluded that a significant linear relationship exists between teacher factors of ethnicity and gender and DAEP placements.

Table 5

Coefficients from Regression Analysis for Teacher Factors

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	37.003	17.180		2.154	.035
	Asian Teachers	-1.804	.389	-.828	-4.634	.000
	Black Teachers	.431	.064	1.313	6.721	.000
	Hispanic Teachers	-.027	.045	-.098	-.615	.541*
	American Indian Alaskan	-5.733	2.529	-.292	-2.267	.027
	Native Hawaiian Pacific	1.551	1.336	.069	1.161	.250*
	White Teachers	0.1305	0.745	.094	3.09	.003
	Multiple Race Teachers	3.214	.746	.580	4.308	.000
	Male Teachers	-.287	.163	-.827	-1.754	.084*
	Female Teachers	.130	.042	.941	3.091	.003

* Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .01 level

Results for Research Question Two

The following is the second of four-research question examined in the study: Is there a significant relationship between school factors of enrollment and student-to-

teacher ratio and the dependent variable of the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs? In addressing this research question, the study tested the following null hypothesis: There is no statistically significant linear relationship between school factors of enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio and the dependent variable of the discretionary placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs.

Again, regression analysis was used to predict the relationship between school factors of enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio and DAEP placement. Table 6 shows calculations from the variables resulted in a multiple correlation coefficient (r) of .773. The independent variables accounted for an adjusted 76.7% of the variance of the discretionary placement of African American students in DAEP.

Table 6

Multiple Linear Regression Model Summary for School Factors

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.879 ^a	.773	.767	85.542

A significant linear relationship was found between DAEP placements and school enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio, $F(1, 73) = 124.66$, $p < .05$ as presented in Table 7.

Table 7*ANOVA Table from Regression Analysis of School Factors*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1824126.528	1	912063.264	124.644	.000 ^b
	Residual	534167.406	73	7317.362		
	Total	2358293.934	74			

* Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .01 level

Moreover, student teacher ratio of each district (p-value=0.000) and the number of students enrolled in each district (p-value=0.014) contributed significantly in predicting placement of African American Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEP) with t-values of -2.524 and 15.789 as reported in Table 8.

Table 8*Coefficients from Regression Analysis for School Factors*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	428.076	150.869		2.837	.006
	CUM_STUD	.018	.001	.891	15.789	.000
	DPSTKIDR	-24.763	9.810	-.142	-2.524	.014

* Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .01 level

Therefore, hypothesis two was rejected. The researcher concluded that a significant linear relationship exists between school factors and the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs.

Results for Research Question Three

The following is the third of four-research question examined in the study: Is there a significant relationship between student factors of socioeconomic status and attendance and the dependent variable placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs? In addressing this research question, the study tested the following null hypothesis: There is no statistically significant linear relationship between student factors of socioeconomic status and attendance and the dependent variable discretionary placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs.

Regression analysis was used to predict the relationship between student factors of attendance and socioeconomic status and DAEP placement. Table 9 revealed the calculations from the variables resulted in a multiple correlation coefficient (r) of .536. The independent variables accounted for an adjusted 52.3% of the variance of the discretionary placement of African American students in DAEP.

Table 9

Multiple Linear Regression Model Summary for Student Factors

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.732 ^a	.536	.523	123.491

A significant linear relationship was found between DAEP placements and teacher ethnicity and gender, $F(1, 73) = 41.015$, $p < .05$ as displayed in Table 10.

Table 10*ANOVA Table from Regression Analysis of Student Factors*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1250947.915	1	625473.958	41.015	.000^b
	Residual	1082746.585	73	15249.952		
	Total	2333694.500	74			

* Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .01 level

Specifically, socioeconomic status was a significant predictor of DAEP

placement with a t-value of 3.793; however, attendance was not a predictor of DAEP

placements according to t-values of -.471 as shown in Table 11.

Table 11*Coefficients from Regression Analysis for Student Factors*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	62.694	21.236		2.952	.004
	Econ Disadv	.006	.001	.826	3.793	.000
	ADA_TOT_	-.001	.001	-.103	-.471	.639*

* Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .01 level

Results indicate that number of socio-economically disadvantaged students were considered a statistically significant predictor of DAEP placements whereas student attendance in the district was ruled out as a significant predictor. Therefore, hypothesis three was also rejected. The researcher concluded that a significant linear relationship exists between student factors and the discretionary placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs.

Results for Research Question Four

The following is the fourth of four-research question examined in the study: Is there a significant interaction effect among the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs in relation to teacher factors of gender and ethnicity, school factors of enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio, and student factors of attendance and socioeconomic status? The following research question was addressed to study the null hypothesis: There is no statistically significant interaction effect among the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs in relation to teacher factors of gender and ethnicity, school factors of enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio, and student factors of attendance and socioeconomic status.

Regression analysis was used for a final time to predict the relationship between teacher, school and student-related factors and the discretionary placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs. Output from multiple linear regression analysis revealed that thirteen predictor variables resulted in a multiple correlation coefficient of .871 as presented in Table 12. Together, these variables accounted for 87.1 % (84.6% adjusted) of the variance in placement of African American students in DAEP.

Table 12

Multiple Linear Regression Model Summary for Interaction Effect of Teacher Factors, Student Factors and School Factors on placement of African American Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.933 ^a	.871	.846	70.269

* Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .01 level

Table 13 ANOVA analysis suggested that a significant linear relationship was found among teacher factors, student factors and school factors on placement of African American Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs, $F(12, 62) = 34.302$, $p < 0.05$.

Table 13

ANOVA Table from Regression Analysis for Interaction Effect of Teacher Factors, Student Factors and School Factors on placement of African American Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2032490.930	12	169374.244	34.302	.000 ^b
	Residual	301203.570	62	4937.763		
	Total	2333694.500	74			

* Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .01 level

Additionally, the variations in the dependent variable from a particular independent variable when all other independent variables are held constant resulted in t-values of Asian teachers -1.104 , African American teachers .915, American Indian Alaskan teachers .735, White teachers 1.644, student attendance -1.117, and student/teacher ratio -1.631 indicated respective p-values greater than significance level and thus were not considered statistically significant predictors of dependent variable. However, t-values for teachers of Hispanic Ethnicity 2.179, Teacher of Native Hawaiian Pacific Ethnicity 2.235, teachers from two or more ethnic background 3.100, Male teachers -3.727, number of economically disadvantaged students 2.131 and the number of students enrolled in a district 5.318 had p-values less than the significance level and thus significantly contributed to the regression model as reported in Table 14. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. It was concluded that there is a significant interaction among teacher factors, student factors and school factors on placement of African American Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs DAEP.

Table 14

Coefficients from Regression Analysis for Interaction Effect of Teacher Factors, Student Factors and School Factors on placement of African American Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardize Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	327.611	179.328		1.827	.073
	Asian Teachers	-.478	.433	-.220	-1.104	.274*

Black Teachers	.161	.176	.491	.915	.364*
Hispanic Teachers	.262	.120	.937	2.179	.033
American Indian Alaskan	1.715	2.334	.087	.735	.465*
Native Hawaiian Pacific	2.457	1.099	.110	2.235	.029
Multiple Race Teachers	2.007	.647	.361	3.100	.003
White Teachers	.179	.109	.873	1.644	.105*
MALE Teachers	-.673	.181	-1.934	-3.727	.000
Female Teachers	.130	.042	.941	3.091	.003
Econ Disadv	.004	.002	.566	2.131	.037
ADA_TOT_REFINE	-.006	.006	-1.158	-1.117	.269*
CUM_STUD	.027	.005	1.325	5.318	.000
DPSTKIDR	-18.740	11.493	-.108	-1.631	.108*

* Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .01 level

Summary of Hypotheses

Four major hypotheses were tested in this research work to investigate the effect of teach factors, student factors and school factors and their interaction on placement of African American Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs. To test these hypotheses, standard multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. Table 15 reveals the outcome of the regression analysis and suggest that all four hypotheses conducted were found as statistically significant.

Hypothesis One tested if there existed a statistically significant relationship between teacher factors and the dependent variable of placement of African American Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs. Regression analysis suggested that Teacher of Asian Ethnicity, Teacher of African American Background, American Indian Alaskan Teachers, Teachers from two or more ethnic background and Female Teachers significantly contributed to the placement of African American Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs.

Hypothesis Two aimed at investigating the presence of a statistically significant relationship between student factors and placement of African American Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs. Analysis suggested that number of socio-economically disadvantaged students was considered statistically significant predictor of dependent variable while student attendance in the district was ruled based on its p-value.

Hypothesis Three tested the existence of significant relationship between school factors and placement of African American Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs. Regression results revealed that student teacher ratio of each district and number of students enrolled in each district contributed significantly in predicting placement of African American Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs.

Hypothesis Four tested the significant interaction effect of student factors, teacher factors and school factors regarding placement of African American Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs. Based on results of regression analysis, null hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that there is a significant interaction among teacher factors, student factors and school factors on placement of African American Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs DAEP.

Table 15*Summary of Hypotheses Tested in the Study*

Hypothesis	R-Square	F Value	Degree of Freedom (df)	p-value (Sig.)
H0 ₁	0.780	29.731	8/66	Significant *
H0 ₂	0.536	41.015	1/73	Significant *
H0 ₃	0.773	124.644	1/73	Significant *
H0 ₄	0.871	34.302	12/62	Significant *

*Significant at the .05 level

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between teacher, school, and student-related factors and the predictability of those factors on the discretionary placement of African American students in DAEPs. Specifically, the study investigated variables of teacher gender and ethnicity, school enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio, and student attendance and socioeconomic status on the number of African American students' discretionary placement in DAEP in Texas P-12 school districts during the 2018-2019 school year.

Pearson r correlation coefficient and multiple linear regression statistical models were used to analyze the data. One hundred and sixty-six school districts in Texas were identified as having at least one African American student discretionary placement in a DAEP. Of the 166 school districts, a sample of 75 school districts that contained information relevant to each variable was used. Texas Education Agency's various archival data reports including Employed Teacher Demographics Report, Enrollment Trends Report, Texas Academic Performance Report/Texas Performance Reporting System, Average Daily Attendance Report, Economically Disadvantage Status Report, and Discipline Action Summary Report from the 2018-2019 school year were used to collect the data. The following null hypotheses were tested at the .05 significant level:

Ho₁: There is no statistically significant linear relationship between teacher factors of gender and ethnicity and the dependent variable of the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs.

- Ho₂: There is no statistically significant linear relationship between school factors of student enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio and the dependent variable of placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs.
- Ho₃: There is no statistically significant linear relationship between student factors of attendance and socioeconomic status and the dependent variable of the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs.
- Ho₄: There is no statistically significant interaction effect among the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs in relation to teacher factors of gender and ethnicity, school factors of enrollment and student-to-teacher ratio, and student factors of attendance and socioeconomic status.

Findings

The findings uncovered in this investigation are as follows. These findings address how certain factors contribute to the placement of African American students in DAEPs in Texas P-12 public schools. The following indicate findings that Texas public school officials should note to enhance equity in discipline as well as findings that call for further research:

1. Both male and female teachers depicted a strong positive correlation with the placement of African American students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs.

2. Asian, African American, American Alaskan, and teachers of two or more races had strong positive relationships with DAEP placements.
3. Hispanic and White teachers had a moderate positive relationship with DAEP placement.
4. Native Hawaiian Pacific teachers had a weak positive relationship with DAEP placement.
5. The number of students enrolled in the district does not correlate with the student-to-teacher ratio of the district.
6. The strongest positive relationships among teacher, school, and student-related factors were identified as school enrollment and the number of socioeconomically disadvantaged students on DAEP placements.
7. Asian, African American, American Indian Alaskan, White teachers, the number of students enrolled in the district, student attendance, the number of socioeconomically disadvantaged students, and teacher-to-student ratio are predictors of DAEP placements.
8. Teachers who identify as two or more races, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian, and male teachers are not predictors of DAEP placements.

Discussions

One of the most distinguished findings in the current study was that men are more suited to deal with discipline and classroom management problems. This is not consistent with the finding of Read (2008). Read found both men and women practice disciplinary assertive ways to exert control, power, and authority over students. The findings of her study contradict the notion that men provide more effective discipline management in the

classroom. The present study revealed a strong relationship between male and female teachers and the placement of AA students in DAEP.

Another important and most interesting finding of this study suggested that Black teachers are less likely to manage the discipline of African American students than non-Black teachers with students of color. African American teachers have a stronger positive correlation with African American students' DAEP placements. This attitude was inconsistent with Acosta et al., (2018) and Burciaga and Kohli (2018), who argued that minority teachers have more connections of cultural and personal experiences with students which heed a greater understanding and increased tolerance towards children's behavior. Likewise, to examine whether matching a student to the same-race teacher affects the rate at which students are detained, suspended, or expelled, Lindsay and Hart (2017) analyzed a unique set of demographic and discipline data from North Carolina elementary schools. The findings provided evidence that when students and their teachers are of the same race, they appear less likely to be expelled as punishment. Teachers who are black are generally more likely to avoid exclusionary discipline than white teachers, which is driven almost entirely by black students, especially black boys. All of the outcomes measured by researchers, including detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and the total number of discipline incidents, are consistently negatively impacted by having a same-race teacher. Black boys tend to have a larger effect on each outcome than black girls. In a study by Neild et al. (2007), it was found that African American female teachers refer students more frequently than White male teachers. The likelihood of African American male teachers referring students was not significantly higher than that of White male teachers. However, "All additional

combinations of the race and gender of both teachers and students were tried with no significant results” (Neild et al., 2007, p. 426).

Even more surprising was the finding that a strong relationship existed between the variable of student enrollment and AA DAEP placement which is in line with research that the more students enrolled the more discipline problems. This is supported by Rios (2011, 2017) and Shedd (2015) who established that urban school districts with higher populations of African American minority students exhibit severe disciplinary practices.

In the present study, a weak correlation was found between the student-to-teacher ratio. The finding is consistent with Jones (2017). Jones studied student-to-teacher ratio and in-school and out-of-school suspension. The results of the study concluded there was no impact on ISS or OSS based on the student-to-teacher ratio. According to Gregory et al. (2015), repeated office discipline referrals can create negative interactions between teachers and students, whereas Skiba et al. (2014) and et al. (2008) found that most disciplinary referrals originated in classrooms (Decker et al., 2007) and were most often written for students from low-income backgrounds. Despite conscious discrimination, Morrison and Skiba (2001) argue that this disproportion has multifaceted causes. The authors of Okonofua, Walton, and Eberhardt (2016) argued that teachers and students were exposed to the same societal stereotypes, for example, that “black people are dangerous” (p. 383). Students' misbehavior can be escalated by these stereotypes, which create unique difficulties for both teachers and students in interaction (Okonofua et al., 2016). For the current study, Girvan et al. (2016) are particularly useful in understanding the relationship between subjective versus objective office referrals.

Not surprising was the finding that a strong positive relationship existed between attendance and DAEP placement. According to Van Wert et al. (2018), truancy is a tool used to criminalize students and push them into the school-to-prison pipeline ignoring the impact of discrimination, inequitable academic structures, and disparities in school discipline. Stainburn (2014) noted not only has low attendance been a predictor of reduced learning, but it has also been associated with suspension and drop-out rates (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). In an analysis of out-of-school suspension data from every school district in the country during the 2011-2012 school year, Losen et al. (2015) found that approximately 3.5 million students were expelled at least once, for an average of 3.5 days. During that one school year, approximately 18 million days of instruction were lost due to this. The study by Losen et al. (2015) focused on suspensions outside of school, however other researchers conclude that suspensions within schools are accompanied by significant instruction time loss (Noltemeyer et al., 2015). Additionally, Losen et al. (2015) noted that excluded students struggled in the classroom upon their return, often resulting in further behavior problems.

Finally, a most interesting finding was the strong relationship between socioeconomic disadvantage and behavior/discipline disparities or likelihood of suspensions, infractions, and office referrals of African American students. A study by Mendez et al. (2002), Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin (2010) and Sullivan et al. (2013) affirmed that socioeconomic differences among racial groups are predictive of the type of disciplinary consequences utilized in the school. There is a higher probability of exclusionary discipline being applied to students eligible for free lunches and to students whose fathers do not have full-time employment than to their peers. High-income and

low-income students agreed that low-income students were unfairly targeted and received harsher punishments.

Implications

African American students are faced with several challenges in obtaining an equitable education. Five of the six predictor variables have correlations with African American students' discretionary placement in DAEP. The findings of the investigation suggest teachers, schools, and student factors all share in contributing to the placement of African American students in DAEP. Regardless of the race or ethnicity of the teacher apart from Native Alaskan teachers, African American students have a moderate to a strong relationship with DAEP placement. Both African American male and female teachers indicated strong positive correlations with student DAEP placement. This implies that student-teacher race and gender congruency do not necessarily have a positive impact on the placement of students in DAEP. The extremely strong positive correlation between the number of students enrolled in the district and the placement of students in DAEP leads the researcher to conclude that the larger the enrollment, the more African American students would be placed in DAEP. Although enrollment may be a defining factor for placing students in DAEP, the student-to-teacher ratio was not. Therefore, African American students had similar chances of being placed in DAEP regardless of the number of students assigned to the teacher. A statistically significant strong positive correlation suggests students from lower-income families have a high chance of being placed in DAEP which is in line with the research. Almost 90% of the variance in DAEP placements can be predicted from the combination of the variables

studied, which is alarming in the respect that African American students may identify with several or all these factors simultaneously.

Recommendations

A follow-up study on teacher perceptions of the behavior of African American students will possibly provide insight into any biases, stereotypes, or preconceived notions surrounding the culture that may or may not contribute to disciplinary consequences. Are the behaviors of African American students considered inappropriate or unacceptable, and to whose standards? Cultural and linguistic awareness and responsiveness training and professional development can help all cultures of teachers become more effective in the classroom.

An additional correlational study examining class size on the number of disciplinary infractions given during class time would provide information to help determine if enrollment and class size have an impact on the teacher's ability to manage discipline in the classroom and keep students in the traditional instructional setting.

A follow-up mixed-methods study investigating the causes of student absences is warranted. Educators, administrators, and other stakeholders can request funding for counseling, social-emotional support, transportation, community service programs, and before and after-school programs to assist with getting students to and from school. Educators must research factors that contribute to areas of deficit in all students. Students, parents, educators, administration, community leaders, local and federal government agencies including the judicial system and criminal justice can collectively tackle factors contributing to negative outcomes that place African American youth on a path that leads to incarceration.

Conclusions

Based on the findings acquired from the results of the investigation, the researcher concluded that the gender of the teacher has a significant relationship with the placement of African American students in DAEP. Although teaching is a female-dominated career, the correlation between male teachers is just as strong.

The relationship between the ethnicity of the teacher and the discretionary placement of African American students in a DAEP revealed surprising results. African American, Hispanic, and Asian teachers had the strongest correlation with DAEP placements. Whereas, White teachers had a moderate relationship and Native Alaskan teachers had no relationship. Race congruence in the classroom is generally viewed as White teachers and minority students with implications that White teachers are more likely to have misunderstandings and miscommunications with their students which result in unfair discipline practices. According to the results, further research is warranted about the relationship between minority teachers and minority students.

Additional research examining the type and frequency of disciplinary consequences such as office referrals, ISS, and OSS will provide a deeper analysis of contributory causes of behaviors that lead to the placement of African American students in DAEP.

The significant findings of the relationship and predictability of student-related factors of attendance and socioeconomic disadvantage status on the discretionary placement of African American students in DAEP correlate with most research about negative outcomes associated with poor Black people. Students living in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities are more likely to experience attendance

problems. Poor attendance is associated with poor academic performance, behavior problems, drop-out rates, lower wages, and the pathway to prison.

African American students go to school in circumstances beyond their control that may contribute to the likelihood of being placed in a pipeline from school to prison. The investigations yield results concluding African American students' teachers, regardless of race and/or gender, school enrollment, and student socioeconomic status are prime predictors of discretionary placement in DAEP. Teachers, schools, and students share the responsibility of combating the placement of students in DAEPs. Cultural or diversity professional development to inform teachers of culturally relevant awareness, literature, and responsiveness can help circumvent misunderstandings or miscommunications that may lead to disciplinary consequences. School districts may benefit from an analysis of the type of offenses, frequency, and location of occurrence in schools with high enrollment that place students on the path to DAEP.

Lastly, students who attend schools with high percentages of socioeconomically disadvantaged students and schools with high enrollment tend to experience the most negative behavior consequences. Impoverish schools should utilize additional funding to hire more teachers to decrease class sizes and battle the economic disparities in education instead of using funds to subject students to more policing and surveillance. Additional funding can aid in the creation of before and after-school programs that help keep students in attendance and focused on pursuing positive outcomes to lessen the probability of becoming another statistic of the school-to-prison pipeline system.

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