

DIFFERENCES IN DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCE ASSIGNMENTS BY
ETHNICITY/RACE, GENDER, AND POVERTY IN TEXAS MIDDLE
SCHOOLS: A STATEWIDE ANALYSIS

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DEDICATION

Charlie Mae Collins, my paternal grandmother, completed her education at eighth grade. Though her education experience was brief, she held education at a very high esteem, especially mine. By today's standards, she would be considered economically disadvantaged, but with very little, she accomplished a whole lot. She instilled in me the most fundamental of life's lessons...the value of family.

Willa Pearl Smith, my maternal grandmother held a Master's degree that allowed her to become the first Black librarian at Delta State University. H.R. Smith, my maternal grandfather also held a Master's degree. His degree afforded him the opportunity to become the first Black high school principal after schools were integrated in Ruleville, a small Mississippi Delta town. My grandparents laid a solid foundation for me, with goals that were crystal clear. Education was key to achieving the American dream and I needed to go get it.

Although it has to be done posthumously, it is with great pride and a sense of accomplishment I cannot describe in words, that I gratefully dedicate this work to my three grandparents. Their shoulders are the shoulders on which I stand and I am eternally grateful for every prayer they prayed, lesson they taught, and investment they made in me and my education.

ABSTRACT

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Purpose

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which differences might be present in discipline consequence assignments by student demographic characteristics in Texas middle schools. In the first investigation, the degree to which discipline consequence assignments differed by the degree of student economic disadvantage (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, or Extremely Poor) was examined. In the second study, the extent to which discipline consequence assignments differed by student ethnicity/race (i.e., Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black) was addressed. Finally, in the third investigation, the degree to which discipline consequence assignments differed by student gender within each of the four major ethnic/racial groups (i.e., Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black) in Texas was determined. These discipline consequences were analyzed for three school years. As such, this multiyear analysis permitted a determination of trends, if present, in the differential assignment of discipline consequences.

Method

In this multiyear investigation, a non-experimental, causal comparative research design was used. Archival data analyzed in this investigation were previously obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System for the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. The degree to which

differences were present in discipline consequence assignments by student demographic characteristics in Texas middle schools was determined.

Findings

For the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, statistically significant differences were established in the assignment of discipline consequences by student demographic characteristic. Data resulting from this 3-year statewide analysis were reflective of strong inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences by student degree of economic disadvantage, by student ethnicity/race (i.e., Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black), and by student gender within each of the four major ethnic/racial groups (i.e., Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black). Results of these analyses were congruent with existing literature. Of note in this study was the presence of a stair-step effect in the assignment of discipline consequences by student degree of economic disadvantage and student ethnicity/race. As such, the inequities delineated herein, may constitute violations of students' civil rights.

KEY WORDS: Economic Disadvantage, Not Poor, Moderately Poor, Extremely Poor, Student Ethnicity/Race, Asian, White, Hispanic, Black, Boy, Girl

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CHAPTER I

Introduction/Brief Review of Literature

The public education system in the United States was created with a primary goal of producing responsible citizens. Unlike other nations where religion was the guiding principle, schools in the United States were charged to teach core values, such as morals, virtue, duty, and civility (Bear, 1998). When students displayed behaviors that were unacceptable or unaligned with these teachings, students received discipline consequences (Bear, 1998).

Over the years, approaches to discipline have evolved from punishment to current day discipline practices, with the goal of discipline being to teach acceptable and appropriate behaviors (Payne, 2001). Innovatively designed frameworks and programs have been generated and implemented to teach social skills and/or manage classroom behavior. Such programs include, but are not limited to, the Flippen Group's Capturing Kids Hearts (www.flippengroup.com), Project CLASS (Children Learning Appropriate Social Skills) by Houston Achievement Place (www.projectclass.org), TRIBES Learning Communities (www.tribes.com) and CHAMPS by Safe and Civil Schools (www.safeandcivilschools.com). The paradigm shift in the approach from punishment to discipline is a testament to the quote from Dreikurs, Grunwald, and Pepper (1982), "Discipline is without question, the most essential and the most difficult aspect of education" (p. 80).

Discipline Consequences and Student Economic Status

Education is the means of achieving the American dream (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003). As such, educators are responsible for ensuring students are taught as much as they can learn, as well as identifying and responding to disparities in discipline practices that inhibit student academic success (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003; Skiba et al., 2011). With these ideas in mind, it is imperative that equitable practices, specifically in relation to disciplinary actions, be established and maintained.

Over three decades ago, Dreikurs (1982) noted “discipline is the most essential and the most difficult aspect of education” (p. 80). The prevalence of that idea still holds true today. As seen in recent news headlines, public school discipline is a topic that continuously generates public interest and concern (Ford, 2016; McCluskey, 2014).

With respect to the state of interest in this investigation, in the 2013-2014 school year, 13,469 discipline consequences were administered to Texas elementary students in Grade 5 (Texas Education Agency, 2014a, 2014b). Of those 13,469 consequences, 12,326 discipline consequences were assigned to students who were economically disadvantaged and the remaining 1,143 discipline consequences were assigned to students who were not economically disadvantaged. A similar trend was evident in data for the 78,570 discipline consequences assigned to Texas elementary school students in Grade 6 (Texas Education Agency, 2014a, 2014b). More than 71,000 discipline consequences were assigned to students who were in poverty, whereas only about 7,000 discipline consequences were assigned to students who were not in poverty. These statistics may be interpreted to mean that with regard to economic status, disparities exist

in discipline consequence assignment in Texas elementary schools (Texas Education Agency, 2014a, 2014b).

The academic and social behaviors of Black students in poverty affect educational experiences. Black students in poor urban school districts face a particular set of challenges that increases the likelihood of academic failure (Gardner & Miranda, 2001). Challenges faced by Black students in poor urban school districts include poverty, underfunded schools, less experienced teachers, little parent participations, and a scarcity of community resources. Each challenge alone has negative effects on student performance. Equally concerning is that the combination of these challenges can bring about substantial obstacles for the learning experiences of Black students (Gardner & Miranda, 2001).

Inequitable discipline consequences based on economic status are not limited to Black students. As noted by Khan and Slate (2016), student receipt of in-school suspension as a disciplinary consequence for Texas Grade 6 students occurred most often for Hispanic students, followed by Black students, and then for White students. Hispanic students received 33,233 in-school suspensions, 86% of which were assigned to Hispanic students in poverty. Regarding Black students, 82% of the 13,899 in-school suspensions they received were assigned were to Black students who were economically disadvantaged (Khan & Slate, 2016). White students received a total of 14,902 in-school suspensions, of which 51% were assigned to White students in poverty. Similarly, the receipt of out-of-school suspension in Grade 6 by these ethnic/racial groups mirrored this pattern. Again, Hispanic students received the most out-of-school suspensions, 86% of 14,377 were assigned to Hispanic students in poverty. Black students received a total of

8,458 out-of-school suspensions, of which 86% were assigned to Black students in poverty. Lastly, 57% of the 3,658 out-of-school suspensions assigned to White students were administered to White students who were economically disadvantaged (Khan & Slate, 2016). With regard to Discipline Alternative Education Program placements, 5,256 assignments were given to students who were in poverty, whereas 848 Discipline Alternative Education Program placements were assigned to students who were not in poverty. This difference reflected an inequity of 72% more placements for students in poverty than for students who were not economically disadvantaged (Khan & Slate, 2016). These dissimilar percentages may be interpreted to mean that inequities are present in the assignment of disciplinary consequences as a function of student economic status for Grade 6 students in Texas.

Regardless of ethnicity/race, students who are poor receive disproportionate discipline consequences in comparison to students who are not poor. As noted by Lopez and Slate (2016), White students who are in poverty experience discipline disparities, similar to the discipline disparities experienced by their Hispanic and Black counterparts. Regarding Grade 8 White students who were not economically disadvantaged, 1.30% received a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. In contrast, 4.70% of White students who were in poverty were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. Grade 8 White students who were in poverty received a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement at a rate three times that of their White peers who were not poor (Lopez & Slate, 2016). Similarly, less than 1% of Grade 7 students who were not in poverty received a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement, in comparison to 3.6% of Grade 7 students who were in poverty

(Lopez & Slate, 2016). Approximately 400 more Grade 7 White students, more than four times the percentage who were in poverty, were placed in a Discipline Alternative Education Program, than Grade 7 White students who were not economically disadvantaged (Lopez & Slate, 2016). The effects of poverty are not limited to any particular racial or ethnic group (Khan & Slate, 2016; Lopez & Slate, 2016).

“Family income is now a better predictor of children’s success in school than race” (Reardon, 2013, para. 6). To provide an equal opportunity for each child’s success, discipline practices must be monitored to decrease the disproportionality of discipline consequence assignments (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). These inequitable discipline practices can negatively influence the widened achievement gap where advantaged students clearly outperform their peers who are in poverty (Reardon, 2013).

Another contributing factor to the achievement gap noted between rich and poor students, is the implementation of prison-like practices, in efforts to maintain safety at impoverished schools (Mallet, 2016). This practice is a result of the School-to-Prison Pipeline that was created from the Reagan Administration’s zero tolerance movement. Zero tolerance policies are policies that mandate suspensions or expulsions for behaviors such as fighting, harassment, assault, as well as for minor infractions such as disobedience, truancy, and obscene language (Mallet, 2016). The implementation of zero tolerance policies has resulted in much harsher discipline methods in schools in lower-income neighborhoods. These harsher methods, ones that remove students from the classroom setting, interfere with student learning. As a result of the implementation of zero tolerance policies, students who are economically disadvantaged have a greater

chance of facing criminal involvement than they do of attaining a quality education (Mallet, 2016).

Discipline Consequences and Student Ethnicity/Race

A connection exists between public education and attaining the American dream. Education is the key to the American dream (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003; Reardon, 2013). A diverse group of students are enrolled in the public school system in the United States with hopes of acquiring an education that will lead to success (Jones, Slate, & Martinez-Garcia, 2014). Unfortunately, however, the American dream is difficult to realize for some groups of students because of the color of their skin or the nation of their origin.

Well documented in the extant literature are discipline inequities among the major ethnic/racial groups (Anfinson et al., 2010; Skiba et al., 2011; United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016). In comparison to their Asian and White peers, Black and Hispanic students have been assigned a disproportionate amount of disciplinary consequences for over four decades (Khan & Slate, 2016). In addition to the studies on inequities between the four major ethnic/racial groups, several researchers (e.g., Kupchik & Ellis, 2008; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Mendez et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 2011) have conducted studies regarding discipline inequities between Black, White, and Hispanic students. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2016a), a higher percentage of Black students have been suspended or expelled than any other major ethnic/racial groups. Hispanic students and students of two or more races have also been suspended or expelled more than White students. Asian students have been suspended the least often among the major racial/ethnic groups. Regarding the data on

suspension and expulsion, 36% of Black students, 21% of Hispanic students, 14% of White students, and 6% of Asian students have been suspended or expelled from school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016a).

The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954, declared “separate but equal” education unconstitutional. The *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) legislation was the first of several legal mandates aimed towards equalizing education opportunities for all students, irrespective of race and ethnicity. Six decades later, racial inequality is still present in public schools (Berlinger & McLaughlin, 2016). In May of 2016, the nation was faced with the reality that racial inequality has yet to be resolved. U.S. District Court Judge Debra Brown ruled that a Mississippi town’s current day segregation of high schools, based on student race was a delay of desegregation that deprived students of their constitutional right to an integrated education (Berlinger & McLaughlin, 2016).

Inequitable practices in schools, such as segregation and disparate discipline practices, negatively influence achievement gaps (Reardon, 2013). Decreasing the disproportionality of discipline consequence assignments is paramount to provide an equal opportunity for each child’s success. Inequitable discipline practices not only increase the disproportionality of discipline consequence assignments, but also increase the likelihood of dropping out of school for Hispanic and Black students and increase the flow of Black students through the School-to-Prison Pipeline (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Bonesheski & Runge, 2014).

In response to the Reagan Administration’s call to action, a zero tolerance movement was implemented in schools across the nation. Zero tolerance policies require school administrators to suspend and/or expel students for major infractions such as

harassment, fighting, or assault and infractions as minor as disobedience, truancy, and obscene language (Mallet, 2016). As a result, prison-like practices are implemented in impoverished schools that minority students attend, in effort to maintain safety. Millions of students become mired in this punitive system. The education exclusion enforced by this system linked with criminalization of youth is referred to as the School-to-Prison Pipeline (Wilson, 2014).

The School-to-Prison Pipeline is largely comprised of a Hispanic and Black population. Hispanic and Black students are overrepresented in the number of students who receive disciplinary consequences, just as Hispanic and Black people are overrepresented in the national prison population (Lopez, 2015). This flow of Black and Hispanic students through the School-to-Prison Pipeline is attributed to zero tolerance policies. As mandated by zero tolerance policies, students are excluded from school and do not learn to change undesirable behaviors (Lopez, 2015). This punitive exclusion from school and failure to teach behavior modifications leads to increased levels of unacceptable criminal activity by students who initially posed little or no threat of harm to schools and communities (Lopez, 2015; Mallet, 2016). The chances of Hispanic and Black students facing criminal involvement is more like likely than the chance of attaining a quality education, as a result of the implementation of zero tolerance policies (Mallet, 2016).

Regarding the disproportionate assignment of discipline consequences to Hispanic and Black students in comparison to their White peers, Khan and Slate (2016) established that Grade 6 Hispanic students in Texas received 54% of the 62,034 in-school suspensions assigned. With respect to out-of-school suspension, Grade 6 Hispanic

students received 54% of the assignments; Black students received 32%, and White students received 14% (Khan & Slate, 2016). A similar pattern was determined in the assignment of Discipline Alternative Education Program placement to Grade 6 students in Texas. Of the 6,104 Discipline Alternative Education Program placements assigned, 57% of placements were assigned to Hispanic students, 26% of placements were assigned to Black students, and 17% of placements were assigned to White students (Khan & Slate, 2016).

In a similar study, Barnes and Slate (2016) analyzed and documented the presence of inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences in Texas schools, particularly to Hispanic and Black students. Barnes and Slate (2016) documented the presence of discipline inequities as early as Grades 4 and 5 in Texas elementary schools. Texas Grade 4 students received a total of 2,679 in-school suspensions. Of those 2,679 suspensions, 40% were assigned to Black students; 26% were assigned to Hispanic students, and 34% were assigned to White students (Barnes & Slate, 2016). Concerning out-of-school suspensions, 480 out-of-school suspensions were assigned to Texas Grade 4 students, of which 61% were received by Black students. Hispanic Grade 4 students in Texas received 38% of the out-of-school suspensions assigned and White students received only 1% of the out-of-school suspensions that were assigned (Barnes & Slate, 2016).

With regard to discipline consequences assigned to Texas Grade 5 students, 9,862 in-school suspensions were given (Barnes & Slate, 2016). Black students received 38% of the in-school suspensions that were assigned, Hispanic students received 40% of the in-school suspensions that were assigned, and White students received 22% of in-school

suspensions that were assigned. Out-of-school suspension rates for Texas Grade 5 students were similar to the out-of-school suspension rates for Texas Grade 4 students. Again, Black students received the highest percentage of out-of-school suspension assignments, 64%, followed by Hispanic students, 31%, and then by White students who received only 6% of the total out-of-school suspensions.

Additional analyses of inequitable discipline practices in Texas public schools were conducted by Hilberth and Slate (2014) who focused specifically on discipline inequities between Grade 6, 7, and 8 Texas Black and White students. In Grade 6, Black students comprised 14.1% of the sample, compared to White students who comprised 34.7% of the sample. Of note here is that Black students received 32% of the in-school suspensions, more than twice their percentage of student enrollment. White students received 14.2% of the in-school suspensions that were assigned, which was less than half of their percentage of student enrollment (Hilberth & Slate, 2014). Out-of-school suspension rates were similar, with Grade 6 Black students receiving 19.4% of assigned suspensions, in comparison to their White peers who received 3.7% of out-of-school suspensions (Hilberth & Slate, 2014). Both of these out-of-school suspension rates reflected substantial discrepancies with the Black and White student enrollment percentages.

Grade 7 discipline assignments followed the same pattern. White students comprised 35.2% of the sample and Black students comprised 14.2% of the sample. Yet, 35.9% of Black students received in-school suspension, in comparison to 16.2% of White students who received in-school suspension (Hilberth & Slate, 2014). Out-of-school suspension rates for Texas Grade 7 were consistent with the rates for Texas Grade 6,

where 22.6% of the Black student sample received out-of-school suspension, in comparison to 4.8% of the White student sample who received out-of-school suspension (Hilberth & Slate, 2014).

Of the Grade 8 student enrollment, Black students comprised 14.4% but received 36.4% of in-school suspensions. The student enrollment was comprised of 35.3% White students, but these White students received only 17.5% of assigned in-school suspensions in Grade 8 (Hilberth & Slate, 2014). Similarly, with regard to out-of-school suspension, 23.2% of Black students were assigned to out-of-school suspension, in comparison to only 5.4% of White students (Hilberth & Slate, 2014).

Discipline Consequences and Student Gender by Ethnicity/Race

Ethnic/racial disparities have been in the forefront of current news and social media (Blacklivesmatter.com; CNN, 2016). The disparate treatment and subsequent death of Black boys (e.g., Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Cameron Tillman) at the hands of public service officers has become a too familiar occurrence. Similar concerns are present in national public school discipline. The disparate treatment of Black and Hispanic students in public schools has been televised nationally (Ford, 2016; Stelloh & Connor, 2015). As such, school discipline is a topic that consistently captivates public attention in the United States.

During the fall semester of the 2015-2016 school year, a Black, South Carolina high school girl was body slammed from her desk in the classroom, by a White police officer (Stelloh & Connor, 2015). Before the unrest from this nationally televised event could settle, during the same school year, another incident occurred. In San Antonio, TX, a middle school Hispanic girl was body-slammed from her desk in the classroom, by a

White police officer (Ford, 2016). Undetermined from the videos was the antecedent to both incidents, but in sharp scrutiny was the violent classroom removal of Black and Hispanic girls who were seated in a public learning environment.

The disparate assignment of discipline consequences to Black and Hispanic boys and girls is a nationwide phenomenon. The National Center for Education Statistics (2016b) documented disparities in school suspension and expulsion rates between Black, Hispanic, and White students. Among the four major racial/ethnic groups in the United States, 36% of Black students were suspended or expelled, a rate higher than any other racial/ethnic group. Of the remaining racial/ethnic groups, 21% of Hispanic students, 14% of White students, and 6% of Asian students have been suspended or expelled from school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016b). The trend of Black and Hispanic students receiving a disproportionate amount of disciplinary consequences in comparison to their Asian and White peers has been established for over four decades (Khan & Slate, 2016). Numerous researchers (e.g., Kupchik & Ellis, 2008; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Mendez et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 2011) have also conducted studies regarding discipline inequities between Black, White, and Hispanic students. In spite of the high rate of documented discipline disparities, more frequent or more serious misbehaviors of Black and Hispanic students, in comparison to their Asian and White peers, have not been documented (U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Regarding discipline inequities in the state of interest for this article, Texas, Barnes and Slate (2016) documented inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences as early as Grade 4 in Texas public schools. Black students received the

most in-school suspensions and the most out-of-school suspensions, in comparison to their White and Hispanic peers. Regarding in-school suspensions, Black students received 40%, Hispanic students received 26%, and White students received 34% of the total 2,679 suspensions assigned to Texas Grade 4 students (Barnes & Slate, 2016). A total of 480 out-of-school suspensions were assigned to Texas Grade 4 students. Black students received 61%, Hispanic students received 38%, and White students received only 1% of the out-of-school suspensions assigned to Texas Grade 4 students (Barnes & Slate, 2016).

Barnes and Slate (2016) also identified discipline inequities in Texas for Grade 5 students. Texas Grade 5 students received a total of 9,862 in-school suspensions (Barnes & Slate, 2016). Of those 9,862 suspensions, 38% were assigned to Black students; 40% were assigned to Hispanic students, and 22% were assigned to White students (Barnes & Slate, 2016). Similar to the trend in Grade 4, Black students received the highest percentage of out-of-school suspension assignments in Grade 5. Black students received 64% of the out-of-school suspensions that were assigned, Hispanic students received 31% of the out-of-school suspensions that were assigned, and White students received 5% of out-of-school suspensions that were assigned (Barnes & Slate, 2016).

With respect to gender, several researchers (e.g., Barnes & Slate, 2016; Curtiss & Slate, 2016; Demanet et al., 2013; Witmer & Johansson, 2015) have analyzed and established the presence of discipline disparities. The National Center for Education Statistics (2016b) documented the presence of disparities in school suspension and expulsion rates between boys and girls. The rates of suspensions and expulsions for boys are twice the rates of suspensions and expulsions for girls. According to the National

Center for Education Statistics (2016b), 26% of boys and 13% of girls have been suspended or expelled from school.

In similar studies conducted in Texas, Curtiss and Slate (2015) and Barnes and Slate (2016) analyzed and identified discipline inequities, with respect to gender for elementary school students. Of the 2,679 in-school suspensions assigned to Texas Grade 4 students, 96% were assigned to boys and 4% were assigned to girls (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Curtiss & Slate, 2015). Regarding out-of-school suspensions, 480 out-of-school suspensions were assigned to Texas Grade 4 students, of which again, 96% were received by boys and 4% were received by girls (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Curtiss & Slate, 2015).

Regarding the disproportionate assignment of discipline consequences, as a function of gender for Texas Grade 5 students, Barnes and Slate (2016) and Curtiss and Slate (2015) documented similar disparities. Concerning in-school suspension rates, boys received 88% and girls received 12% of the 9,862 consequences assigned in Grade 5. With respect to out-of-school suspension, 1,575 were assigned to Grade 5 students, of which boys received 90% of assignments and girls received 10% of assignments (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Curtiss & Slate, 2015).

In a recent study conducted by Slate, Gray, and Jones (2016), statistically significant inequities were identified in the assignment of discipline consequences, specifically to Black girls in Grades 4 through Grade 11. Grade 4 Black girls received four times as many out-of-school suspensions as White girls. In their investigation, Hispanic girls in Grade 4 did not receive any out-of-school suspensions (Slate et al., 2016). Regarding Grade 5 students, Black girls received almost twice as many out-of-

school suspensions as Hispanic girls, and more than three times as many out-of-school suspensions as White girls.

At the secondary level, the trend of Black girls receiving higher percentages of out-of-school suspension continued. Specifically, in Grade 6, 2,050 out-of-school suspensions were assigned to Black girls, 2,181 out-of-school suspensions were assigned to Hispanic girls, and 23 out-of-school suspensions were assigned to White girls (Slate et al., 2016). Concerning Grade 7, Black girls again received the highest percentage (25.5%) of out-of-school suspensions, followed by Hispanic girls (17.3%). Of note here is that White girls (0.4%) received almost six times fewer out-of-school suspensions (Slate et al., 2016) than either Hispanic or Black girls. Grade 8 out-of-school suspension rates were comparable to rates in Grade 7. Black girls received the highest percentage (24.4%) of out-of-school suspensions, followed by Hispanic girls (16.6%), and then by White girls (2.8%), who again received almost six times fewer assignments (Slate et al., 2016).

Similar to the increases identified at the middle school level, a sharp increase in discipline consequence assignments to girls was established in high school. With respect to Grade 9, over 60,00 in-school suspensions were assigned to girls. Of the out-of-school suspensions, 27.1% of Black girls received this consequence, 14.2% of Hispanic girls, and only 3.9% of White girls received this consequence (Slate et al., 2016). In Grade 10, in-school suspension assignments dramatically decreased to 34,000. Regarding in-school suspensions assigned to Grade 10 girls, Black girls still received the highest percentage, 22.4%; followed by Hispanic girls, 8.4%, and White girls, 2.0% (Slate et al., 2016). Grade 11 girls had a continued decrease in discipline consequence assignments. Fewer

than 20,000 in-school suspensions were assigned to Grade 11 girls, however, Black girls continued to receive higher percentages of out-of-school suspensions. With respect to out-of-school suspensions in Grade 11, 22.1% of Black girls, 6.8% of Hispanic girls, and 2.4% of White girls received out-of-school suspensions (Slate et al., 2016).

Inequitable practices in schools, specifically disparate discipline practices, negatively influence pre-existing achievement gaps (Reardon, 2013). Students who receive exclusionary discipline consequences transition in and out of traditional school settings and, as a result, experience disruptions to learning and typically receive education services in placement facilities that are not comparable to their local schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016a). Exclusionary discipline practices, such as suspension, expulsion, and alternative placement increase the likelihood that Black boys will drop of school, as well as increase the flow of Black boys through the School-to-Prison Pipeline (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Boneshefski & Runge, 2014).

The School-to-Prison Pipeline has been identified as a by-product of decisions made during the Reagan Administration. The Reagan Administration's call to action during the war on drugs led to a nationwide implementation of zero tolerance policies in public schools (Mallet, 2016). Zero tolerance policies established mandatory suspensions and expulsions for a wide range of student offenses. Students would be suspended or expelled for nonviolent infractions such as truancy, obscene language, and disobedience, as well as violent behaviors, such as assault, fighting, and destruction of school property (Mallet, 2016; Wilson, 2014).

Many schools, most of which were impoverished schools that Black and Hispanic students attended, implemented prison-like practices in effort to maintain safety. As a

result, millions of Black and Hispanic students became mired in this punitive system (Wilson, 2014). This education removal of students through exclusionary discipline encourages entrance into the criminal justice system. This criminalization of youth is referred to as the School-to-Prison Pipeline (Mallet, 2016; Wilson, 2014).

Black boys comprise the vast majority of the School-to-Prison Pipeline population. The disproportionate number of Black boys who receive disciplinary consequences is a large contributor to the overrepresentation of Black boys in the national School-to-Prison Pipeline population (Khan & Slate, 2016; Lopez, 2015). The overflow of Black boys through the School-to-Prison Pipeline can be attributed to the mandatory exclusion established by zero tolerance policies. Zero tolerance policies do not offer opportunities for rehabilitation or learning alternate behaviors, but instead exclude Black boys from school and provide no opportunities for learning to change undesirable behaviors (Lopez, 2015). This exclusion from school and loss of learning opportunities, coupled with the economic disadvantages that surround many Black boys leads to increased levels of unacceptable criminal activity and the mass incarceration of young men of color, who initially posed little or no threat of harm to schools and communities (Lopez, 2015; Mallet, 2016; Wilson, 2014). The implementation of zero tolerance policies has consequently made the chances of Black boys facing criminal involvement more like likely than the chance of attaining a quality education (Mallet, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

Numerous researchers (e.g., Cabrera et al., 2006; Eamon, 2002; Haskins, Mumane, Sawhill, & Snow, 2012; Reardon, 2013; Vargas, 2013) have documented the

presence of achievement gaps as a function of economic status. Students in poverty do not perform as well academically as students who are not in poverty (Cabrera et al., 2006; Eamon, 2002; Haskins et al., 2012; Reardon, 2013; Vargas, 2013). Furthermore, inequitable in discipline assignment practices based on economic status may widen achievement gaps (Reardon, 2013). It is imperative that educators identify and respond to these disparities in discipline (Skiba et al., 2011). A detailed analysis of school discipline data can be insightful to educators and provide direction for appropriate and effective responses to inequitable practices. Educators ranging from teachers to policymakers can be informed and influenced by findings from this study.

The No Child Left Behind Act (Public Law 107-110, 2001) brought about the implementation of numerous initiatives, focused on providing equal education opportunities to public school students, regardless of their economic status or ethnicity/race. Nonetheless, with the implementation of current policy, the Every Student Succeeds Act (Bill Number S.1177, 2015), discipline consequences are inequitably assigned to students by ethnicity/race in Texas public schools (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Hilberth & Slate, 2014). Hilberth and Slate (2014) documented that “Black students were disciplined at a higher rate than any other ethnic group” (p. 313). A trend comparable to the results of the Hilberth and Slate study was revealed when Barnes and Slate (2016) analyzed discipline consequences by student ethnicity/race for elementary school students. Suspensions for minor misbehaviors were assigned to Black students more often than to their White and Hispanic counterparts (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Boneshefski & Runge, 2014; Curtis & Slate, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Skiba et al., 2011). Black students were four times more likely to be suspended than White students

and Hispanic students were two and a half times more likely to be suspended than White students (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). White students were more likely to receive moderate consequences, such as detention, for noncompliance, minor misbehavior, or moderate infractions and were mainly assigned in-school suspension as a discipline consequence, whereas Black and Hispanic students were assigned consequences with less leniency (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Skiba et al., 2011).

Documented disparities in the assignment of discipline consequences of gender by ethnicity/race negatively affect the academic performance of Black and Hispanic students (Vincent, Frank, Hawken, & Tobin, 2012). Suspension has become a standard disciplinary practice (Wilson, 2014). However, a number of researchers (e.g., Brown, 2007; Chin et al., 2012; U.S. Department of Justice, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2014) have indicated that suspensions are counterproductive for students with behavioral issues and result in lost time for academic instruction. Exclusionary discipline consequences, such as suspension have also been linked to poor student performance, which will expand the ever present achievement gap between Black and Hispanic students, in comparison to their Asian and White peers. Monitoring discipline practices to ensure that discipline consequences are assigned in an equitable and nondiscriminatory manner (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014) is paramount in the quest to provide equitable learning opportunities to all students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which differences might be present in discipline consequence assignments by student demographic characteristics in Texas middle schools. In the first investigation, the

degree to which discipline consequence assignments differed by the degree of student economic disadvantage (i.e., Not Economically Disadvantaged, Moderately Poor, or Extremely Poor) was examined. In the second study, the extent to which discipline consequence assignments differed by student ethnicity/race (i.e., Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black) was addressed. Finally, in the third investigation, the degree to which discipline consequence assignments differed by student gender within each of the four major ethnic/racial groups (i.e., Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black) in Texas was determined. These discipline consequences were analyzed for three school years. As such, this multiyear analysis permitted a determination of trends, if present, in the differential assignment of discipline consequences.

Significance of the Study

Through legislation such as the No Child Left Behind Act (Public Law 107-110, 2001) and Every Student Succeeds Act (Bill Number S.1177, 2015), emphasis has been placed on providing equal education opportunities to public school students, regardless of their economic status, ethnicity/race, or gender. With reference to the state of interest in this investigation, several initiatives have been implemented in Texas to provide equal learning opportunities to students in poverty. Numerous researchers (e.g., Cabrera et al., 2006; Eamon, 2002; Haskins, Mumane, Sawhill, & Snow, 2012; Reardon, 2013; Vargas, 2013) have documented the presence of achievement gaps as a function of economic status. Students in poverty do not perform as well academically as students who are not in poverty. In addition, inequitable practices in discipline consequences and reasons based on economic status may contrarily widen achievement gaps. It is imperative that educators identify and respond to these disparities in discipline practices to support the

academic success of students in poverty (Skiba et al., 2011). Thorough analysis of school discipline data may provide insightful information to educators and provide direction for appropriate and effective responses to inequitable practices. Findings obtained from the three investigations conducted in this journal-ready dissertation may be beneficial to policymakers and education leaders regarding the presence of differential assignment of discipline consequences to Texas students.

Definition of Terms

The following terms, used in this journal-ready dissertation, are defined below to assist the reader in understanding the context of this investigation.

Asian

The Texas Education Agency (2013) defines Asian as “students having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent” (p. 2).

Black

The Texas Education Agency (2013) defines Black as “students having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa” (p. 2).

Discipline Alternative Education Program

The Texas Education Agency (2010) describes disciplinary alternative education programs as the third method of disciplinary consequence, following in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension. Discipline Alternative Education Program consequence is a removal of a student from their regular classes and placing them in an alternative classroom setting for an extended period time. Discipline Alternative Education Program are designed for students in elementary through high school and may

be located on or off campus. Most programs have written procedures and expectations for the program, as well as written contracts between parents/guardians and students (Texas Education Agency, 2010).

Discipline Consequence

School districts establish a student code of conduct with the purpose of achieving and maintaining order in public schools. The code of conduct defines standards for acceptable behavior and prohibits certain behaviors (Texas Education Agency, 2016).

Discipline consequences are consequences assigned to students for violations of standards established in the student code of conduct. Major discipline consequences are: In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, Discipline Alternative Education Program, Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program, and Expulsion.

Economically Disadvantaged

The Texas Education Agency (2013) defines economically disadvantaged as students in Texas who are eligible for the federal free- and reduced-lunch program. Eligibility for the federal free- and reduced-lunch program is determined by family income.

Ethnicity

The Texas Education Agency (2014) defines ethnicity as students in Texas being classified of or not of Hispanic or Latin descent.

Expulsion

Expulsion is the permanent removal of a student from the traditional school setting as a disciplinary consequence. Texas law requires that students who have been

expelled be placed in an alternative school setting, the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (Texas Education Agency, 2016).

Extremely Poor

This phrase was used to refer to a group of students who were determined to be economically disadvantaged by the Texas Education Agency (2013). With respect to students who were Extremely Poor, they were from families with an income of 130% or less of the federal poverty line (Burney & Beilke, 2008) and, as a result, are eligible for the federal free lunch program.

Hispanic

The Texas Education Agency (2014) defines Hispanic/Latino as “students of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race” (p. 2).

In-School Suspension

The Texas Education Agency (2010) describes in-school suspension as the first method of disciplinary consequence for students. An in-school suspension consequence is the removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary consequence by placing the student into a separate classroom.

Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program

Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program is an alternate education setting, away from the home campus, provided for students who have been expelled from school in the state of Texas. Counties with a population greater than 125,000 shall develop a juvenile justice alternative education program, subject to the approval of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (Texas Education Agency, 2016). Counties with a

population of 125,000 or less may develop a juvenile justice alternative education program (Texas Education Agency, 2016).

Moderately Poor

This phrase was used to refer to a group of students who were determined to be economically disadvantaged by the Texas Education Agency (2013). With respect to students who are Moderately Poor, they were from families with an income of 131% to 185% of the federal poverty line (Burney & Beilke, 2008) and, as a result, are eligible for the federal reduced lunch program.

Not Economically Disadvantaged

This phrase was used to refer to students in Texas who were not eligible for the federal free and reduced lunch program. Students who are eligible for the federal free- and reduced-lunch program are regarded as being economically disadvantaged by the Texas Education Agency (2013). Eligibility for the federal free- and reduced-lunch program is determined by family income.

Out-of-School Suspension

The Texas Education Agency (2010) describes out-of-school suspension as the second method of disciplinary consequence, following in-school suspension. An out-of-school suspension consequence is the removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary consequence that does not allow the student to attend school for a day and to not exceed three days in a row.

Public Education Information Management System

The Public Education Information Management System is a database for the state of Texas that encompasses all data requested and received by Texas Education Agency

about public education, including student demographic and academic performance, personnel, financial, and organizational information (Texas Education Agency, 2016b).

Race

The Texas Education Agency (2014) defines race as students in Texas being classified as American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, or White.

Texas Education Agency

The Texas Education Agency (2016a) is the state agency responsible for overseeing primary and secondary public education in state of Texas. The mission of the agency is to provide leadership, guidance and resources to help schools meet the educational needs of all students and prepare them for success in the global economy.

White

The Texas Education Agency (2014) defines White as “students having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa” (p. 2).

Delimitations

Delimitations for this study involved examining discipline consequence assignments for Texas middle school students. Only discipline consequence assignments that were present in the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System were analyzed in this journal-ready dissertation. Three student demographic characteristics (i.e., economic status, ethnicity/race, and gender) and their relationship to discipline consequence assignments were examined. Economic status was solely defined by whether or not students were eligible for the reduced price lunch or free lunch programs. With respect to ethnicity/race, data on only the four major ethnic/racial

groups (i.e., Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White) in Texas were analyzed. Data were analyzed for only three school years (i.e., 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016).

Limitations

For the purpose of this journal-ready dissertation, only quantitative data on discipline consequences assigned to Texas middle school students were analyzed. The archival data that were analyzed herein was only on students enrolled in Texas middle schools. As such, the degree to which results from this journal-ready dissertation would be generalizable to middle school students in other states is not known. Data analyses were limited to middle school students, which restricts generalizability of these results to students at other grade levels.

Assumptions

For the purpose of this journal-ready dissertation, an assumption was made that the discipline data in the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System were accurately reported by each school campus and each school district. Furthermore, a second assumption was that student demographic data (i.e., economic status, gender, and ethnicity) were accurately reported and recorded in the Public Education Information Management System. To the degree that errors were present in this archival dataset, results from this journal-ready dissertation may be adversely influenced.

Organization of the Study

In this journal-ready dissertation, three research investigations were conducted. The focus of the first article was on the extent to which disciplinary consequence assignments were differentially assigned by student degree of economic disadvantage

(i.e., Not Economically Disadvantaged, Moderately Poor, or Extremely Poor). The focus of the second dissertation article was on the degree to which disciplinary consequence assignments were differentially assigned by student ethnicity/race (i.e., Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White). The focus of the third article was on whether disciplinary consequences were assigned differentially to boys and girls within four ethnic/racial groups (i.e., Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White).

Five chapters are present in this journal-ready dissertation. Chapter I encompasses the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, definition of terms, delimitations, limitations, assumptions, and organization of this journal-ready dissertation. In Chapter II is the first article in which differences in discipline consequences were analyzed by student degree of economic disadvantage. Chapter III is a discussion of discipline consequence differences by student ethnicity/race. In Chapter IV, the relationship of discipline consequence assignment by gender within the four major ethnic/racial groups of students in Texas is discussed. In the final chapter, Chapter V, is a summary discussion of research results, implications for policy and practice, and recommendations for future research regarding the effects of economic status.

CHAPTER IIDISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE ASSIGNMENT DIFFERENCES BY DEGREE OF
ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE: A TEXAS STATEWIDE INVESTIGATION

This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

Abstract

Examined in this study was the extent to which discipline consequence assignments differed by student economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, or Extremely Poor). Statewide data were obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System on all middle school students for the 2013-2014 through the 2015-2016 school years. Inferential statistical procedures yielded statistically significant differences for all school years examined. For each year, in each grade level, a stair-step effect was present. Students who were Extremely Poor received statistically significantly higher rates of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension than either students who were Moderately Poor and students who were Not Poor. Students who were Moderately Poor had statistically significantly higher rates of both discipline consequences than students who were Not Poor. Implications are discussed and suggestions for policy and practice are made.

Keywords: Not Poor, Moderately Poor, Extremely Poor, In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, Middle school students

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE ASSIGNMENT DIFFERENCES BY DEGREE OF
ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE: A TEXAS STATEWIDE INVESTIGATION

Education is the means of achieving the American dream (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003). As such, educators are responsible for ensuring students are taught as much as they can learn, as well as identifying and responding to disparities in discipline practices that inhibit student academic success (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003; Skiba et al., 2011). With these ideas in mind, it is imperative that equitable practices, specifically in relation to disciplinary actions, be established and maintained.

Over three decades ago, Dreikurs (1982) noted “discipline is the most essential and the most difficult aspect of education” (p. 80). The prevalence of that idea still holds true today. As seen in recent news headlines, public school discipline is a topic that continuously generates public interest and concern (Ford, 2016; McCluskey, 2014).

With respect to the state of interest in this investigation, in the 2013-2014 school year, 13,469 discipline consequences were administered to Texas elementary students in Grade 5 (Texas Education Agency, 2014a, 2014b). Of those 13,469 consequences, 12,326 discipline consequences were assigned to students who were economically disadvantaged and the remaining 1,143 discipline consequences were assigned to students who were not economically disadvantaged. A similar trend was evident in data for the 78,570 discipline consequences assigned to Texas elementary school students in Grade 6 (Texas Education Agency, 2014a, 2014b). More than 71,000 discipline consequences were assigned to students who were in poverty, whereas only about 7,000 discipline consequences were assigned to students who were not in poverty. These statistics may be interpreted to mean that with regard to economic status, disparities exist

in discipline consequence assignment in Texas elementary schools (Texas Education Agency, 2014a, 2014b).

The academic and social behaviors of Black students in poverty affect educational experiences. Black students in poor urban school districts face a particular set of challenges that increases the likelihood of academic failure (Gardner & Miranda, 2001). Challenges faced by Black students in poor urban school districts include poverty, underfunded schools, less experienced teachers, little parent participations, and a scarcity of community resources. Each challenge alone has negative effects on student performance. Equally concerning is that the combination of these challenges can bring about substantial obstacles for the learning experiences of Black students (Gardner & Miranda, 2001).

Inequitable discipline consequences based on economic status are not limited to Black students. As noted by Khan and Slate (2016), student receipt of in-school suspension as a disciplinary consequence for Texas Grade 6 students occurred most often for Hispanic students, followed by Black students, and then for White students. Hispanic students received 33,233 in-school suspensions, 86% of which were assigned to Hispanic students in poverty. Regarding Black students, 82% of the 13,899 in-school suspensions they received were assigned were to Black students who were economically disadvantaged (Khan & Slate, 2016). White students received a total of 14,902 in-school suspensions, of which 51% were assigned to White students in poverty. Similarly, the receipt of out-of-school suspension in Grade 6 by these ethnic/racial groups mirrored this pattern. Again, Hispanic students received the most out-of-school suspensions, 86% of 14,377 were assigned to Hispanic students in poverty. Black students received a total of

8,458 out-of-school suspensions, of which 86% were assigned to Black students in poverty. Lastly, 57% of the 3,658 out-of-school suspensions assigned to White students were administered to White students who were economically disadvantaged (Khan & Slate, 2016). With regard to Discipline Alternative Education Program placements, 5,256 assignments were to students who were in poverty, whereas 848 Discipline Alternative Education Program assignments were assigned to students who were not in poverty. This difference reflected an inequity of 72% more placements for students in poverty than for students who were not economically disadvantaged (Khan & Slate, 2016). These dissimilar percentages may be interpreted to mean that inequities are present in the assignment of disciplinary consequences, as a function of student economic status in Texas Grade 6.

Regardless of ethnicity/race, students who are poor receive disproportionate discipline consequences than students who are not poor. As noted by Lopez and Slate (2016), White students who are in poverty experience discipline disparities, similar to the discipline disparities experienced by their Hispanic and Black counterparts. Regarding Grade 8 White students who were not economically disadvantaged, 1.30% received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. In contrast, 4.70% of White students who were in poverty were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. Grade 8 White students who were in poverty received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement at a rate three times that of their White peers who were not poor (Lopez & Slate, 2016). Similarly, less than 1% of Grade 7 students who were not in poverty received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement, in comparison to 3.6% of Grade 7 students who were in poverty (Lopez & Slate, 2016).

Approximately 400 more Grade 7 White students, more than four times the percentage, who were in poverty were placed in a Discipline Alternative Education Program program than Grade 7 White students who were not economically disadvantaged (Lopez & Slate, 2016). The effects of poverty are not limited to any particular racial or ethnic group (Khan & Slate, 2016; Lopez & Slate, 2016).

“Family income is now a better predictor of children’s success in school than race” (Reardon, 2013, para. 6). To provide an equal opportunity for each child’s success, discipline practices must be monitored to decrease the disproportionality of discipline consequence assignments (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). These inequitable discipline practices can negatively influence the widened achievement gap where advantaged students clearly outperform their peers who are in poverty (Reardon, 2013).

Another contributing factor to the achievement gap noted between rich and poor students, is the implementation of prison-like practices, in efforts to maintain safety at impoverished schools (Mallet, 2016). This practice is a result of the School-to-Prison Pipeline that was created from the Reagan Administration’s zero tolerance movement. Zero tolerance policies are policies that mandate suspensions or expulsions for behaviors such as fighting, harassment, assault, as well as for minor infractions such as disobedience, truancy, and obscene language (Mallet, 2016). The implementation of zero tolerance policies has resulted in much harsher discipline methods in schools in lower-income neighborhoods. These harsher methods, ones that remove students from the classroom setting, interfere with student learning. As a result of the implementation of zero tolerance policies, students who are economically disadvantaged have a greater

chance of facing criminal involvement than they do, of attaining a quality education (Mallet, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

Numerous researchers (e.g., Cabrera et al., 2006; Eamon, 2002; Haskins, Mumane, Sawhill, & Snow, 2012; Reardon, 2013; Vargas, 2013) have documented the presence of achievement gaps as a function of economic status. Students in poverty do not perform as well academically as students who are not in poverty (Cabrera et al., 2006; Eamon, 2002; Haskins et al., 2012; Reardon, 2013; Vargas, 2013). Furthermore, inequitable discipline assignment practices based on economic status may widen achievement gaps (Reardon, 2013). It is imperative that educators identify and respond to these disparities in discipline (Skiba et al., 2011). A detailed analysis of school discipline data can be insightful to educators and provide direction for appropriate and effective responses to inequitable practices. Educators ranging from teachers to policymakers can be informed and influenced by findings from this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which discipline consequence assignments were assigned differentially as a function of student degree of economic disadvantage. The specific focus in this investigation was on the degree to which student level of economic disadvantage (i.e., Extremely Poor, Moderately Poor, or Not Poor) was related to the assignment of discipline consequences. These discipline consequences assignments were analyzed for the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years in Texas public schools. As such, data from this multiyear analysis

permitted a determination of trends in the differential assignment of discipline consequences by student economic status.

Significance of the Study

Through legislation such as the No Child Left Behind Act (Public Law 107-110,2001) and Every Student Succeeds Act (Bill Number S.1177, 2015), emphasis has been placed on providing equal education opportunities to public school students, regardless of their gender, ethnicity/race, or economic status. Inequitable practices in discipline consequences and reasons based on economic status may exacerbate already existing achievement gaps. With reference to the state of interest in this investigation, numerous initiatives have been implemented in Texas to provide equal learning opportunities to students in poverty.

The focus of this study was different from previous researchers who have addressed inequities in discipline consequence assignment. That is, instead of comparing only students in poverty to students who are not in poverty, in this investigation, students in poverty were separated into two groups: those students who qualified for the reduced price lunch program (i.e., Moderately Poor) and those students who qualified for the free price lunch program (i.e., Extremely Poor). Students who did not qualify for either program are referred to as the Not Poor group in this investigation. It is the results from this more nuanced approach in this article that will add substantially to the extant research literature in this area.

It is imperative that educators identify and respond to these disparities in discipline practices to support the academic success of students in poverty (Skiba et al., 2011). Thorough analysis of school discipline data may be informative to educators and

provide direction for appropriate and effective responses to inequitable practices.

Educators ranging from teachers to policymakers can be informed and influenced by findings from this study.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) What is the difference in in-school suspension assignment by degree of economic disadvantage?; (b) What is the difference in out-of-school suspension assignment by degree of economic disadvantage?; (c) To what extent does a trend exist in the assignment of in-school suspension by degree of economic disadvantage for the 2013-2014 through the 2015-2016 school years?; and (d) To what extent does a trend exist in the assignment of out-of-school suspension by degree of economic disadvantage for the 2013-2014 through the 2015-2016 school years? Each of these research questions was analyzed separately for students in Grades 6, 7, and 8 and for the 2012-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. As such, a total of 20 research questions constituted this empirical statewide investigation.

Method

Research Design

In this multiyear investigation, a non-experimental, causal comparative research design was used (Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The data that were analyzed herein constituted archival data that had already occurred (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Moreover, the independent variable of student economic status cannot be manipulated. The dependent variables were discipline consequence assignments of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension for the 2013-2014,

2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years in the State of Texas. Because both the independent variable and the dependent variables had already occurred, extraneous variables could not be controlled in this study.

Participants and Instrumentation

Data for this study were requested and obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System through a Public Information Request form. The Public Information Request form was submitted to the Texas Education Agency, following approval from this researcher's doctoral dissertation committee. The discipline consequence assignments of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension were analyzed separately for each school year by degree of student economic disadvantage and for each grade level. All Texas middle school students who received a disciplinary consequence during the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years were participants in this study. Specific data that were analyzed were (a) student economic status, (b) student grade level, (c) and discipline consequence assigned. Because the data had been audited by the Texas Education Agency, an assumption of minimal errors was made. Archival data were imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software from the Excel file that was provided by the Texas Education Agency.

For this study, the relationship between the degree of economic disadvantage and major discipline consequences for all Grade 6, 7, and 8 students was determined. The Texas Education Agency (2013) defines economically disadvantaged as students in Texas who are eligible for the federal free- and reduced-lunch program. Eligibility for the federal free- and reduced-lunch program is determined by family income. Students from

families with an income of 130% or less of the federal poverty line are eligible for free-lunch and were referred to as Extremely Poor for the purpose of this study (Burney & Beilke, 2008). Students from families with an income of 131% to 185% of the federal poverty line are eligible for the reduced-lunch program and were referred to as Moderately Poor in this study (Burney & Beilke, 2008). Students in Texas who were not eligible for federal free and reduced lunch program were referred to as the Not Poor group in this study.

Major discipline consequences were limited to in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension. In-school suspension is an initial disciplinary consequence that results in the removal of a student from the regular classroom by placing the student into a separate classroom (Texas Education Agency, 2010). Out-of-school suspension consequence is the removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary consequence that does not allow the student to attend school for a day and not to exceed three days in a row (Texas Education Agency, 2010).

Results

In this investigation, the degree to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments as a function of economic status for Grade 6, 7, and 8 students was examined. Data were analyzed for all middle school students in Texas who had been assigned a disciplinary consequence of in-school suspension and/or out-of-school suspension in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. Statistical procedures were then conducted to determine the degree to which student economic status might be related to the assignment of discipline consequences.

To address all of the research questions, regarding the extent to which differences were present in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by degree of economic disadvantage, Pearson chi-square procedures were calculated. This statistical procedure was viewed as the optimal statistical procedure to use because frequency data were present for both categorical variables: economic status and discipline consequence assignment. With the large sample size, the available sample size per cell was more than five. Therefore, the assumptions underlying a Pearson chi-square were met for each research question (Field, 2013). Results will now be provided, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year and with Grade 6 students and ending with the 2015-2016 school year and with Grade 8 students.

Grade 6 Results for In-School Suspension

With regard to the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 8965.52, p < .001$, to Grade 6 students. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). As shown in Table 2.1, Grade 6 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an in-school suspension more than twice as often as their peers who were Not Poor. Students who were Extremely Poor were assigned in-school suspension almost 50% more often than their peers who were Moderately Poor. Over one and a half times as many Grade 6 students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an in-school suspension than were students who were Not Poor. As such, a stair-step effect (Carpenter, Ramirez, & Severn, 2006) was present with respect to in-school suspension. As poverty increased, so too did the instances of in-school suspension that were assigned to students.

Insert Table 2.1 about here

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, the Pearson chi-square revealed a statistically significant difference in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 8837.90, p < .001$, by degree of economic disadvantage to Grade 6 students. The Cramer's V was .15, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Similar to the previous year results, Grade 6 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an in-school suspension more than two times as often as their peers who were Not Poor. Students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an in-school suspension more than one and a half times more often than their peers who were Moderately Poor. Students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an in-school suspension almost one and a half times more often than students who were Not Poor. As such, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present in the receipt of in-school suspension by student economic status. Delineated in Table 2.1 are the frequencies and percentages of the assignment of in-school suspension by degree of economic disadvantage for Grade 6 students in this school year.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 8568.72, p < .001$, by degree of economic disadvantage to Grade 6 students. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an in-school suspension more than twice as often as students who were Not Poor. Students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an in-school suspension

more than 50% more often than students who were Moderately Poor. Students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an in-school suspension almost one and a half times more often than students who were Not Poor. Congruent with the previous two school year results, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present in that as student poverty increased, so too did the assignment of in-school suspension. The frequencies and percentages for the assignment of in-school suspension by degree of economic disadvantage for Grade 6 students in this school year are revealed in Table 2.1.

Grade 7 Results for In-School Suspension

With respect to Grade 7 students in the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 10934.28, p < .001$, by economic status. The Cramer's V or effect size was .17, small (Cohen, 1988). More than two times as many Grade 7 students who were Extremely Poor received an in-school suspension in comparison to their peers who were Not Poor. Grade 7 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an in-school suspension more than 50% more often than their peers who were Moderately Poor. Slightly over 50% more Grade 7 students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an in-school suspension, in comparison to Grade 7 students who were Not Poor. The frequencies and percentages for disciplinary consequences assigned to Grade 7 students by their economic status in this school year are presented in Table 2.2.

Insert Table 2.2 about here

For the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension to Grade 7 students, $\chi^2(2) = 10204.41, p < .001$, by degree of economic disadvantage. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .17 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an in-school suspension more than two times more often than students who were Not Poor. Students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an in-school suspension more than 50% more often than students who were Moderately Poor. Students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an in-school suspension more than 50% more often than students who were Not Poor. As such, a stair-step effect was demonstrated (Carpenter et al., 2006). Presented in Table 2.2 are the frequencies and percentages for the assignment of in-school suspension by degree of economic disadvantage for Grade 7 students in the 2014-2015 school year.

Concerning the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 10049.49, p < .001$, in the assignment of in-school suspension to Grade 7 students by their degree of economic disadvantage. The effect size, or Cramer's V, was .16, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an in-school suspension more than two times more often as their peers who were Not Poor. Students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an in-school suspension more than 50% more often as their peers who were Moderately Poor. Congruent with results from the previous two years, Grade 7 students who were Moderately Poor were

assigned an in-school suspension almost 50% more often than their peers who were Not Poor. Congruent with the Grade 6 results and with the previous two school year results for Grade 7 students, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present in that as student poverty increased, so too did the assignment of in-school suspension. Table 2.2 contains the frequencies and percentages for the assignment of in-school suspension to Grade 7 students by degree of economic disadvantage for this school year.

Grade 8 Results for In-School Suspension

Concerning Grade 8 in the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 9918.57$ $p < .001$, by economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). More than two times as many Grade 8 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an in-school suspension, in comparison to Grade 8 students who were Not Poor. Grade 8 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an in-school suspension more than 50% more often than students who were Moderately Poor. Grade 8 students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an in-school suspension one and a half times more often than Grade 8 students who were Not Poor. A stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present in this school year. Table 2.3 contains the frequencies and percentages for the assignment of in-school suspension to Grade 8 students by their degree of economic disadvantage for the 2013-2014 school year.

Insert Table 2.3 about here

With regard to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 9769.75, p < .001$, by economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an in-school suspension more than two times more often than their peers who were Not Poor. Students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an in-school suspension more than 50% more often than their peers who were Moderately Poor. Grade 8 students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an in-school suspension more than 50% more often than their peers who were Not Poor. A stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present in this school year. The frequencies and percentages for the assignment of in-school suspension to Grade 8 students by their degree of economic disadvantage in the 2014-2015 school year are delineated in Table 2.3.

For the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 8873.83, p < .001$, to Grade 8 students by their economic status. The Cramer's V was .15, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an in-school suspension more than two times more often than their peers who were Not Poor. Grade 8 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned in-school suspension more than 40% more often than their peers who were Moderately Poor. Grade 8 students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an in-school suspension more than 50% more often than their Grade 8 peers

who were Not Poor. Congruent with the previous two school year results, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present in that as student poverty increased, so too did the assignment of in-school suspension. Table 2.3 contains the frequencies and percentages of the assignment of in-school suspension to Grade 8 students by their degree of economic disadvantage in the 2015 -2016 school year.

Trends for In-School Suspension

Across the three years of data that were analyzed and across the three different grade levels, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) in the assignment of in-school suspension was clearly established. As student level of poverty increased, the frequency of in-school suspension increased. Students who were the most economically disadvantaged (i.e., the Extremely Poor group) were assigned an in-school suspension at rates that were statistically significantly higher than the in-school suspension rates for students who were Not Poor and for students who were Moderately Poor. Students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an in-school suspension at statistically significantly higher rates than were students who were Not Poor. These results were commensurate across all three grade levels and across all three school years.

Grade 6 Results for Out-of-School Suspension

With respect to the 2013-2014 school year, the Pearson chi-square revealed a statistically significant difference in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 7974.70, p < .001$, by economic status. The Cramer's V, or effect size was .15, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than three times more often than their peers who were Not Poor. Grade 6 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school

suspension almost twice as often as their peers who were Moderately Poor. Students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension almost two-thirds more often than students who were Not Poor. The results were reflective of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). Revealed in Table 2.4 are the frequencies and percentages for the assignment of out-of-school suspension by student economic status in the 2013-2014 school year for Grade 6 students.

Insert Table 2.4 about here

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 7255.22, p < .001$, by student economic status. The effect size, or Cramer's V, was .14, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Out-of-school suspension was assigned to Grade 6 students who were Extremely Poor more than three times more often than to students who were Not Poor. Out-of-school suspension was assigned to Grade 6 students who were Extremely Poor more than twice as often as Grade 6 students who were Moderately Poor. Grade 6 students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension almost two-thirds more often than to Grade 6 students who were Not Poor. The results were reflective of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). The frequencies and percentages for the assignment of out-of-school suspension by student economic status in the 2014-2015 school year for Grade 6 students are presented in Table 2.4.

Regarding the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 8178.20, p < .001$, by

student economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than three times more often than their peers who were Not Poor. Grade 6 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than two times more often than their peers who were Moderately Poor. Grade 6 students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than 50% more often than Grade 6 students who Not Poor. A stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was clearly evident in these results. Table 2.4 contains the frequencies and percentages for the assignment of out-of-school suspension by student economic status in the 2015-2016 school year for Grade 6 students.

Grade 7 Results for Out-of-School Suspension

For the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 9174.65, p < .001$, to Grade 7 students by economic status. The Cramer's V or effect size was .16, small (Cohen, 1988). Almost three times more Grade 7 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension in comparison to their peers who were Not Poor. Grade 7 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension almost twice as often as their peers who were Moderately Poor. More than 50% more Grade 7 students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 7 students who were Not Poor. A stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was clearly evident in these results. The frequencies and percentages of out-of-school suspensions assigned to Grade 7 students by their economic status in the 2013-2014 school year are presented in Table 2.5.

Insert Table 2.5 about here

In the 2014-2015 school year, the Pearson chi-square revealed a statistically significant difference in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 7891.64$, $p < .001$, by degree of economic disadvantage to Grade 7 students. The Cramer's V was .15, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Similar to the previous year results, Grade 7 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than three times more often than their peers who were Not Poor. Students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension twice as often as their peers who were Moderately Poor. More than 50% as many Grade 7 students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension, in comparison to Grade 7 students who were Not Poor. Evident in these results was the presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). Delineated in Table 2.5 are the frequencies and percentages of the assignment of out-of-school suspension by degree of economic disadvantage for Grade 7 students in 2014-2015 school year.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, the Pearson chi-square revealed a statistically significant difference in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 8178.20$, $p < .001$, by economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Congruent with results from the previous two years, more than three times as many Grade 7 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension in comparison to their peers who were Not Poor. Students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than twice as often as

their peers who were Moderately Poor. Grade 7 students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than 50% more often than Grade 7 students who were Not Poor. Across the three school years for Grade 7 students, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was clearly evident in these results. Table 2.5 contains the frequencies and percentages of the assignment of out-of-school suspension by degree of economic disadvantage for Grade 7 students in the 2015-2016 school year.

Grade 8 Results for Out-of-School Suspension

Regarding Grade 8 in the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 8234.47$ $p < .001$, by economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Almost three times as many Grade 8 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension in comparison to Grade 8 students who were Not Poor. Grade 8 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension almost twice as often as Grade 8 students who were Moderately Poor. Grade 8 students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than 50% more often than Grade 8 students who were Not Poor. Evident in these results was the presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). Table 2.6 contains the frequencies and percentages for the assignment of out-of-school suspension to Grade 8 students by their degree of economic disadvantage in the 2013-2014 school year.

Insert Table 2.6 about here

For the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 8070.57, p < .001$, by economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension almost three times as often as their peers who were Not Poor and almost twice as often as their peers who were Moderately Poor. Grade 8 students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension almost 50% more often than their peers who were Not Poor. Evident in these results was the presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). The frequencies and percentages for the assignment of out-of-school suspension to Grade 8 students by their degree of economic disadvantage in the 2014-2015 school year are delineated in Table 2.6.

Concerning the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 7442.70, p < .001$, to Grade 8 students by their economic status. The Cramer's V was .14, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension almost three times as often as their peers who were Not Poor and almost twice as often as their peers who were Moderately Poor. Grade 8 students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension almost 50% more often than their peers who were Not Poor. Evident in these results was the presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). Table 2.6 contains the frequencies and percentages of the assignment of out-of-school suspension to Grade 8 students by their degree of economic disadvantage in the 2015-2016 school year.

Trends for Out-of-School Suspension

Consistent across the three years of data that were analyzed for the three different grade levels was the clear presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) in the assignment of out-of-school suspension. As student level of poverty increased, so too did the frequency of out-of-school suspension. Students who were the most economically disadvantaged (i.e., the Extremely Poor group) were assigned an out-of-school suspension at rates that were statistically significantly higher than the out-of-school suspension rates for students who were Not Poor and for students who were Moderately Poor. Similarly, students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension at rates that were statistically significantly higher than the out-of-school suspension rates for students who were Not Poor.

Discussion

In this study, the degree to which differences were present in the assignment of discipline consequences as a function of economic status was examined for students in Texas middle schools during the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. Over this 3-year time period, statistically significant differences in the assignment of discipline consequences as a function of the degree of economic status in each school year at each grade level were yielded. The presence of trends in the assignment of discipline consequences by degree of economic status was determined, subsequent to the statistical analyses. Results will now be summarized.

Throughout the 2013-2014 through the 2015-2016 school years, across each of the three grade levels, students who were Extremely Poor received the highest rates of in-school suspension. In-school suspension rates ranged from 19.5% to 20.9% for Grade 6

students, from 22.2% to 24.1% for Grade 7 students, and from 22.4% to 24.5% for Grade 8 students in these three school years for students who were Extremely Poor. For students who were Moderately Poor, in-school suspension rates ranged from 13.0% to 14.5% for Grade 6 students, from 14.6% to 16.2% for Grade 7 students, and from 16.0% to 16.8% for Grade 8 students in these three school years. In comparison to these in-school suspension rates, the in-school suspension rates for students who were Not Poor ranged from 8.6% to 9.1% for Grade 6 students, from 9.8% to 10.6% for Grade 7 students, and from 10.5% to 11.5% for Grade 8 students in these three school years. Findings were strongly aligned with Carpenter et al. (2006) of the presence of a stair-step effect in the assignment of in-school suspension by student economic status. Readers are directed to Table 2.7 for a summary of effect sizes for in-school suspension rates by economic status for Grade 6, 7, and 8 students across the three school years.

Insert Table 2.7 about here

For the 2013-2014 through the 2015-2016 school years, across each of the three grade levels, higher percentages of students who were Extremely Poor received an out-of-school suspension. Out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 10.1% to 13.1% for Grade 6 students, from 12.0% to 13.5% for Grade 7 students, and from 12.5% to 13.5% for Grade 8 students in these three school years for students who were Extremely Poor. For students who were Moderately Poor, out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 4.9% to 6.6% for Grade 6 students, from 5.8% to 7.2% for Grade 7 students, and from 6.6% to 7.2% for Grade 8 students in these three school years. In comparison to these

out-of-school suspension rates, the out-of-school suspension rates for students who were Not Poor ranged from 3.0% to 4.0% for Grade 6 students, from 3.8% to 4.7% for Grade 7 students, and from 4.5% to 4.7% for Grade 8 students in these three school years. The presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) in the assignment of out-of-school suspension by student economic status was clearly established. A summary of the effect sizes for out-of-school suspension rates by student economic status for Grade 6, 7, and 8 students across the three school years is presented in Table 2.8.

Insert Table 2.8 about here

Implications for Policy and for Practice

Over the 3-year time period analyzed, statistically significant disparities were evident in the assignment of discipline consequences to Grade 6, 7, and 8 students based on their degree of poverty. Students who were Extremely Poor were assigned an in-school suspension and an out-of-school suspension much more often than their peers who were either Moderately Poor or Not Poor in all three school years and in all three grade levels. Moreover, students who were Moderately Poor were assigned an in-school suspension and an out-of-school suspension much more often than their peers who were Not Poor in all three school years and in all three grade levels. Readers should note that empirical evidence is not present that students in poverty commit more misbehaviors than their peers who are not poor. As such, school leaders are encouraged to examine their discipline programs to determine the degree to which student poverty in their districts and campuses is related to discipline consequence assignment. Such audits can be used to

drive changes where needed in existing programs and new programs in cases where the existing discipline programs are ineffective.

Another implication for practice, in an effort to reduce the disparaging flow of students in poverty through the School-to-Prison pipeline, codes of conduct should be reviewed and revised. School district and school campus leaders are encouraged to create codes of conduct with outlined consequences for discipline violations to decrease administrator subjectivity and allow for a systematic assignment of consequences contingent upon the infraction and irrespective of student economic status. Periodic analysis of discipline data would increase educator awareness of discipline disparities. Cognizance of campus and school district discipline data trends could create the opportunity for necessary intervention and ongoing support for teachers and administrators. A final implication for practice would be to determine the underlying reasons for the inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences by student economic status. Do students who are poor have sufficient cultural or social capital to respond appropriately to conflict situations at school? To what degree were Khan and Slate (2016) correct when they contended that “students in poverty may lack the experience or knowledge they need to behave in accordance with school norms” (p. 42)? Should Khan and Slate (2016) be correct in their hypothesis, then school leaders and counselors would need to develop programs to increase student cultural and social capital.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this study, the relationship between student level of poverty and the assignment of discipline consequences, specifically in-school suspension and out-of-school

suspension, to students in Grades 6, 7, and 8 was examined. Future researchers could extend this study by analyzing in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension data by level of economic status separately for White, Hispanic, and Black students. Such a detailed analysis would permit a determination of whether the results obtained herein are similar across ethnic/racial groups of students. Because data on only middle school students were analyzed in this investigation, researchers are encouraged to extend this study to students enrolled in lower grade levels, such as elementary schools. Such an analysis would be helpful to ascertain whether the inequities documented herein are also occurring at the elementary school level. Researchers are also recommended to extend this investigation to students enrolled in high schools. Another recommendation would be for investigators to extend this study to other states. The degree to which the inequities delineated herein are generalizable to students in other states is not known.

Researchers are encouraged to examine discipline consequences as a function of other student characteristics such as English Language Learner, at-risk students, gender, and gender within ethnic/racial groups. Having a more detailed understanding of the presence of inequities in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension would add to the existing literature on discipline. Research should also be conducted on the disciplinary consequences of Discipline Alternative Education Placement, Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Placement, and expulsion to ascertain whether inequities exist in their assignment. A final recommendation for future research would be to analyze the reasons why students are assigned a discipline consequence. To what degree are students who commit the same misbehavior given a different discipline consequence, one based on their personal characteristics rather than on the misbehavior?

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which discipline consequence assignments were assigned differentially as a function of student degree of economic disadvantage. The degrees of student economic disadvantage were Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Extremely Poor. Evidenced in this 3-year statewide data analysis was the presence of statistically significant differences in the assignment of discipline consequences as a function of student degree of economic disadvantage. For the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, students who were Extremely Poor were assigned statistically significantly more often to in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension than were their peers who were Moderately Poor and their peers who were Not Poor. Students who were Moderately Poor were assigned to an in-school suspension and to an out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than were students who were Not Poor. Results of this 3-year statewide investigation were congruent with previous researchers (e.g., Boneshefski & Runge, 2014; Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003; Khan & Slate, 2016; Lopez & Slate, 2016; Reardon, 2013; Skiba et al., 2011; Texas Education Agency, 2014a, 2014b) that inequities exist in the assignment of discipline consequences. Of note in this study was the presence of a consistent stair-step effect in discipline consequence assignment (Carpenter et al., 2006) by student degree of poverty.

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Table 2.1

Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspension Assignment by Economic Status for Grade 6 Students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Economic Status	Received an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 13,880) 9.1%	(<i>n</i> = 139,141) 90.9%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 4,066) 14.5%	(<i>n</i> = 24,020) 85.5%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 38,790) 20.9%	(<i>n</i> = 147,050) 79.1%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 14,185) 8.8%	(<i>n</i> = 14,7401) 91.2%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 3,499) 13.0%	(<i>n</i> = 23,372) 87.0%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 37,350) 20.0%	(<i>n</i> = 148,935) 80.0%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 14,012) 8.6%	(<i>n</i> = 149,025) 91.4%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 3,268) 13.0%	(<i>n</i> = 21,824) 87.0%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 37,523) 19.5%	(<i>n</i> = 154,803) 80.5%

Table 2.2

Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspension Assignment by Economic Status for Grade 7 Students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Economic Status	Received an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 16,929) 10.6%	(<i>n</i> = 143,241) 89.4%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 4,644) 16.2%	(<i>n</i> = 23,983) 83.8%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 45,340) 24.1%	(<i>n</i> = 142,563) 75.9%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 17,114) 10.3%	(<i>n</i> = 148,302) 89.7%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 4,083) 15.3%	(<i>n</i> = 22,535) 84.7%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 42,394) 23.2%	(<i>n</i> = 140,540) 76.8%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 16,313) 9.8%	(<i>n</i> = 150,299) 90.2%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 3,731) 14.6%	(<i>n</i> = 21,793) 85.4%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 41,560) 22.2%	(<i>n</i> = 145,462) 77.8%

Table 2.3

Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspension Assignment by Economic Status for Grade 8 Students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Economic Status	Received an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 19,055) 11.5%	(<i>n</i> = 146,915) 88.5%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 4,675) 16.8%	(<i>n</i> = 23,144) 83.2%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 44,286) 24.5%	(<i>n</i> = 136,389) 75.5%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 18,982) 11.0%	(<i>n</i> = 153,304) 89.0%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 4,304) 16.0%	(<i>n</i> = 22,619) 84.0%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 42,867) 23.6%	(<i>n</i> = 138,911) 76.4%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 17,955) 10.5%	(<i>n</i> = 152,346) 89.5%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 4,003) 16.0%	(<i>n</i> = 21,083) 84.0%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 40,552) 22.4%	(<i>n</i> = 140,780) 77.6%

Table 2.4

*Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspension Assignment by Economic**Status for Grade 6 Students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 6,372) 4.0%	(<i>n</i> = 153,798) 96.0%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 1,886) 6.6%	(<i>n</i> = 26,741) 93.4%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 24,573) 13.1%	(<i>n</i> = 163,330) 86.9%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 4,784) 3.0%	(<i>n</i> = 156,802) 97.0%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 1,315) 4.9%	(<i>n</i> = 25,556) 95.1%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 18,821) 10.1%	(<i>n</i> = 167,464) 89.9%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 6,344) 3.8%	(<i>n</i> = 160,198) 96.2%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 1,485) 5.8%	(<i>n</i> = 24,039) 94.2%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 22,395) 12.0%	(<i>n</i> = 164,627) 88.0%

Table 2.5

*Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspension Assignment by Economic**Status for Grade 7 Students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 7,779) 4.7%	(<i>n</i> = 158,191) 95.3%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 2,004) 7.2%	(<i>n</i> = 25,815) 92.8%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 24,390) 13.5%	(<i>n</i> = 156,285) 86.5%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 6,641) 4.0%	(<i>n</i> = 158,775) 96.0%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 1,614) 6.1%	(<i>n</i> = 25,004) 93.9%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 22,262) 12.2%	(<i>n</i> = 160,672) 87.8%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 6,344) 3.8%	(<i>n</i> = 160,198) 96.2%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 1,485) 5.8%	(<i>n</i> = 24,039) 94.2%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 22,395) 12.0%	(<i>n</i> = 164,627) 88.0%

Table 2.6

*Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspension Assignment by Economic**Status for Grade 8 Students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 7,779) 4.7%	(<i>n</i> = 158,191) 95.3%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 2,004) 7.2%	(<i>n</i> = 25,815) 92.8%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 24,390) 13.5%	(<i>n</i> = 156,285) 86.5%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 7,729) 4.5%	(<i>n</i> = 164,557) 95.5%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 1,769) 6.6%	(<i>n</i> = 25,154) 93.4%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 23,433) 12.9%	(<i>n</i> = 158,345) 87.1%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	(<i>n</i> = 7,623) 4.5%	(<i>n</i> = 162,678) 95.5%
Moderately Poor	(<i>n</i> = 1,690) 6.7%	(<i>n</i> = 23,396) 93.3%
Extremely Poor	(<i>n</i> = 22,737) 12.5%	(<i>n</i> = 158,595) 87.5%

Table 2.7

Summary of Effect Sizes for In-School Suspension Assignment by Economic Status for

Grade 6-8 Students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

Grade Level and School Year	Cramer's V	Effect Size Range	Highest ISS Rate
Grade 6			
2013-2014	.16	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.15	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.15	Small	Extremely Poor
Grade 7			
2013-2014	.17	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.17	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.16	Small	Extremely Poor
Grade 8			
2013-2014	.16	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.16	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.15	Small	Extremely Poor

Table 2.8

*Summary of Effect Sizes for Out-of-School Suspension Assignment by Economic Status
for Grade 6-8 Students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

Grade Level and School Year	Cramer's V	Effect Size Range	Highest OSS Rate
Grade 6			
2013-2014	.15	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.14	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.15	Small	Extremely Poor
Grade 7			
2013-2014	.16	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.15	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.15	Small	Extremely Poor
Grade 8			
2013-2014	.15	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.15	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.14	Small	Extremely Poor

CHAPTER III

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE ASSIGNMENT DIFFERENCES BY STUDENT

ETHNICITY/RACE: A TEXAS STATEWIDE INVESTIGATION

This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

Abstract

Analyzed in this study was the degree to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments as a function of student ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian). Statewide data were obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System on all middle school students for the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. For each school year, inferential statistical procedures yielded statistically significant differences. A stair-step effect was present each school year in each grade level. Black students received statistically significantly higher rates of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension than did Hispanic, White, and Asian students. Hispanic students had statistically significantly higher rates of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension than White and Asian students. Implications are discussed and suggestions for policy and practice are made.

Keywords: Student Ethnicity/Race, Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, Middle school students

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE ASSIGNMENT DIFFERENCES BY STUDENT
ETHNICITY/RACE: A TEXAS STATEWIDE INVESTIGATION

A connection exists between public education and attaining the American dream. Education is the key to the American dream (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003; Reardon, 2013). A diverse group of students are enrolled in the public school system in the United States with hopes of acquiring an education that will lead to success (Jones, Slate, & Martinez-Garcia, 2014). Unfortunately, however, the American dream is difficult to realize for some groups of students because of the color of their skin or the nation of their origin.

Well documented in the extant literature are discipline inequities among the major ethnic/racial groups (Anfinson et al., 2010; Skiba et al., 2011; United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016). In comparison to their Asian and White peers, Black and Hispanic students have been assigned a disproportionate amount of disciplinary consequences for over four decades (Khan & Slate, 2016). In addition to the studies on inequities between the four major ethnic/racial groups, several researchers (e.g., Kupchik & Ellis, 2008; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Mendez et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 2011) have also conducted studies regarding discipline inequities between Black, White, and Hispanic students. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2016a), a higher percentage of Black students have been suspended or expelled than any other major ethnic/racial groups. In addition, Hispanic students and students of two or more races have been suspended or expelled more than White students. Asian students have been suspended the least often, among the major racial/ethnic groups. Regarding the data on suspension and expulsion, 36% of Black students, 21% of Hispanic students,

14% of White students, and 6% of Asian students have been suspended or expelled from school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016a).

The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954, declared “separate but equal” education unconstitutional. The *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) legislation was the first of several legal mandates aimed towards equalizing education opportunities for all students, irrespective of race and ethnicity. Six decades later, racial inequality is still present in public schools (Berlinger & McLaughlin, 2016). In May of 2016, the nation was faced with the reality that racial inequality has yet to be resolved. U.S. District Court Judge Debra Brown ruled that a Mississippi town’s current day segregation of high schools, based on student race was a delay of desegregation that deprived students of their constitutional right to an integrated education (Berlinger & McLaughlin, 2016).

Inequitable practices in schools, such as segregation and disparate discipline practices, negatively influence achievement gaps (Reardon, 2013). Decreasing the disproportionality of discipline consequence assignments is paramount to provide an equal opportunity for each child’s success. Inequitable discipline practices not only increase the disproportionality of discipline consequence assignments, but also increase the likelihood of dropping out of school for Hispanic and Black students and increase the flow of Black students through the School-to-Prison Pipeline (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Boneshefski & Runge, 2014).

In response to the Reagan Administration’s call to action, a zero tolerance movement was implemented in schools across the nation. Zero tolerance policies require school administrators to suspend and/or expel students for major infractions such as harassment, fighting, or assault and infractions as minor as disobedience, truancy, and

obscene language (Mallet, 2016). As a result, prison-like practices are implemented in impoverished schools that minority students attend, in effort to maintain safety. Millions of students become mired in this punitive system. The education exclusion enforced by this system linked with criminalization of youth is referred to as the School-to-Prison Pipeline (Wilson, 2014).

The School-to-Prison Pipeline is largely comprised of a Hispanic and Black population. Hispanic and Black students are overrepresented in the number of students who receive disciplinary consequences, just as Hispanic and Black people are overrepresented in the national prison population (Lopez, 2015). This flow of Black and Hispanic students through the School-to-Prison Pipeline is attributed to zero tolerance policies. As mandated by zero tolerance policies, students are excluded from school and do not learn to change undesirable behaviors (Lopez, 2015). This punitive exclusion from school and failure to teach behavior modifications leads to increased levels of unacceptable criminal activity by students who initially posed little or no threat of harm to schools and communities (Lopez, 2015; Mallet, 2016). The chances of Hispanic and Black students facing criminal involvement is more like likely than the chance of attaining a quality education, as a result of the implementation of zero tolerance policies (Mallet, 2016).

Regarding the disproportionate assignment of discipline consequences to Hispanic and Black students in comparison to their White peers, Khan and Slate (2016) established that Grade 6 Hispanic students in Texas received 54% of the 62,034 in-school suspensions assigned. With respect to out-of-school suspension, Grade 6 Hispanic students received 54% of the assignments; Black students received 32%, and White

students received 14% (Khan & Slate, 2016). A similar pattern was determined in the assignment of Discipline Alternative Education Program placement to Grade 6 students in Texas. Of the 6,104 Discipline Alternative Education Program placements assigned, 57% of placements were assigned to Hispanic students, 26% of placements were assigned to Black students, and 17% of placements were assigned to White students (Khan & Slate, 2016).

In a similar study, Barnes and Slate (2016) established the presence of inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences in Texas schools, particularly to Hispanic and Black students. Barnes and Slate (2016) documented discipline inequities as early as Grades 4 and 5 in Texas elementary schools. Texas Grade 4 students received a total of 2,679 in-school suspensions. Of those 2,679 suspensions, 40% were assigned to Black students, 26% were assigned to Hispanic students, and 34% were assigned to White students (Barnes & Slate, 2016). Concerning out-of-school suspensions, 480 out-of-school suspensions were assigned to Texas Grade 4 students, of which 61% were received by Black students. Hispanic Grade 4 students in Texas received 38% of the out-of-school suspensions assigned and White students received only 1% of the out-of-school suspensions that were assigned (Barnes & Slate, 2016).

With regard to the assignment of discipline consequences to Texas Grade 5 students, 9,862 in-school suspensions were given (Barnes & Slate, 2016). Black students received 38% of the in-school suspensions that were assigned, Hispanic students received 40% of the in-school suspensions that were assigned, and White students received 22% of in-school suspensions that were assigned. Out-of-school suspension rates for Texas Grade 5 students were similar to the out-of-school suspension rates for Texas Grade 4

students. Again, Black students received the highest percentage of out-of-school suspension assignments, 64%, followed by Hispanic students, 31%; and then by White students who received only 6% of the total out-of-school suspensions.

Additional analyses of inequitable discipline practices in Texas public schools were conducted by Hilberth and Slate (2014) who focused specifically on discipline inequities between Grade 6, 7, and 8 Texas Black and White students. In Grade 6, Black students comprised 14.1% of the sample, compared to White students who comprised 34.7% of the sample. Of note here is that Black students received 32% of the in-school suspensions, more than twice their percentage of student enrollment. White students received 14.2% of the in-school suspensions that were assigned, which was less than half of their percentage of student enrollment (Hilberth & Slate, 2014). Out-of-school suspensions rates were similar, with Grade 6 Black students receiving 19.4% of assigned suspensions, in comparison to their White peers who received 3.7% of out-of-school suspensions (Hilberth & Slate, 2014). Both of these out-of-school suspension rates reflected substantial discrepancies with the Black and White student enrollment percentages.

Grade 7 discipline assignments followed the same pattern. White students comprised 35.2% of the sample, and Black students comprised 14.2% of the sample. Yet, 35.9% of Black students received in-school suspension, in comparison to 16.2% of White students who received in-school suspension (Hilberth & Slate, 2014). Out-of-school suspension rates for Texas Grade 7 were consistent with rates for Texas Grade 6, where 22.6% of the Black student sample received out-of-school suspension, in

comparison to 4.8% of the White student sample who received out-of-school suspension (Hilberth & Slate, 2014).

Black students comprised 14.4% of the Grade 8 student enrollment but and received 36.4% of in-school suspensions. White students comprised 35.3% of the student enrollment but only received 17.5% of assigned in-school suspensions in Grade 8 (Hilberth & Slate, 2014). Similarly, with regard to out-of-school suspension, 23.2% of Black students were assigned to out-of-school suspension, in comparison to 5.4% of White students (Hilberth & Slate, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

The No Child Left Behind Act (Public Law 107-110, 2001) brought about the implementation of numerous initiatives, focused on providing equal education opportunities to public school students, regardless of their ethnicity/race. Nonetheless, with the implementation of current policy, the Every Student Succeeds Act (Bill Number S.1177, 2015), discipline consequences are inequitably assigned to students by ethnicity/race in Texas public schools (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Hilberth & Slate, 2014). Hilberth and Slate (2014) documented that “Black students were disciplined at a higher rate than any other ethnic group” (p. 313). A trend comparable to the results of the Hilberth and Slate study was revealed when Barnes and Slate (2016) analyzed discipline consequences by student ethnicity/race for elementary school students. Suspensions for minor misbehaviors were assigned to Black students more often than to their White and Hispanic counterparts (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Boneshefski & Runge, 2014; Curtiss & Slate, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Skiba et al., 2011). Black students were four times more likely to be suspended than White students and Hispanic students were two and a

half times more likely to be suspended than White students (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). White students were more likely to receive moderate consequences, such as detention, for noncompliance, minor misbehavior, or moderate infractions and were mainly assigned in-school suspension as a discipline consequence, whereas Black and Hispanic students were assigned consequences with less leniency (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Skiba et al., 2011).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments as a function of student ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian). These discipline consequences assignments were analyzed separately for the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years in Texas middle schools. Moreover, these discipline consequences were examined separately for students in Grades 6, 7, and 8. The specific focus in this investigation was whether the assignment of discipline consequences differed as a function of student ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian).

Significance of the Study

Racial inequality has unfortunately been a topic of concern and discussion in the United States for decades (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Boneshefski & Runge, 2014; Curtiss & Slate, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; McCluskey, 2014; Skiba et al., 2011). With respect to disciplining students, education practitioners must vigilantly monitor discipline practices to ensure that discipline consequences in the education environment are assigned in an equitable and nondiscriminatory manner (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). The desired outcome of this monitoring process should be to establish and maintain

equitable practices that lessen disproportionality in disciplinary actions. Analyzing school discipline data may provide education practitioners crucial insight, essential to establishing culturally responsive practices, with respect to discipline. Findings from this study may potentially inform, influence, and improve classroom practices, with respect to discipline.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) What is the difference in in-school suspension assignment as a function of ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian)?; (b) What is the difference in out-of-school suspension assignment as a function of ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian)?; (c) To what degree is a trend present in in-school suspension assignment as a function of ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) across the three school years?; and (d) To what degree is a trend present in out-of-school suspension assignment as a function of ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) across the three school years? Texas statewide data for the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years were analyzed to answer these research questions. Data were analyzed separately for students in Grades 6, 7, and 8.

Method

Research Design

The data that were used in this study constituted archival data from past events (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). For this reason, the independent variable involved in this research study could not be manipulated. As such, a non-experimental, causal comparative research design was used in this investigation (Creswell, 2009; Johnson &

Christensen, 2012). Because both the independent variable and the dependent variables had already occurred, extraneous variables were not controlled in this study. The independent variable for this study was student ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) and the dependent variables were discipline consequence assignments of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years in the State of Texas.

Participants and Instrumentation

Data for this study were obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System through a Public Information Request form. The Public Information Request form was submitted to obtain data for a Basic Statistics course at Sam Houston State University. The data that were used in this study to answer the research questions had not been analyzed. Inequities in discipline consequence assignments were analyzed separately for each school year by ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian). All Texas middle school students who received a disciplinary consequence during the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years were participants in this study. Specific data that were analyzed were: (a) student ethnicity/race, (b) student grade level, and (c) discipline consequence assigned. Because the data have been audited by the Texas Education Agency, an assumption of minimal errors existed. Archival data were imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, then labeled and reduced to only include variables relevant to this study. For this study, only the two major discipline consequences were analyzed.

Major discipline consequences were in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension. In-school suspension is an initial disciplinary consequence that results in the

removal of a student from the regular classroom by placing the student into a separate classroom (Texas Education Agency, 2010). Out-of-school suspension consequence is the removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary consequence that does not allow the student to attend school for a day and to not exceed three days in a row (Texas Education Agency, 2010).

Results

In this study, the extent to which differences were present in the assignment of discipline consequences as a function of ethnicity/race for Grade 6, 7, and 8 students was analyzed. Data were examined for all middle school students in Texas who had been assigned a disciplinary consequence of in-school suspension and/or out-of-school suspension in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. Statistical procedures were then conducted to determine the degree to which student ethnicity/race may be related to the assignment of discipline consequences.

To address all of the research questions, Pearson chi-square procedures were calculated to determine the degree to which differences were present in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by ethnicity/race. Frequency data were present for both categorical variables: ethnicity/race and discipline consequence assignment. As such, the Pearson chi-square statistical procedure was viewed as the optimal statistical procedure to use. With the large sample size, the available sample size per cell was more than five. Therefore, underlying assumptions for use of a Pearson chi-square were met for each research question (Field, 2013). Results will now be presented, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year and Grade 6 students and ending with the 2015-2016 school year and Grade 8 students.

Grade 6 Results for In-School Suspension

For the 2013-2014 school year, the Pearson chi-square revealed a statistically significant difference in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 10154.51$, $p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V was .16, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Apparent in the results was a stair-step effect (Carpenter, Ramirez, & Severn, 2006). Grade 6 Black students were assigned an in-school suspension greater than seven times more often than Asian students, two and one half times more often than White students, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic students. Hispanic students were assigned an in-school suspension four times more often than Asian students and more than one and a half times more often than White students. The frequencies and percentages of in-school suspension by student ethnicity/race for this school year are delineated in Table 3.1.

 Insert Table 3.1 about here

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, the Pearson chi-square again revealed a statistically significant difference in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 9721.18$, $p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V was .16, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Clearly apparent in the results was a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). Grade 6 Black students received an in-school suspension eight times more often than Asian students, two and one half times more often than White students, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic students. Hispanic students received an in-school suspension greater than four times more often than Asian students

and more than one and one third times more often than White students. Revealed in Table 3.1 are the frequencies and percentages for in-school suspension by student ethnicity/race for the 2014-2015 school year.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 8861.52, p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Similar to the previous two years, a stair-step effect was clearly apparent (Carpenter et al., 2006). Grade 6 Black students received an in-school suspension seven times more often than Asian students, more than twice as often as White students, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic students. Hispanic students received an in-school suspension greater than three times more often than Asian students and almost one and one third times more often than White students. Table 3.1 contains the frequencies and percentages for the assignment of in-school suspension by student ethnicity/race for this school year.

Grade 7 Results for In-School Suspension

Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 11255.53, p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V was .16, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Evident in the results was a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). Grade 7 Black students were assigned an in-school suspension more than seven and one half times more often than Asian students, more than two times more often than White students, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic students. Hispanic students received an in-school suspension four times more often than Asian students and more than one and one

half times more often than White students. Presented in Table 3.2 are the frequencies and percentages for the assignment of in-school suspension by student ethnicity/race in this school year.

Insert Table 3.2 about here

In the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 10222.91$, $p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Similar to the previous year, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. Black students in Grade 7 were assigned in-school suspension more than eight times more often than Asian students and two and one half times more often than White students and Hispanic students. Hispanic students in Grade 7 were assigned an in-school suspension more than four times more often than Asian students and almost one and one half times more often than White students. The frequencies and percentages for the assignment of in-school suspension by student ethnicity/race for this school year are presented in Table 3.2.

For the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 9766.44$, $p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V or effect size was .15, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Congruent with the previous two years, a stair-step effect was clearly evident (Carpenter et al., 2006). Black students in Grade 7 were assigned an in-school suspension seven times more often than were Asian students, more than two times more often than were

White students, and more than one and one half times more often than were Hispanic students. Hispanic students were assigned an in-school suspension more than four and one half times more often than were Asian students and more than one and one third times more often than were White students. Table 3.2 contains the frequencies and percentages of in-school suspension assignments by student ethnicity/race in the 2015-2016 school year.

Grade 8 Results for In-School Suspension

Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 9850.05, p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V or effect size was .16, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). A stair-step effect was apparent in the results (Carpenter et al., 2006). Black students in Grade 8 were assigned an in-school suspension more than six and one half times more often than Asian students, more than two times more often than White students, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic students. Hispanic students were assigned an in-school suspension four times more often than Asian students and almost one and one half times more often than White students. Revealed in Table 3.3 are the frequencies and percentages for in-school suspension assignments by student ethnicity/race in the 2013-2014 school year.

 Insert Table 3.3 about here

With respect to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 9042.67, p < .001$, by

student ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V was .15, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). A stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was again present. Grade 8 Black students were assigned an in-school suspension more than seven times more often than Asian students, two times more often than White students, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic students. Hispanic students in Grade 8 were assigned an in-school suspension more than four times more often than Asian students and more than one and one third times more often than White students. The frequencies and percentages for the assignment of in-school suspension by student ethnicity/race for this school year are presented in Table 3.3.

Regarding the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 8755.97, p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Similar to the previous two years, a stair-step effect was clearly apparent (Carpenter et al., 2006). Black students in Grade 8 were assigned an in-school suspension more than seven times more often than their Asian peers, more than two times more often than their White peers, and more than one and one half times more often than their Hispanic peers. Hispanic students in Grade 8 were assigned an in-school suspension more than four and one half times more often than for Asian students and more than one and one third times more often than for White students. Delineated in Table 3.3 are the frequencies and percentages of in-school suspension assignments by student ethnicity/race in the 2015-2016 school year.

Trends for In-School Suspension

Across the four ethnic/racial groups over the three years of data that were analyzed, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was clearly established in the assignment of in-school suspension. Black students in all three grade levels received an in-school suspension statistically significantly more often than did Asian, White, and Hispanic students. Similarly, Hispanic students in all three grade levels were assigned an in-school suspension statistically significantly more often than were Asian and White students.

Grade 6 Results for Out-of-School Suspension

For the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 13605.21, p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V was .19, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Apparent in the results was a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). Grade 6 Black students received an out-of-school suspension 15 times more than Asian students, more than five and one half times more often than White students, and more than two times more often than Hispanic students. Hispanic students received an out-of-school suspension six times more often than Asian students and more than two times more often than White students. The frequencies and percentages of out-of-school suspension by student ethnicity/race for this school year are delineated in Table 3.4.

Insert Table 3.4 about here

With respect to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 12708.34, p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V was .18, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Clearly apparent in the results was a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). Grade 6 Black students received an out-of-school suspension more than 16 times more often than Asian students, more than five and one half times more often than White students, and more than two times more often than Hispanic students. Hispanic students received an out-of-school suspension more than six and one half times more often than Asian students and more than two times more often than White students. Table 3.4 contains the frequencies and percentages for out-of-school suspension by student ethnicity/race for the 2014-2015 school year.

Regarding the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 12536.98, p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .18 (Cohen, 1988). Similar to the previous two years, a stair-step effect was clearly apparent (Carpenter et al., 2006). Grade 6 Black students received an out-of-school suspension more than 14 and one half times more often than Asian students, more than five and one half times more often than White students, and more than twice as often as Hispanic students. Hispanic students received an out-of-school suspension more than six times more often than Asian students and more than two times more often than White students. Delineated in Table 3.4 are the frequencies and percentages for the assignment of out-of-school suspension by student ethnicity/race for this school year.

Grade 7 Results for Out-of-School Suspension

Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 14402.32, p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V was .19, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Apparent in the results was a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). Grade 7 Black students were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than 11 and one half times more often than Asian students, more than five times as much as White students, and more than two times more often than Hispanic students. Hispanic students were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than five and one half times more often than Asian students and more than two and one half times more often than White students. Presented in Table 3.5 are the frequencies and percentages for the assignment of out-of-school suspension by student ethnicity/race for the 2013-2014 school year.

 Insert Table 3.5 about here

With respect to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 12229.54, p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .17 (Cohen, 1988). Similar to the previous year, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. Black students in Grade 7 were assigned out-of-school suspension more than 14 and one half times more often than Asian students, more than four and one half times more often than White students, and more than two times more often than Hispanic students. Hispanic students in Grade 7 were assigned an out-of-school suspension seven

times more often than Asian students and more than two times more often than White students. The frequencies and percentages for the assignment of out-of-school suspension by student ethnicity/race for the 2014-2015 school year are presented in Table 3.5.

Regarding the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 12641.58, p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V or effect size was .18, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Congruent with the previous two years, a stair-step effect was clearly evident (Carpenter et al., 2006). Black students in Grade 7 were assigned an out-of-school suspension 16 times more often than Asian students, more than four and one half times more often than White students, and more than two times more often than as Hispanic students. Hispanic students were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than seven and one half times more often than Asian students and more than two times more often than White students. Table 3.5 contains the frequencies and percentages of out-of-school suspension assignments by student ethnicity/race for the 2015-2016 school year.

Grade 8 Results for Out-of-School Suspension

For the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 12565.58, p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V or effect size was .18, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). A stair-step effect was apparent in the results (Carpenter et al., 2006). Black students in Grade 8 were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than 11 and one half times more often than Asian students, more than four and one half times more often than White students, and two times more often than Hispanic students. Hispanic students were

assigned an out-of-school suspension more than five and one half times more often than Asian students and more than two times more often than White students. Revealed in Table 3.6 are the frequencies and percentages for out-of-school suspension assignments by student ethnicity/race in the 2013-2014 school year.

Insert Table 3.6 about here

In the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 11940.13, p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V was .17, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). A stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was again present. Grade 8 Black students were assigned an out-of-school suspension 14 times more often than Asian students, four and one half times more often than White students, and two times more often than Hispanic students. Hispanic students in Grade 8 were assigned an out-of-school suspension almost seven times more often than Asian students and more than two times more often than White students. The frequencies and percentages for the assignment of out-of-school suspension by student ethnicity/race for this school year are presented in Table 3.6.

With regard to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(3) = 11696.60, p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .17 (Cohen, 1988). Similar to the previous two years, a stair-step effect was clearly apparent (Carpenter et al., 2006). Black students in Grade 8 were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than 15 times more often than Asian students, four and one half times

more often than White students, and two times more often than Hispanic students.

Hispanic students in Grade 8 were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than seven times more often than Asian students and two times more often than White students.

Delineated in Table 3.6 are the frequencies and percentages of out-of-school suspension assignments by student ethnicity/race in the 2015-2016 school year.

Trends for Out-of-School Suspension

A stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was clearly established in the assignment of out-of-school suspension across the three years of data that were analyzed and for students in the three different grade levels. Each year, Black students in all three grade levels received an out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than did Asian, White, and Hispanic students. Similarly, Hispanic students in all three grade levels were assigned an out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than White and Asian students in each year.

Discussion

In this study, the degree to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments as a function of student ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) was examined for Texas middle school students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. In each school year at each grade level over this 3-year time period, statistically significant differences were documented in the assignment of discipline consequences as a function of student ethnicity/race. The presence of trends in the assignment of discipline consequences by student ethnicity/race was determined, subsequent to the statistical analyses. Results will now be summarized.

Throughout the 2013-2014 through the 2015-2016 school years, across each of the three grade levels, Black students received the highest rates of in-school suspension. In-school suspension rates for Black students ranged from 27.5% to 29.1% in Grade 6, from 29.0% to 31.9% in Grade 7, and from 28.4% to 31.3% in Grade 8 in these three school years. For Hispanic students, in-school suspension rates ranged from 15.0% to 17.0% in Grade 6, from 9.0% to 17.0% in Grade 7, and from 17.3% to 19.2% in Grade 8 in these three school years. In comparison to these in-school suspension rates, the in-school suspension rates for White students ranged from 11.0% to 12.2% in Grade 6, from 12.2% to 12.8% in Grade 7, and from 12.5% to 13.2% in Grade 8 in these three school years. In-school suspension rates for Asian students ranged from 3.4% to 3.9% in Grade 6, from 3.5% to 4.2% in Grade 7, and from 3.8% to 4.8% in Grade 8 in these three school years. In strong agreement with Carpenter et al. (2006), a stair-step effect was clearly established in the assignment of in-school suspension by student ethnicity/race. Readers are directed to Table 3.7 for a summary of effect sizes across the three school years for in-school suspension rates by student ethnicity/race for Grade 6, 7, and 8 students.

Insert Table 3.7 about here

With respect to out-of-school suspension, across each of the three grade levels, higher percentages of Black students received an out-of-school suspension in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and the 2015-2016 school years than their peers. Out-of-school suspension rates for Black students ranged from 17.6% to 19.2% in Grade 6, from 29.0% to 31.9% in Grade 7, and from 28.4% to 31.3% in Grade 8 in these three school years.

For Hispanic students, out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 15.0% to 17.0% in Grade 6, from 17.0% to 19.0% in Grade 7, and from 17.3% to 19.2% in Grade 8 in these three school years. In comparison to these out-of-school suspension rates, the out-of-school suspension rates for White students ranged from 11.0% to 12.2% in Grade 6, from 12.2% to 12.8% in Grade 7, and from 12.5% to 13.5% in Grade 8 in these three school years. Out-of-school suspension rates for Asian ranged from 3.4% to 3.9% in Grade 6, from 3.5% to 4.2% in Grade 7, and from 3.8% to 4.8% in Grade 8 in these three school years. Again, findings were in strong agreement with Carpenter et al. (2006) of the presence of a stair-step effect in the assignment of out-of-school suspension by student ethnicity/race. A summary of the effect sizes for out-of-school suspension rates by student ethnicity/race for Grade 6, 7, and 8 students across the three school years is presented in Table 3.8.

Insert Table 3.8 about here

Implications for Policy and for Practice

Statistically significant disparities were evident in the assignment of discipline consequences to Grade 6, 7, and 8 students by their ethnicity/race throughout the 3-year time period analyzed. Black students were assigned an in-school suspension and an out-of-school suspension much more often than their Asian, White, and Hispanic peers in all three grade levels in all three analyzed school years. Similarly, Hispanic students were assigned an in-school suspension and an out-of-school suspension much more often than their Asian and White peers in all three school years and in all three grade levels. With

these findings in mind, school leaders are encouraged to conduct an analysis of their school campus and their school district discipline strategies to ascertain the extent to which student ethnicity/race is related to discipline consequence assignment. Results from such audits could then be used to cultivate changes in discipline systems or foster the development of new discipline systems. School district leaders are also encouraged to increase the cultural diversity of school administrators, teachers, and other staff members. Another suggestion would be for school district leaders to provide professional development on multicultural awareness for school administrators, teachers, and other staff members.

Review and revision of codes of conduct are other implications for practice. This code of conduct analysis could augment the effort to reduce the inequitable flow of Black and Hispanic students through the School-to-Prison pipeline. The creation of codes of conduct with outlined consequences for discipline violations is encouraged by school district leaders and school campus leaders to decrease administrator subjectivity. Outlined consequences for discipline violations would also allow for a systematic assignment of consequences contingent upon the infraction and irrespective of student ethnicity/race. Educator cognizance of discipline disparities could increase with recurrent analysis of discipline data. A final implication for practice would be to determine the underlying reasons for the inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences by student ethnicity/race.

Recommendations for Future Research

Examined in this study was the relationship between student ethnicity/race and the assignment of discipline consequences, specifically in-school suspension and out-of-

school suspension, to students in Grades 6, 7, and 8. Future researchers could extend this study by analyzing in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension data by gender within ethnic/racial groups. As the data analyzed in this investigation were on only middle school students, researchers are encouraged to extend this study to students enrolled in other grade levels, such as elementary schools and high schools. This extended analysis would help determine if the inequities delineated herein are also occurring at the elementary school or high school levels. Researchers are also recommended to extend this study to other states, as the degree to which the inequities identified in this study are generalizable to students in other states is unknown.

Researchers are encouraged to examine discipline consequences as a function of other student characteristics such as students who are at-risk, student level of poverty, gender, and English Language Learner status. A thorough understanding of the presence of inequities in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension would expand the existing literature on discipline. Moreover, research should be conducted on the extent to which the discipline consequences of Discipline Alternative Education Placement, Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Placement, and expulsion are assigned in an inequitable manner. To what degree are students given different discipline consequences, based on the color of their skin, is a resonating question. As such, a final recommendation for future research would be to analyze the reasons why students are assigned a discipline consequence.

Conclusion

In this multiyear, statewide analysis, the degree to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments as a function of student ethnicity/race (i.e., Black,

Hispanic, White, and Asian) in Texas middle schools during the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years was addressed. Inferential statistical analyses yielded statistically significant differences in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension to Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian students. For the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and the 2015-2016 school years, Black students were assigned both in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than their Asian, White, and Hispanic peers. In addition, Hispanic students were assigned both in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than were their Asian and White grade level peers. Congruent with previous researchers (e.g., Anfinson et al., 2010; Barnes & Slate, 2016; Berlinger & McLaughlin, 2016; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Kupchik & Ellis, 2008; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Mendez et al., 2002; National Center for Education Statistics, 2016; Skiba et al., 2011; United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016), clear inequities were established in the assignment of these two discipline consequences for Black and Hispanic students. Of note in this study was the presence of a consistent stair-step effect in discipline consequence assignment (Carpenter et al., 2006) by student ethnicity/race.

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Table 3.1

Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 6 Students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 15,250) 29.1%	(<i>n</i> = 37,222) 70.9%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 33,205) 16.2%	(<i>n</i> = 172,371) 83.8%
White	(<i>n</i> = 13,903) 11.5%	(<i>n</i> = 107,168) 88.5%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 577) 3.9%	(<i>n</i> = 14,356) 96.1%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 14,574) 27.5%	(<i>n</i> = 38,367) 72.5%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 31,658) 15.0%	(<i>n</i> = 179,326) 85.0%
White	(<i>n</i> = 13,306) 11.0%	(<i>n</i> = 107,459) 89.0%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 548) 3.4%	(<i>n</i> = 15,548) 96.6%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 15,550) 29.0%	(<i>n</i> = 38,104) 71.0%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 36,420) 17.0%	(<i>n</i> = 178,241) 83.0%
White	(<i>n</i> = 14,765) 12.2%	(<i>n</i> = 106,506) 87.8%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 589) 3.5%	(<i>n</i> = 16,177) 96.5%

Table 3.2

Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 7 Students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 17,206) 31.9%	(<i>n</i> = 36,710) 68.1%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 40,278) 19.0%	(<i>n</i> = 171,435) 81.0%
White	(<i>n</i> = 15,913) 12.8%	(<i>n</i> = 108,295) 87.2%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 633) 4.2%	(<i>n</i> = 14,371) 95.8%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 16,055) 30.0%	(<i>n</i> = 37,435) 70.0%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 37,493) 17.8%	(<i>n</i> = 172,842) 82.2%
White	(<i>n</i> = 15,124) 12.4%	(<i>n</i> = 107,092) 87.6%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 572) 3.7%	(<i>n</i> = 15,084) 96.3%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 15,550) 29.0%	(<i>n</i> = 38,104) 71.0%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 36,420) 17.0%	(<i>n</i> = 178,241) 83.0%
White	(<i>n</i> = 14,765) 12.2%	(<i>n</i> = 106,506) 87.8%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 589) 3.5%	(<i>n</i> = 16,177) 96.5%

Table 3.3

Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 8 Students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 16,848) 31.3%	(<i>n</i> = 37,044) 68.7%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 39,728) 19.2%	(<i>n</i> = 167,126) 80.8%
White	(<i>n</i> = 16,929) 13.5%	(<i>n</i> = 108,908) 86.5%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 694) 4.8%	(<i>n</i> = 13,915) 96.2%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 16,054) 29.5%	(<i>n</i> = 38,332) 70.5%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 38,711) 18.1%	(<i>n</i> = 175,274) 81.9%
White	(<i>n</i> = 16,434) 13.2%	(<i>n</i> = 108,532) 86.8%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 643) 4.1%	(<i>n</i> = 14,991) 95.9%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 15,262) 28.4%	(<i>n</i> = 38,555) 71.6%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 36,901) 17.3%	(<i>n</i> = 176,906) 82.7%
White	(<i>n</i> = 15,306) 12.5%	(<i>n</i> = 107,078) 87.5%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 619) 3.8%	(<i>n</i> = 15,569) 96.2%

Table 3.4

Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 6 Students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 10,067) 19.2%	(<i>n</i> = 42,405) 80.8%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 16,538) 8.0%	(<i>n</i> = 189,038) 92.0%
White	(<i>n</i> = 4,073) 3.4%	(<i>n</i> = 116,998) 96.6%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 196) 1.3%	(<i>n</i> = 14,737) 98.7%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 9,302) 17.6%	(<i>n</i> = 43,639) 82.4%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 15,293) 7.2%	(<i>n</i> = 195,691) 92.8%
White	(<i>n</i> = 3,678) 3.0%	(<i>n</i> = 117,087) 97.0%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 172) 1.1%	(<i>n</i> = 15,924) 98.9%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 9,457) 17.6%	(<i>n</i> = 44,414) 82.4%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 15,797) 7.3%	(<i>n</i> = 200,097) 92.7%
White	(<i>n</i> = 3,781) 3.1%	(<i>n</i> = 116,397) 96.9%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 212) 1.2%	(<i>n</i> = 16,878) 98.8%

Table 3.5

Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 7 Students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 11,441) 21.2%	(<i>n</i> = 42,475) 78.8%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 21,120) 10.0%	(<i>n</i> = 190,593) 90.0%
White	(<i>n</i> = 4,891) 3.9%	(<i>n</i> = 119,317) 96.1%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 272) 1.8%	(<i>n</i> = 14,732) 98.2%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 10,317) 19.3%	(<i>n</i> = 43,173) 80.7%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 19,209) 9.1%	(<i>n</i> = 191,126) 90.9%
White	(<i>n</i> = 4,853) 4.0%	(<i>n</i> = 117,363) 96.0%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 204) 1.3%	(<i>n</i> = 15,452) 98.7%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 10,406) 19.4%	(<i>n</i> = 43,248) 80.6%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 19,396) 9.0%	(<i>n</i> = 195,265) 91.0%
White	(<i>n</i> = 4,724) 3.9%	(<i>n</i> = 116,547) 96.1%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 209) 1.2%	(<i>n</i> = 16,557) 98.8%

Table 3.6

Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 8 Students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 11,208) 20.8%	(<i>n</i> = 42,684) 79.2%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 21,450) 10.4%	(<i>n</i> = 185,404) 89.6%
White	(<i>n</i> = 5,766) 4.6%	(<i>n</i> = 120,071) 95.4%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 256) 1.8%	(<i>n</i> = 14,353) 98.2%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 10,706) 19.7%	(<i>n</i> = 43,680) 80.3%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 20,849) 9.7%	(<i>n</i> = 193,136) 90.3%
White	(<i>n</i> = 5,475) 4.4%	(<i>n</i> = 119,491) 95.6%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 223) 1.4%	(<i>n</i> = 15,411) 98.6%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 10,478) 19.5%	(<i>n</i> = 43,339) 80.5%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 20,551) 9.6%	(<i>n</i> = 193,256) 90.4%
White	(<i>n</i> = 5,316) 4.3%	(<i>n</i> = 117,068) 95.7%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 218) 1.3%	(<i>n</i> = 15,970) 98.7%

Table 3.7

*Summary of Effect Sizes for In-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for**Grade 6-8 Students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

Grade Level and School Year	Cramer's V	Effect Size Range	Highest ISS Rate
Grade 6			
2013-2014	.16	Small	Black students
2014-2015	.16	Small	Black students
2015-2016	.15	Small	Black students
Grade 7			
2013-2014	.17	Small	Black students
2014-2015	.16	Small	Black students
2015-2016	.16	Small	Black students
Grade 8			
2013-2014	.16	Small	Black students
2014-2015	.15	Small	Black students
2015-2016	.15	Small	Black students

Table 3.8

Summary of Effect Sizes for Out-of-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 6-8 Students in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

Grade Level and School Year	Cramer's V	Effect Size Range	Highest OSS Rate
Grade 6			
2013-2014	.19	Small	Black students
2014-2015	.18	Small	Black students
2015-2016	.18	Small	Black students
Grade 7			
2013-2014	.19	Small	Black students
2014-2015	.17	Small	Black students
2015-2016	.18	Small	Black students
Grade 8			
2013-2014	.18	Small	Black students
2014-2015	.17	Small	Black students
2015-2016	.17	Small	Black students

CHAPTER IV

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE ASSIGNMENT

DIFFERENCES BY STUDENT ETHNICITY/RACE AND GENDER:

A TEXAS STATEWIDE INVESTIGATION

This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

Abstract

Examined in this study was the extent to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments to girls and to boys by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian). Statewide data were obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System on all middle school students for the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. For all three school years, inferential statistical procedures yielded statistically significant differences. Black boys and Black girls received statistically significantly higher rates of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension than Hispanic, White, and Asian boys and girls. Hispanic boys and Hispanic girls received statistically significantly higher rates of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension than White and Asian boys and girls. Implications are discussed and suggestions for policy and practice are made.

Keywords: Student Ethnicity/Race, Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, Boys, Girls

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE ASSIGNMENT
DIFFERENCES BY STUDENT ETHNICITY/RACE AND GENDER:
A TEXAS STATEWIDE INVESTIGATION

Racial/ethnic disparities have been in the forefront of current news and social media (CNN, 2016). The disparate treatment and subsequent death of Black boys (e.g., Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Cameron Tillman) at the hands of public service officers has become a too familiar occurrence. Similar concerns are present in national public school discipline. The disparate treatment of Black and Hispanic students in public schools has been televised nationally (Ford, 2016; Stelloh & Connor, 2015). As such, school discipline is a topic that consistently captivates public attention in the United States.

During the fall semester of the 2015-2016 school year, a Black, SC high school girl was body slammed from her desk in the classroom, by a White police officer (Stelloh & Connor, 2015). Before the unrest from this nationally televised event could settle, during the same school year, another incident occurred. In San Antonio, TX, a middle school Hispanic girl was body-slammed from her desk in the classroom, by a White police officer (Ford, 2016). Undetermined from the videos was the antecedent to both incidents, but in sharp scrutiny was the violent classroom removal of Black and Hispanic girls who were seated in a public learning environment.

The disparate assignment of discipline consequences to Black and Hispanic boys and girls is a nationwide phenomenon. The National Center for Education Statistics (2016b) documented disparities in school suspension and expulsion rates between Black, Hispanic, and White students. Among the four major racial/ethnic groups in the United

States, 36% of Black students were suspended or expelled, a rate higher than any other racial/ethnic group. Of the remaining racial/ethnic groups, 21% of Hispanic students, 14% of White students, and 6% of Asian students have been suspended or expelled from school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016b). The trend of Black and Hispanic students receiving a disproportionate amount of disciplinary consequences in comparison to their Asian and White peers has been established for over four decades (Khan & Slate, 2016). Numerous researchers (e.g., Kupchik & Ellis, 2008; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Mendez et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 2011) have also conducted studies regarding discipline inequities between Black, White, and Hispanic students. In spite of the high rate of documented discipline disparities, more frequent or more serious misbehaviors of Black and Hispanic students, in comparison to their Asian and White peers, have not been documented (U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Regarding discipline inequities in the state of interest for this article, Texas, Barnes and Slate (2016) documented inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences as early as Grade 4 in Texas public schools. Black students received the most in-school suspensions and the most out-of-school suspensions, in comparison to their White and Hispanic peers. Regarding in-school suspensions, Black students received 40%, Hispanic students received 26%, and White students received 34% of the total 2,679 suspensions assigned to Texas Grade 4 students (Barnes & Slate, 2016). A total of 480 out-of-school suspensions were assigned to Texas Grade 4 students. Black students received 61%, Hispanic students received 38%, and White students received

only 1% of the out-of-school suspensions assigned to Texas Grade 4 students (Barnes & Slate, 2016).

Barnes and Slate (2016) also identified discipline inequities in Texas for Grade 5 students. Texas Grade 5 students received a total of 9,862 in-school suspensions (Barnes & Slate, 2016). Of those 9,862 suspensions, 38% were assigned to Black students; 40% were assigned to Hispanic students, and 22% were assigned to White students (Barnes & Slate, 2016). Similar to the trend in Grade 4, Black students received the highest percentage of out-of-school suspension assignments in Grade 5. Black students received 64% of the out-of-school suspensions that were assigned, Hispanic students received 31% of the out-of-school suspensions that were assigned, and White students received 5% of out-of-school suspensions that were assigned (Barnes & Slate, 2016).

With respect to gender, several researchers (e.g., Barnes & Slate, 2016; Curtiss & Slate, 2015; Demanet et al., 2013; Witmer & Johansson, 2015) have analyzed and established the presence of discipline disparities. The National Center for Education Statistics (2016b) documented the presence of disparities in school suspension and expulsion rates between boys and girls. The rates of suspensions and expulsions for boys are twice the rates of suspensions and expulsions for girls. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2016b), 26% of boys and 13% of girls have been suspended or expelled from school.

In similar studies conducted in Texas, Curtiss and Slate (2015) and Barnes and Slate (2016) analyzed and identified discipline inequities, with respect to gender for elementary school students. Of the 2,679 in-school suspensions assigned to Texas Grade 4 students, 96% were assigned to boys and 4% were assigned to girls (Barnes & Slate,

2016; Curtiss & Slate, 2015). Regarding out-of-school suspensions, 480 out-of-school suspensions were assigned to Texas Grade 4 students, of which again, 96% were received by boys and 4% were received by girls (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Curtiss & Slate, 2015).

Regarding the disproportionate assignment of discipline consequences, as a function of gender for Texas Grade 5 students, Barnes and Slate (2016) and Curtiss and Slate (2015) documented similar disparities. Concerning in-school suspension rates, boys received 88% and girls received 12% of the 9,862 consequences assigned in Grade 5. With respect to out-of-school suspension, 1,575 were assigned to Grade 5 students, of which boys received 90% of assignments and girls received 10% of assignments (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Curtiss & Slate, 2015).

In a recent study conducted by Slate, Gray, and Jones (2016), statistically significant inequities were identified in the assignment of discipline consequences, specifically to Black girls in Grades 4 through Grade 11. Grade 4 Black girls received four times as many out-of-school suspensions as White girls. In their investigation, Hispanic girls in Grade 4 did not receive any out-of-school suspensions (Slate et al., 2016). Regarding Grade 5 students, Black girls received almost twice as many out-of-school suspensions as Hispanic girls, and more than three times as many out-of-school suspensions as White girls.

At the secondary level, the trend of Black girls receiving higher percentages of out-of-school suspension continued. Specifically, in Grade 6, 2,050 out-of-school suspensions were assigned to Black girls, 2,181 out-of-school suspensions were assigned to Hispanic girls, and 23 out-of-school suspensions were assigned to White girls (Slate et al., 2016). Concerning Grade 7, Black girls again received the highest percentage

(25.5%) of out-of-school suspensions, followed by Hispanic girls (17.3%). Of note here is that White girls (0.4%) received almost six times fewer out-of-school suspensions (Slate et al., 2016) than either Hispanic or Black girls. Grade 8 out-of-school suspension rates were comparable to rates in Grade 7. Black girls received the highest percentage (24.4%) of out-of-school suspensions, followed by Hispanic girls (16.6%), and then by White girls (2.8%), who again received almost six times fewer assignments (Slate et al., 2016).

Inequitable practices in schools, specifically disparate discipline practices, negatively influence pre-existing achievement gaps (Reardon, 2013). Students who receive exclusionary discipline consequences transition in and out of traditional school settings and, as a result, experience disruptions to learning and typically receive education services in placement facilities that are not comparable to their local schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016a). Exclusionary discipline practices, such as suspension, expulsion, and alternative placement increase the likelihood that Black boys will drop of school, as well as increase the flow of Black boys through the School-to-Prison Pipeline (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Boneshefski & Runge, 2014).

The School-to-Prison Pipeline has been identified as a by-product of decisions made during the Reagan Administration. The Reagan Administration's call to action during the war on drugs led to a nationwide implementation of zero tolerance policies in public schools (Mallet, 2016). Zero tolerance policies established mandatory suspensions and expulsions for a wide range of student offenses. Students would be suspended or expelled for nonviolent infractions such as truancy, obscene language, and disobedience,

as well as violent behaviors, such as assault, fighting, and destruction of school property (Mallet, 2016; Wilson, 2014).

Many schools, most of which were impoverished schools that Black and Hispanic students attended, implemented prison-like practices in effort to maintain safety. As a result, millions of Black and Hispanic students became mired in this punitive system (Wilson, 2014). This education removal of students through exclusionary discipline encourages entrance into the criminal justice system. This criminalization of youth is referred to as the School-to-Prison Pipeline (Mallet, 2016; Wilson, 2014).

Black boys comprise the vast majority of the School-to-Prison Pipeline population. The disproportionate number of Black boys who receive disciplinary consequences is a large contributor to the overrepresentation of Black boys in the national School-to-Prison Pipeline population (Khan & Slate, 2016; Lopez, 2015). The overflow of Black boys through the School-to-Prison Pipeline line can be attributed to the mandatory exclusion established by zero tolerance policies. Zero tolerance policies do not offer opportunities for rehabilitation or learning alternate behaviors, but instead exclude Black boys from school and provide no opportunities for learning to change undesirable behaviors (Lopez, 2015). This exclusion from school and loss of learning opportunities, coupled with the economic disadvantages that surround many Black boys leads to increased levels of unacceptable criminal activity and the mass incarceration of young men of color, who initially posed little or no threat of harm to schools and communities (Lopez, 2015; Mallet, 2016; Wilson, 2014). The implementation of zero tolerance policies has consequently made the chances of Black boys facing criminal

involvement more likely than the chance of attaining a quality education (Mallet, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

Black and Hispanic boys and girls have been assigned exclusionary discipline consequences, such as suspension and expulsion, substantially more often than their Asian and White peers. Documented disparities in the assignment of discipline consequences of gender by ethnicity/race negatively affect the academic performance of Black and Hispanic students (Vincent, Frank, Hawken, & Tobin, 2012). Suspension has become a standard disciplinary practice (Wilson, 2014). However, a number of researchers (e.g., Brown, 2007; Chin et al., 2012; U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education, 2014) have indicated that suspensions are counterproductive for students with behavioral issues and result in lost time for academic instruction. Exclusionary discipline consequences, such as suspension have also been linked to poor student performance, which will expand the ever present achievement gap between Black and Hispanic students, in comparison to their Asian and White peers. Monitoring discipline practices to ensure that discipline consequences are assigned in an equitable and nondiscriminatory manner (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014) is paramount in the quest to provide equitable learning opportunities to all students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments by student gender within each of four major ethnic/racial groups (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian). These discipline consequences were analyzed separately for the 2013-2014 through the 2015-2016 school

years. This multi-year analysis was conducted for students enrolled in Grades 6, 7, and 8. Data were analyzed for trends in the differential assignment of discipline consequences by student gender within the four major ethnic/racial groups.

Significance of the Study

An array of legislation, such as *Brown v. Board Education* (1955), the Civil Rights Act (Public Law 88-352, 1964), Title IX of the Education Amendment (Public Law 92-318, 1972), No Child Left Behind Act (Public Law 107-110, 2001), *Race to the Top*, and the Every Student Succeeds Act (Bill Number S.1177, 2015), have been designed with the intent of making education opportunities equal for all public school students. The administrations of Presidents Reagan, Bush (George H. W.), Clinton, Bush (George W.) and Obama each realized this need and implemented policies/initiatives to equalize educational opportunities for public school students, regardless of their gender and ethnicity/race. To date, public school staff and administrators continue to struggle with gender equality and race relations. Results from the data analysis of this study may add to the pre-existing body of literature of the presence of inequities in discipline consequences. Moreover, findings from this multiyear investigation may be used to support the need for substantial changes in discipline methods used in Texas.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) What is the difference in disciplinary consequence assignment (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension) by gender within four major ethnic/racial groups (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) for Grade 6 students?; (b) What is the difference in disciplinary consequence assignment (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school

suspension) by gender within four major ethnic/racial groups for Grade 7 students?; (c) What is the difference in disciplinary consequence assignment (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension) by gender within four major ethnic/racial groups for Grade 8 students?; and (d) What trends, if any, are present in disciplinary consequence assignment by student gender and ethnicity/race?

Method

Research Design

A non-experimental, causal comparative research design was used in this study (Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Outcomes have already occurred in causal-comparative research, therefore independent variables cannot be manipulated (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The data that were used in this study constituted archival data from past events (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). As such, the independent variable in this study was student ethnicity/race, with separate analyses conducted for boys and for girls. Discipline consequence assignments, specifically in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension, for the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years in the State of Texas served as the dependent variables.

Participants and Instrumentation

During a Basic Statistics course at Sam Houston State University, a Public Information Request form was submitted to the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System to obtain the data required to answer the research questions. Archival data requested and obtained to answer the research questions have not yet been analyzed. The data included all Texas middle school students who received a discipline consequence during the 2013-2014 through the 2015-

2016 school years. Specific data that were analyzed were: (a) student ethnicity/race, (b) student gender, (c) grade level, and (d) discipline consequence assigned. Because the data had been audited by the Texas Education Agency, an assumption of minimal errors existed. For this study, only the two major discipline consequences were analyzed.

Major discipline consequences were in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension. In-school suspension is an initial disciplinary consequence that results in the removal of a student from the regular classroom by placing the student into a separate classroom (Texas Education Agency, 2010). The consequence of out-of-school suspension is defined as the removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary consequence that does not allow the student to attend school for a day and to not exceed three days in a row (Texas Education Agency, 2010).

Results

For each research question, regarding the extent to which differences were present in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by student ethnicity/race for boys and girls, Pearson chi-square procedures were calculated. Frequency data were present for the categorical variables: ethnicity/race gender, and discipline consequence assignment. As such, the Pearson chi-square statistical procedure was viewed as the optimal statistical procedure to use. With the large sample size, the available sample size per cell was more than five (Field, 2013). Results will now be provided, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year and with Grade 6 boys and ending with the 2015-2016 school year and with Grade 8 girls.

Grade 6 In-School Suspension Results for Boys

Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 5428.39, p < .001$, to Grade 6 boys. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black boys were assigned an in-school suspension almost six times more often than Asian boys, two times more often than White boys, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic boys. Hispanic boys were assigned an in-school suspension three times more often than Asian boys and more than one time more often than White boys. As revealed in Table 4.1, a stair-step effect was apparent in the results (Carpenter, Ramirez, & Severn, 2006).

 Insert Table 4.1 about here

With respect to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 5540.28, p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race to Grade 6 boys. The Cramer's V was .16, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black boys were assigned an in-school suspension more than six and half times more often than Asian boys, two times more often than White boys, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic boys. Hispanic boys were assigned an in-school suspension more than three and one half times more often than Asian boys and almost one and one half times more often than White boys. Again, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. Delineated in Table 4.1 are the descriptive statistics for the 2014-2015 school year.

Regarding the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was again present, $\chi^2(2) = 4947.45, p < .001$. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black boys were assigned an in-school suspension more than five and one half times more often than Asian boys, two times more often than White boys, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic boys. Hispanic boys were assigned an in-school suspension more than three times more often than Asian boys and more than one time more often than White boys. Similar to the previous two years' results, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. Table 4.1 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016 school year.

Grade 7 In-School Suspension Results for Boys

With regard to the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 5961.41, p < .001$, to Grade 7 boys by their ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V or effect size was .17, small (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black boys were assigned to an in-school suspension more than six times more often than Asian boys, two times more often than White boys, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic boys. Grade 7 Hispanic boys were assigned an in-school suspension more than three and one half times more often than Asian boys and almost one and one half times more often than White boys. A stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was clearly evident in these results. The descriptive statistics for the 2013-2014 school year are presented in Table 4.2.

Insert Table 4.2 about here

For the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 5253.60, p < .001$. The Cramer's V was .16, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black boys were assigned an in-school suspension more than six times more often than Asian boys, two times more often than White boys, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic boys. Hispanic boys in Grade 7 were assigned an in-school suspension almost four times more often than Asian boys and more than one time more often than White boys. Evident in these results was the presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). Table 4.2 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2014-2015 school year.

In the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was again revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 5219.62, p < .001$. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black boys were assigned an in-school suspension more than six and one half times more often than Asian boys, two times more often than White boys, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic boys. Grade 7 Hispanic boys were assigned an in-school suspension almost four times more often than Asian boys and more than one time more often than White boys. Similar to the other two school years for Grade 7 students, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was clearly evident. Revealed in Table 4.2 are the descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016 school year.

Grade 8 In-School Suspension Results for Boys

Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 5030.84 p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race to Grade 8 boys. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black boys were assigned an in-school suspension more than five times

more often than Asian boys, two times more often than White boys, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic boys. Grade 8 Hispanic boys were assigned an in-school suspension more than three times more often than Asian boys and more than one time more often than White boys. Evident in these results was the presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). Table 4.3 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2013-2014 school year.

Insert Table 4.3 about here

For the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 4932.58, p < .001$. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black boys were assigned an in-school suspension more than five and one half times more often than Asian boys, two times more often than White boys, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic boys. Grade 8 Hispanic boys were assigned an in-school suspension more than three and one half times more often than Asian boys and more than one time more often than White boys. The presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was evident. Delineated in Table 4.3 are the descriptive statistics for the 2014-2015 school year.

In the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was again yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 4586.22, p < .001$. The Cramer's V was .15, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black boys were assigned an in-school suspension almost six times more often than Asian boys, almost two times more often than White boys, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic boys. Hispanic boys were assigned an in-

school suspension more than three and one half times more than Asian boys and more than one time more often than White boys. Evident in these results was the presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). Contained in Table 4.3 are the descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016 school year.

Trends for In-School Suspension Results for Boys

Consistent across the three years of data for the three different grade levels was the clear presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) in the assignment of in-school suspension to boys by their ethnicity/race. Black boys in all three grade levels in all three school years received an out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than did Asian, White, and Hispanic boys. Similarly, Hispanic boys in all three grade levels for all three school years were assigned an in-school suspension statistically significantly more often than Asian and White boys.

Grade 6 In-School Suspension Results for Girls

Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 5289.93, p < .001$, to Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .17 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black girls were assigned an in-school suspension 16 times more often than Asian girls, almost eight times more often than White girls, and nearly two times more often than Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned an in-school suspension eight times more often than Asian girls and nearly two times more often than White girls. Revealed in Table 4.4 is a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006).

Insert Table 4.4 about here

For the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was again yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 4699.56, p < .001$. The Cramer's V was .16, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black girls were assigned an in-school suspension more than 14 and one half times more often than Asian girls, more than three and one half times more often than White girls, and two times more than Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned an in-school suspension more than seven times more often than Asian girls and more than one and one half times more often than White girls. Again, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. Delineated in Table 4.4 are the descriptive statistics for the 2014-2015 school year.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was again revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 4520.78, p < .001$. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black girls were assigned an in-school suspension 13 times more often than Asian girls, three and one half times more often than White girls, and nearly two times more often than Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned an in-school suspension more than six and one half times more often than Asian girls and more than one and one half times more often than White girls. Similar to the previous two years' results, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. Table 4.4 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016 school year.

Grade 7 In-School Suspension Results for Girls

With regard to the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 5724.25, p < .001$, to Grade 7 girls by their ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V or effect size was .17, small (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension nearly 12 times more than Asian girls, three times more often than White girls, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned an in-school suspension almost seven times more often than Asian girls and nearly two times more often than White girls. A stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was clearly evident. Delineated in Table 4.5 are the descriptive statistics for the 2013-2014 school year.

Insert Table 4.5 about here

For the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was again yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 5428.47, p < .001$. The Cramer's V was .17, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls were assigned an in-school suspension more than 15 and one half times more often than Asian girls, three times more often than White girls, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls in Grade 7 were assigned an in-school suspension nearly nine times more often than Asian girls and almost two times more often than White girls. Evident in these results was the presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). The descriptive statistics for the 2014-2015 school year are presented in Table 4.5.

In the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was again revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 4976.23, p < .001$. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls were assigned an in-school suspension nearly 14 times more often than Asian girls, three times more often than White girls, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned an in-school suspension more than seven and one half times more often than Asian girls and nearly two times more often than White girls. Similar to the other two school years for Grade 7 girls, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was clearly evident. Table 4.5 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016 school year.

Grade 8 In-School Suspension Results for Girls

Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 5192.33 p < .001$, by student ethnicity/race to Grade 8 girls. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls were assigned an in-school suspension 10 times more often than Asian girls, three times more often than White girls, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned an in-school suspension six times more often than Asian girls and more than one and half times more often than White girls. Evident in these results was the presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). Presented in Table 4.6 are the descriptive statistics for the 2013-2014 school year.

Insert Table 4.6 about here

For the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was again revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 4431.58, p < .001$. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls were assigned an in-school suspension nearly 12 times more often than Asian girls, almost three times more often than White girls, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned an in-school suspension seven times more often than Asian girls and more than one and one half times more often than White girls. The presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was again clearly evident. Table 4.6 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2014-2015 school year.

In the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was again revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 4500.43, p < .001$. The Cramer's V was .15, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls were assigned an in-school suspension 13 times more than Asian girls, almost three times more often than White girls, and more than one and one half times more often than Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned an in-school suspension seven and one half times more than Asian girls and more than one and one half times more often than White girls. Evident in these results was the presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006). Contained in Table 4.6 are the descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016 school year.

Trends for In-School Suspension Results for Girls

Regarding the assignment of in-school suspension, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was clearly established across all three years of data and for all three grade levels with respect to student ethnicity/race. In all instances, Black girls received an in-school suspension statistically significantly more often than did Asian, White, and

Hispanic girls. Moreover, Hispanic girls in all three grade levels for all three school years were assigned an in-school suspension statistically significantly more often than Asian and White girls.

Grade 6 Out-of-School Suspension Results for Boys

With regard to the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 8084.07, p < .001$, to Grade 6 boys by their ethnicity/race. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .20 (Cohen, 1988). As shown in Table 4.7, Grade 6 Black boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension 11 times more often than Asian boys, more than four and one half times more often than White boys, and two times more often than Hispanic boys. Hispanic boys were assigned out-of-school suspension nearly five times more often than Asian boys and twice as often as White boys. As such, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present.

 Insert Table 4.7 about here

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was again revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 7749.08, p < .001$. The Cramer's V was .19, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than 12 and one half times more often than Asian boys, almost five times more often than White boys, and two times more often than Hispanic boys. Hispanic boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension five and one half times more often than Asian boys and twice as often as White boys. As such, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was

present. Delineated in Table 4.7 are the descriptive statistics for the 2014-2015 school year.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was again revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 7572.77, p < .001$. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .19 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension almost 11 and one half times more often than Asian boys, more than four and half times more often than White boys, and two times more often than Hispanic boys. Hispanic boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension nearly five times more often than Asian boys and twice as often as White boys. Congruent with the previous two school year results, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. The descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016 school year are revealed in Table 4.7.

Grade 7 Out-of-School Suspension Results for Boys

With respect to the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 8173.41, p < .001$, to Grade 7 boys by their ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V was .20, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than nine and one half times more often than Asian boys, four and half times more often than White boys, and two times more often than Hispanic boys. Grade 7 Hispanic boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than four and one half times more often than Asian boys and two times more often than White boys. Table 4.8 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2013-2014 school year.

Insert Table 4.8 about here

For the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was again yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 6883.41, p < .001$. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .18 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than 11 times more often than Asian boys, four times more often than White boys, and two times more often than Hispanic boys. Hispanic boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than five and one half times more often than Asian boys and two times more often than White boys. As such, a stair-step effect was present (Carpenter et al., 2006). Table 4.8 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2014-2015 school year.

Concerning the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was again revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 7289.16, p < .001$. The Cramer's V was .19, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than 12 and one half times more often than Asian boys, more than four times more often than White boys, and two times more often than Hispanic boys. Hispanic boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension six times more often than Asian boys and two times more often than White boys. Congruent with the previous two school year results for Grade 7 boys, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. Revealed in Table 4.8 are the descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016 school year.

Grade 8 Out-of-School Suspension Results for Boys

Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 6885.56 p < .001$, to Grade 8 boys by their ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V effect size, .18 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension nine times more often than Asian boys, almost four times more often than White boys, and nearly two times more often

than Hispanic boys. Hispanic boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension almost five times more often than Asian boys and two times more often than White boys. A stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. Table 4.9 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2013-2014 school year.

Insert Table 4.9 about here

With regard to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was again revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 6713.50, p < .001$. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .18 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than 11 times more often than Asian boys, almost four times more often than White boys, and nearly two times more often than Hispanic boys. Hispanic boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension nearly six times more often than Asian boys and two times more often than White boys. A stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. Delineated in Table 4.9 are the descriptive statistics for the 2014-2015 school year.

For the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was again revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 6230.83, p < .001$. The Cramer's V was .17, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension 11 and one half times more often than Asian boys, more than three and one half times more often than White boys, and nearly two times more often than Hispanic boys. Grade 8 Hispanic boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension six times more often than Asian boys and two times more often than White boys. Congruent with the previous two school year results, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. Table 4.9 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2015 -2016 school year.

Trends for Out-of-School Suspension Results for Boys

Across the three years and across the three grade levels, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) in the assignment of out-of-school suspension to boys by their ethnicity/race was clearly established. Black boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension at rates that were statistically significantly higher than the out-of-school suspension rates for Asian boys, White boys, and Hispanic boys. Moreover, Hispanic boys were assigned an out-of-school suspension at statistically significantly higher rates than both Asian and White boys. These results were commensurate across all three grade levels and across all three school years.

Grade 6 Out-of-School Suspension Results for Girls

Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 5795.16, p < .001$, to Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V was .17, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than 33 and one half times more often than Asian girls, more than nine and one half times more often than White girls, and more than two and one half times more often than Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension 13 times more often than Asian girls and more than three and one half times more often than White girls. As such, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. Delineated in Table 4.10 are the descriptive statistics for the 2013-2014 school year.

Insert Table 4.10 about here

With regard to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was again present, $\chi^2(2) = 5243.82, p < .001$. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .16(Cohen, 1988). As shown in Table 4.10, Grade 6 Black girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than 39 and one half times more often than Asian girls, nearly 10 times more often than White girls, and more than two and one half times more often than Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned out-of-school suspension 15 times more often than Asian girls and more than three and one half times more often than White girls. As such, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was again yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 7572.77, p < .001$. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension almost 24 times more often than Asian girls, 10 times more often than White girls, and almost four times more often than Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension nine times more often than Asian girls and almost four times more than White girls. Congruent with the previous two school year results, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. The descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016 school year are revealed in Table 4.10.

Grade 7 Out-of-School Suspension Results for Girls

With respect to the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 6466.76, p < .001$, to Grade 7 girls by their ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V was .18, small (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension 18 times more often than Asian girls, eight times more often than White girls, and two times more often than

Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension eight times more often than Asian girls and more than three and one half times more than White girls. Presented in Table 4.11 are the descriptive statistics for the 2013-2014 school year.

Insert Table 4.11 about here

For the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was again yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 5562.04, p < .001$. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .17 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension 36 and one half times more often than Asian girls, more than seven times more often than White girls, and two times more often than Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than 16 times more often than Asian girls and more than three times more often than White girls. As such, a stair-step effect was present (Carpenter et al., 2006). Table 4.11 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2014-2015 school year.

Concerning the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was again revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 5525.36, p < .001$. The Cramer's V was .17, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension 24 and one half times more than Asian girls, seven times more often than White girls, and more than two times more often than Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension 11 times more often than Asian girls and three times more often than White girls. Congruent with the previous two school year results for Grade 7 girls, a

stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. Table 4.11 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016 school year.

Grade 8 Out-of-School Suspension Results for Girls

Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 5888.40$ $p < .001$, to Grade 8 girls by their ethnicity/race. The Cramer's V, effect size, was small, .17(Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than 20 and one half times more often than Asian girls, more than six times more often than White girls, and two times more often than Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension nine and one half times more often than Asian girls and nearly three times more often than White girls. A stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. Revealed in Table 4.12 are the descriptive statistics for the 2013-2014 school year.

 Insert Table 4.12 about here

With regard to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was again revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 5425.08$, $p < .001$. The effect size, Cramer's V, was small, .17 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension nearly 22 times more often than Asian girls, six times more often than White girls, and two times more often than Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension 10 times more often than Asian girls and almost three times more often than White girls. A stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. Table 4.9 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2014-2015 school year.

Regarding the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was again yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 5724.45, p < .001$. The Cramer's V was .17, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension 26 times more often than Asian girls, six and one half times more often than White girls, and more than two times more often than Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned out-of-school suspension 11 and one half times more often than Asian girls and almost three times more often than White girls. Congruent with the previous two school year results, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present. Table 4.12 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016 school year.

Trends for Out-of-School Suspension Results for Girls

Established across the three years of data and across the three grade levels was a clear stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) in the assignment of out-of-school suspension to girls by their ethnicity/race. Black girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension at rates that were statistically significantly higher than the out-of-school suspension rates for Asian girls, White girls, and Hispanic girls. Moreover, Hispanic girls were assigned an out-of-school suspension at statistically significantly higher rates than both Asian and White girls. These results were commensurate across all three grade levels and across all three school years.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Based upon the statistically significant disparities that were documented herein, several implications for policy and for practice can be made. Educational leaders are encouraged to conduct an analysis of their school discipline programs to determine the extent to which student ethnicity/race in their schools and districts is related to discipline

consequence assignment. Audit findings can be used to implement necessary discipline program changes. School district leaders are also urged to hire diversified faculty and staff members at all levels, as well as provide professional development focused on multicultural awareness for all district and campus faculty and staff.

Codes of conduct should also be reviewed and revised, in an effort to decrease the flow of Black and Hispanic boys and girls through the School-to-Prison pipeline. Codes of conduct with outlined consequences for discipline violations should be created. This code of conduct revision would decrease administrator subjectivity and allow for a systematic assignment of consequences contingent upon the infraction and not student ethnicity/race. Another suggestion would be for school campus leaders to conduct periodic analysis of discipline data. Educator awareness of campus and school district discipline data trends could create the opportunity for necessary intervention and ongoing support for teachers and administrators. Determining the underlying reasons for the inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences by student ethnicity/race is a final implication for policy and practice.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this study, the relationship between student ethnicity/race and the assignment of discipline consequences, specifically in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension, to boys and to girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8 was examined. Future researchers could extend this study by analyzing in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension data for boys and for girls in both elementary and high schools. Because data on only middle school students were analyzed herein, extending the analysis to students at the elementary school level and at the high school level would help determine if results

generalize to students in other grade levels. In addition, researchers are recommended to extend this investigation to other states. The degree to which the inequities delineated herein are generalizable to students in other states is unknown.

Researchers are encouraged to examine discipline consequences as a function of other student characteristics such as English Language Learner, student level of poverty, at-risk students, gender, and gender within ethnic/racial groups. Moreover, research should be conducted to determine if inequities exist in the assignment of Discipline Alternative Education Placement, Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Placement, and expulsion. A final recommendation for future research would be to analyze the reasons why students are assigned a discipline consequence. To what degree are discipline consequences assigned differentially to students based upon their ethnicity/race more than on the actual student misbehavior?

Conclusion

This multiyear, statewide analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments for boys and for girls, as a function of student ethnicity/race in Texas middle schools for three school years. Statistically significant differences in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension as a function of student ethnicity/race were yielded for both boys and girls by their ethnicity/race. For all three school years, Black boys were assigned to both in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than Asian, White, and Hispanic boys. Moreover, Hispanic boys were assigned to both in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than Asian and White grade level boys. With respect to gender, in all three school

years, Black girls were also assigned to both in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than Asian, White, and Hispanic girls. Furthermore, Hispanic girls were also assigned to both in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than Asian and White girls. Of note in this study was the presence of a consistent stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension to boys and to girls by their ethnicity/race. As such, these inequities may constitute violations of these students' civil rights.

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Table 4.1

Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 6 Boys in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 9,879) 36.5%	(<i>n</i> = 17,216) 63.5%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 22,495) 21.3%	(<i>n</i> = 82,996) 78.7%
White	(<i>n</i> = 10,573) 16.9%	(<i>n</i> = 51,946) 83.1%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 478) 6.3%	(<i>n</i> = 7,115) 93.7%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 9,630) 35.4%	(<i>n</i> = 17,566) 64.6%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 21,732) 20.1%	(<i>n</i> = 86,287) 79.9%
White	(<i>n</i> = 10,180) 16.4%	(<i>n</i> = 52,051) 83.6%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 443) 5.4%	(<i>n</i> = 7,770) 94.6%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 9,381) 34.1%	(<i>n</i> = 18,156) 65.9%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 21,477) 19.5%	(<i>n</i> = 88,805) 80.5%
White	(<i>n</i> = 10,353) 16.7%	(<i>n</i> = 51,766) 83.3%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 510) 5.9%	(<i>n</i> = 8,206) 94.1%

Table 4.2

Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 7 Boys in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 10,703) 38.5%	(<i>n</i> = 17,113) 61.5%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 25,479) 23.5%	(<i>n</i> = 83,044) 76.5%
White	(<i>n</i> = 11,389) 17.8%	(<i>n</i> = 52,686) 82.2%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 480) 6.3%	(<i>n</i> = 7,192) 93.7%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 10,004) 36.2%	(<i>n</i> = 17,664) 63.8%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 23,997) 22.3%	(<i>n</i> = 83,784) 77.7%
White	(<i>n</i> = 10,974) 17.4%	(<i>n</i> = 52,064) 82.6%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 454) 5.7%	(<i>n</i> = 7,549) 94.3%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 9,789) 35.4%	(<i>n</i> = 17,871) 64.6%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 23,408) 21.3%	(<i>n</i> = 86,415) 78.7%
White	(<i>n</i> = 10,353) 16.7%	(<i>n</i> = 51,814) 82.9%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 461) 5.4%	(<i>n</i> = 8,111) 94.6%

Table 4.3

Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 8 Boys in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 10,328) 37.2%	(<i>n</i> = 17,442) 62.8%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 24,814) 23.4%	(<i>n</i> = 81,193) 76.6%
White	(<i>n</i> = 11,856) 18.3%	(<i>n</i> = 52,870) 81.7%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 520) 7.0%	(<i>n</i> = 6,908) 93.0%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 10,059) 36.0%	(<i>n</i> = 17,913) 64.0%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 24,393) 22.3%	(<i>n</i> = 84,878) 77.7%
White	(<i>n</i> = 11,525) 17.9%	(<i>n</i> = 52,735) 82.1%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 498) 6.2%	(<i>n</i> = 7,514) 93.8%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 9,518) 34.3%	(<i>n</i> = 18,256) 65.7%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 23,695) 21.6%	(<i>n</i> = 85,886) 78.4%
White	(<i>n</i> = 10,863) 17.2%	(<i>n</i> = 52,241) 82.8%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 483) 5.9%	(<i>n</i> = 7,760) 94.1%

Table 4.4

Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 6 Girls in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 5,371) 21.2%	(<i>n</i> = 20,006) 78.8%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 10,710) 10.7%	(<i>n</i> = 89,375) 89.3%
White	(<i>n</i> = 3,330) 5.7%	(<i>n</i> = 55,222) 94.3%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 99) 1.3%	(<i>n</i> = 7,241) 98.7%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 4,944) 19.2%	(<i>n</i> = 20,801) 80.8%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 9,926) 9.6%	(<i>n</i> = 93,039) 90.4%
White	(<i>n</i> = 3,126) 5.3%	(<i>n</i> = 55,408) 94.7%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 105) 1.3%	(<i>n</i> = 7,778) 98.7%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 4,901) 18.6%	(<i>n</i> = 21,433) 81.4%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 9,991) 9.5%	(<i>n</i> = 95,621) 90.5%
White	(<i>n</i> = 3,067) 5.3%	(<i>n</i> = 54,992) 94.7%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 114) 1.4%	(<i>n</i> = 8,260) 98.6%

Table 4.5

Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 7 Girls in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 6,503) 24.9%	(<i>n</i> = 19,597) 75.1%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 14,799) 14.3%	(<i>n</i> = 88,391) 85.7%
White	(<i>n</i> = 4,524) 7.5%	(<i>n</i> = 55,609) 92.5%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 153) 2.1%	(<i>n</i> = 7,179) 97.9%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 6,051) 23.4%	(<i>n</i> = 19,771) 76.6%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 13,496) 13.2%	(<i>n</i> = 89,058) 86.8%
White	(<i>n</i> = 4,150) 7.0%	(<i>n</i> = 55,028) 93.0%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 118) 1.5%	(<i>n</i> = 7,535) 98.5%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 5,761) 22.2%	(<i>n</i> = 20,233) 77.8%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 13,012) 12.4%	(<i>n</i> = 91,826) 87.6%
White	(<i>n</i> = 4,041) 6.9%	(<i>n</i> = 54,692) 93.1%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 128) 1.6%	(<i>n</i> = 8,066) 98.4%

Table 4.6

Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 8 Girls in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 6,520) 25.0%	(<i>n</i> = 19,602) 75.0%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 14,914) 14.8%	(<i>n</i> = 85,933) 85.2%
White	(<i>n</i> = 5,073) 8.3%	(<i>n</i> = 56,038) 91.7%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 174) 2.4%	(<i>n</i> = 7,007) 97.6%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 5,995) 22.7%	(<i>n</i> = 20,419) 77.3%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 14,318) 13.7%	(<i>n</i> = 90,396) 86.3%
White	(<i>n</i> = 4,909) 8.1%	(<i>n</i> = 55,797) 91.9%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 145) 1.9%	(<i>n</i> = 7,477) 98.1%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 5,744) 22.1%	(<i>n</i> = 20,299) 77.9%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 13,206) 12.7%	(<i>n</i> = 91,020) 87.3%
White	(<i>n</i> = 4,443) 7.5%	(<i>n</i> = 54,837) 92.5%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 136) 1.7%	(<i>n</i> = 7,809) 98.3%

Table 4.7

Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 6 Boys in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 6,639) 24.5%	(<i>n</i> = 20,456) 75.5%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 11,327) 10.7%	(<i>n</i> = 94,164) 89.3%
White	(<i>n</i> = 3,227) 5.2%	(<i>n</i> = 59,292) 94.8%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 168) 2.2%	(<i>n</i> = 7,425) 97.8%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 6,243) 23.0%	(<i>n</i> = 20,953) 77.0%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 10,645) 9.9%	(<i>n</i> = 97,374) 90.1%
White	(<i>n</i> = 2,974) 4.8%	(<i>n</i> = 59,257) 95.2%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 145) 1.8%	(<i>n</i> = 8,068) 98.2%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 6,296) 22.9%	(<i>n</i> = 21,241) 77.1%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 10,933) 9.9%	(<i>n</i> = 99,349) 90.1%
White	(<i>n</i> = 3,073) 4.9%	(<i>n</i> = 59,046) 95.1%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 170) 2.0%	(<i>n</i> = 8,546) 98.0%

Table 4.8

Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 7 Boys in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 7,216) 25.9%	(<i>n</i> = 20,600) 74.1%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 13,623) 12.6%	(<i>n</i> = 94,900) 87.4%
White	(<i>n</i> = 3,715) 5.8%	(<i>n</i> = 60,360) 94.2%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 206) 2.7%	(<i>n</i> = 7,466) 97.3%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 6,551) 23.7%	(<i>n</i> = 21,117) 76.3%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 12,510) 11.6%	(<i>n</i> = 95,271) 88.4%
White	(<i>n</i> = 3,682) 5.8%	(<i>n</i> = 59,356) 94.2%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 171) 2.1%	(<i>n</i> = 7,832) 97.9%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 6,576) 23.8%	(<i>n</i> = 21,084) 76.2%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 12,506) 11.4%	(<i>n</i> = 97,317) 88.6%
White	(<i>n</i> = 3,493) 5.6%	(<i>n</i> = 59,045) 94.4%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 159) 1.9%	(<i>n</i> = 8,413) 98.1%

Table 4.9

Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 8 Boys in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 6,898) 24.8%	(<i>n</i> = 20,872) 75.2%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 13,820) 13.0%	(<i>n</i> = 92,187) 87.0%
White	(<i>n</i> = 4,147) 6.4%	(<i>n</i> = 60,579) 93.6%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 197) 2.7%	(<i>n</i> = 7,231) 97.3%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 6,691) 23.9%	(<i>n</i> = 21,821) 76.1%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 13,531) 12.4%	(<i>n</i> = 95,740) 87.6%
White	(<i>n</i> = 3,984) 6.2%	(<i>n</i> = 60,276) 93.8%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 172) 2.1%	(<i>n</i> = 7,840) 97.9%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 6,398) 23.0%	(<i>n</i> = 21,376) 77.0%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 13,348) 12.2%	(<i>n</i> = 96,233) 87.8%
White	(<i>n</i> = 3,877) 6.1%	(<i>n</i> = 59,227) 93.9%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 168) 2.0%	(<i>n</i> = 8,075) 98.0%

Table 4.10

Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 6 Girls in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 3,428) 13.5%	(<i>n</i> = 21,949) 86.5%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 5,211) 5.2%	(<i>n</i> = 94,874) 94.8%
White	(<i>n</i> = 846) 1.4%	(<i>n</i> = 57,706) 98.6%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 28) 0.4%	(<i>n</i> = 7,312) 99.6%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 3,059) 11.9%	(<i>n</i> = 22,686) 88.1%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 4,648) 4.5%	(<i>n</i> = 98,317) 95.5%
White	(<i>n</i> = 704) 1.2%	(<i>n</i> = 57,830) 98.8%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 27) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 7,856) 99.7%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 3,161) 12.0%	(<i>n</i> = 23,173) 88.0%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 4,864) 4.6%	(<i>n</i> = 100,748) 95.4%
White	(<i>n</i> = 708) 1.2%	(<i>n</i> = 57,351) 98.8%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 42) 0.5%	(<i>n</i> = 8,332) 99.5%

Table 4.11

Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 7 Girls in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 4,225) 16.2%	(<i>n</i> = 21,875) 83.8%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 7,497) 7.3%	(<i>n</i> = 95,693) 92.7%
White	(<i>n</i> = 1,176) 2.0%	(<i>n</i> = 58,957) 98.0%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 66) 0.9%	(<i>n</i> = 7,266) 99.1%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 3,766) 14.6%	(<i>n</i> = 22,056) 85.4%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 6,699) 6.5%	(<i>n</i> = 95,855) 93.5%
White	(<i>n</i> = 1,171) 2.0%	(<i>n</i> = 58,007) 98.0%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 33) 0.4%	(<i>n</i> = 7,620) 99.6%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 3,830) 14.7%	(<i>n</i> = 22,164) 85.3%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 6,890) 6.6%	(<i>n</i> = 97,948) 93.4%
White	(<i>n</i> = 1,231) 2.1%	(<i>n</i> = 57,502) 97.9%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 50) 0.6%	(<i>n</i> = 8,144) 99.4%

Table 4.12

Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspension Assignment by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 8 Girls in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2013-2014		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 4,310) 16.5%	(<i>n</i> = 21,812) 83.5%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 7,630) 7.6%	(<i>n</i> = 93,217) 92.4%
White	(<i>n</i> = 1,619) 2.6%	(<i>n</i> = 59,492) 97.4%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 59) 0.8%	(<i>n</i> = 7,122) 99.2%
2014-2015		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 4,015) 15.2%	(<i>n</i> = 22,399) 84.8%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 7,318) 7.0%	(<i>n</i> = 97,396) 93.0%
White	(<i>n</i> = 1,491) 2.5%	(<i>n</i> = 59,215) 97.5%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 51) 0.7%	(<i>n</i> = 7,571) 99.3%
2015-2016		
Black	(<i>n</i> = 4,080) 15.7%	(<i>n</i> = 21,963) 84.3%
Hispanic	(<i>n</i> = 7,203) 6.9%	(<i>n</i> = 97,023) 93.1%
White	(<i>n</i> = 1,439) 2.4%	(<i>n</i> = 57,841) 97.6%
Asian	(<i>n</i> = 50) 0.6%	(<i>n</i> = 7,895) 99.4%

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments by student demographic characteristics in Texas middle schools. In the first investigation, the degree to which discipline consequence assignments differed by the degree of student economic disadvantage (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, or Extremely Poor) was ascertained. In the second study, the extent to which discipline consequence assignments differed by student ethnicity/race (i.e., Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black) was addressed. Finally, in the third investigation, the degree to which discipline consequence assignments differed by student gender within each of the four major ethnic/racial groups (i.e., Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black) in Texas was determined. The discipline consequences of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension were analyzed for three school years. As such, this multiyear analysis permitted a determination of trends in the differential assignment of discipline consequences.

Summary of Results for Study One

Evidenced in this 3-year statewide data analysis was the presence of statistically significant differences in the assignment of discipline consequences as a function of student degree of economic disadvantage. For the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, students who were Extremely Poor were assigned statistically significantly more often to in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension than were their peers who were Moderately Poor and their peers who were Not Poor. Students who were Moderately Poor were assigned to an in-school suspension and to an out-of-

school suspension statistically significantly more often than were students who were Not Poor. In all instances, students who were Not Poor were assigned statistically significantly less often to in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension than their peers who were Moderately Poor or Very Poor.

Summary of Results for Study Two

Inferential statistical analyses yielded statistically significant differences in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension to Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian students. For the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and the 2015-2016 school years, Black students were assigned to both in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than their Asian, White, and Hispanic peers. Hispanic students were also assigned to both in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than were their Asian and White grade level peers. These results were consistent for Grade 6, 7, and 8 students. In all instances, the ordering from the highest to the lowest rates of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension assignments was Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian.

Summary of Results for Study Three

Across each of the three grade levels and for the three school years, Black boys received the highest rates of in-school suspension. In-school suspension rates for Black boys ranged from 34.1% to 36.5% in Grade 6, from 35.4% to 38.5% in Grade 7, and from 34.3% to 37.2% in Grade 8. For Hispanic boys, in-school suspension rates ranged from 19.5% to 21.3% in Grade 6, from 21.3% to 23.5% in Grade 7, and from 21.6% to 23.4% in Grade 8. In comparison to these in-school suspension rates, the in-school suspension rates for White boys ranged from 16.4% to 16.9% in Grade 6, from 17.1% to 17.8% in

Grade 7, and from 17.2% to 18.3% in Grade 8. In-school suspension rates for Asian boys ranged from 5.4% to 6.3% in Grade 6, from 5.4% to 6.3% in Grade 7, and from 5.9% to 7.0% in Grade 8. Findings were in strong agreement with Carpenter et al. (2006) of the presence of a stair-step effect in the assignment of in-school suspension. Readers are directed to Table 5.1 for a summary of effect sizes for in-school suspension rates for boys by their ethnicity/race for Grade 6, 7, and 8 across the three school years.

Table 5.1

Summary of Effect Sizes for In-School Suspension by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 6-8 Boys in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

Grade Level and School Year	Cramer's V	Effect Size Range	Highest ISS Rate
Grade 6			
2013-2014	.16	Small	Black boys
2014-2015	.16	Small	Black boys
2015-2016	.15	Small	Black boys
Grade 7			
2013-2014	.17	Small	Black boys
2014-2015	.16	Small	Black boys
2015-2016	.16	Small	Black boys
Grade 8			
2013-2014	.16	Small	Black boys
2014-2015	.15	Small	Black boys
2015-2016	.15	Small	Black boys

Similar to Black boys, Black girls also received the highest rates of in-school suspension across each of the three grade levels for all three school years. In-school suspension rates for Black girls ranged from 18.6% to 21.2% in Grade 6, from 22.2% to 24.9% in Grade 7, and from 22.1% to 25.0% in Grade 8. For Hispanic girls, in-school suspension rates ranged from 9.5% to 10.7% in Grade 6, from 12.4% to 14.3% in Grade 7, and from 12.7% to 14.8% in Grade 8. In comparison to these in-school suspension rates, the in-school suspension rates for White girls ranged from 5.3% to 5.7% in Grade 6, from 6.9% to 7.5% in Grade 7, and from 7.5% to 8.1% in Grade 8. In-school suspension rates for Asian girls ranged from 1.3% to 1.4% in Grade 6, from 1.5% to 2.1% in Grade 7, and from 1.7% to 2.4% in Grade 8. Findings were in strong agreement with Carpenter et al. (2006) of the presence of a stair-step effect in the assignment of in-school suspension to girls by their ethnicity/race. Table 5.2 contains a summary of effect sizes for in-school suspension rates for girls by their ethnicity/race for Grade 6, 7, and 8 across the three school years.

Table 5.2

Summary of Effect Sizes for In-School Suspension by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 6-8 Girls in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

Grade Level and School Year	Cramer's V	Effect Size Range	Highest ISS Rate
Grade 6			
2013-2014	.17	Small	Black girls
2014-2015	.16	Small	Black girls
2015-2016	.15	Small	Black girls
Grade 7			
2013-2014	.17	Small	Black girls
2014-2015	.17	Small	Black girls
2015-2016	.16	Small	Black girls
Grade 8			
2013-2014	.16	Small	Black girls
2014-2015	.15	Small	Black girls
2015-2016	.15	Small	Black girls

Across each of the three grade levels for all three school years, Black boys also received the highest rates of out-of-school suspension. Out-of-school suspension rates for Black boys ranged from 22.9% to 24.5% in Grade 6, from 23.7% to 25.9% in Grade 7, and from 23.0% to 24.8% in Grade 8. For Hispanic boys, out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 9.9% to 10.7% in Grade 6, from 11.4% to 11.6% in Grade 7, and from 12.2% to 13.0% in Grade 8. In comparison to these out-of-school suspension rates, the

out-of-school suspension rates for White boys ranged from 4.8% to 5.2% in Grade 6, from 5.6% to 5.8% in Grade 7, and from 6.1% to 6.4% in Grade 8. Out-of-school suspension rates for Asian boys ranged from 1.8% to 2.2% in Grade 6, from 1.9% to 2.7% in Grade 7, and from 2.0% to 2.7% in Grade 8. The presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) in the assignment of out-of-school suspension to boys by their ethnicity/race was clearly established. A summary of the effect sizes for out-of-school suspension for Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys across the three school years is in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3

Summary of Effect Sizes for Out-of-School Suspension by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 6-8 Boys in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

Grade Level and School Year	Cramer's V	Effect Size Range	Highest ISS Rate
Grade 6			
2013-2014	.20	Small	Black boys
2014-2015	.19	Small	Black boys
2015-2016	.19	Small	Black boys
Grade 7			
2013-2014	.20	Small	Black boys
2014-2015	.18	Small	Black boys
2015-2016	.19	Small	Black boys
Grade 8			
2013-2014	.18	Small	Black boys
2014-2015	.18	Small	Black boys
2015-2016	.17	Small	Black boys

Similarly, Black girls also received the highest rates of out-of-school suspension across each of the three grade levels and for the three school years. Out-of-school suspension rates for Black girls ranged from 11.9% to 13.5% in Grade 6, from 14.6% to 16.2% in Grade 7, and from 15.2% to 16.5% in Grade 8. For Hispanic girls, out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 4.5% to 5.2% in Grade 6, from 6.5% to 7.3% in Grade 7, and from 6.9% to 7.6% in Grade 8. In comparison to these out-of-school suspension rates, the out-of-school suspension rates for White girls ranged from 1.2% to 1.4% in Grade 6, from 2.0% to 2.1% in Grade 7, and from 2.4% to 2.6% in Grade 8. Out-of-school suspension rates for Asian girls ranged from 0.3% to 0.5% in Grade 6, from 0.4% to 0.9% in Grade 7, and from 0.6% to 0.8%. The presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) in the assignment of out-of-school suspension to girls by their ethnicity/race was clearly established. A summary of the effect sizes for out-of-school suspension to girls by their ethnicity/race for Grade 6, 7, and 8 across the three school years is presented in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4

*Summary of Effect Sizes for Out-of-School Suspension by Ethnicity/Race for Grade 6-8**Girls in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

Grade Level and School Year	Cramer's V	Effect Size Range	Highest ISS Rate
Grade 6			
2013-2014	.17	Small	Black girls
2014-2015	.16	Small	Black girls
2015-2016	.16	Small	Black girls
Grade 7			
2013-2014	.18	Small	Black girls
2014-2015	.17	Small	Black girls
2015-2016	.17	Small	Black girls
Grade 8			
2013-2014	.17	Small	Black girls
2014-2015	.17	Small	Black girls
2015-2016	.17	Small	Black girls

Connections with Existing Literature

The presence of inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences has been well documented in the extant literature (Anfinson et al., 2010; Berlinger & McLaughlin, 2016; *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954; Skiba et al., 2011; United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016). Similar to the results of previous researchers (e.g., Bonesheski & Runge, 2014; Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003; Khan & Slate, 2016;

Lopez & Slate, 2016; Reardon, 2013; Skiba et al., 2011; Texas Education Agency, 2014a, 2014b), inequities still exist in the assignment of discipline consequences. In this study was the presence of a consistent stair-step effect in discipline consequence assignment (Carpenter et al., 2006) by student degree of poverty. Students who were Extremely Poor were assigned statistically significantly more often to in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension than were their peers who were Moderately Poor and their peers who were Not Poor. Students who were Moderately Poor were assigned to an in-school suspension and to an out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than were students who were Not Poor.

Results of this research investigation were also congruent with previous researchers who have documented the presence of disparities in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black and Hispanic students. The National Center for Education Statistics (2016a) established that a higher percentage of Black students have been suspended or expelled than any other major ethnic/racial group. Moreover, Hispanic students and students of two or more races have also been suspended or expelled more often than White students. Asian students have been suspended the least often among the major racial/ethnic groups (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016a). Evidenced in the data from this investigation, as well as research from previous researchers (e.g., Anfinson et al., 2010; Barnes & Slate, 2016; Berlinger & McLaughlin, 2016; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Kupchik & Ellis, 2008; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Mendez et al., 2002; National Center for Education Statistics, 2016; Skiba et al., 2011; United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016), are

clearly apparent inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black and Hispanic students in comparison to their White and Asian peers.

With respect to discipline consequence assignments to boys and girls by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian), results were similar in that Black boys and Black girls received the highest percentages of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension, with Hispanic boys and Hispanic girls receiving the second highest percentages of these consequences. The inequities established in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension in this 3-year statewide investigation were congruent with previous researchers (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Curtiss & Slate, 2015; Demanet et al., 2013; Khan & Slate, 2016; Kupchik & Ellis, 2008; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Mendez et al., 2002; National Center for Education Statistics, 2016b; Skiba et al., 2011; Slate et al., 2016; U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education, 2014; Witmer & Johansson, 2015) and may constitute violations of these students' civil rights.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Based upon the results of the three articles previously discussed in this journal-ready dissertation, school leaders are encouraged to examine their discipline programs to determine the degree to which student poverty in their districts and campuses is related to discipline consequence assignment. School leaders are also encouraged to conduct an analysis of their school campus and their school district discipline strategies to ascertain the extent to which student ethnicity/race is related to discipline consequence assignment. Such audits can be used to drive changes where needed in existing programs and new programs in cases where the existing discipline programs are ineffective.

With these findings in mind, results from such audits could then be used to cultivate changes in discipline systems or foster the development of new discipline systems. School district leaders are urged to hire diversified faculty and staff members at all levels. School district leaders are also encouraged to increase the cultural diversity of school administrators, teachers, and other staff members by providing professional development on multicultural awareness for school administrators, teachers, and other staff members.

In addition to a focus on cultural awareness and diversity, another implication for practice is to decrease the population of Black and Hispanic students, in the School-to-Prison pipeline. In an effort to reduce the disparaging flow of Black and Hispanic students through the School-to-Prison pipeline, codes of conduct should be reviewed and revised. School district and school campus leaders are encouraged to create codes of conduct with outlined consequences for discipline violations to decrease administrator subjectivity and allow for a systematic assignment of consequences contingent upon the infraction and irrespective of student ethnicity/race. Periodic analysis of discipline data would increase educator awareness of discipline disparities. Cognizance of campus and school district discipline data trends could create the opportunity for necessary intervention and ongoing support for teachers and administrators. A final implication for practice would be to determine the underlying reasons for the inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences by student economic status and student ethnicity/race. Do Black students, Hispanic students, and students who are poor have sufficient cultural or social capital to respond appropriately to conflict situations at school? If the Khan and Slate (2016) hypothesis, regarding students lacking “the experience or knowledge they

need to behave in accordance with school norms” (p. 42), is correct, then school leaders and counselors will need to develop programs to increase student cultural and social capital.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this journal-ready dissertation, the relationships between student degree of poverty, student ethnicity/race, and gender within student ethnicity/race were addressed for Texas middle school students for three academic years. Based upon the results of the three journal articles previously discussed, the following recommendations for future research are made. Because student degree of poverty was analyzed for all students and not separately by student ethnicity/race or by gender within ethnicity/race, researchers are recommended to examine whether inequities are present in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by student degree of poverty separately by student ethnicity/race. Such a detailed analysis would permit a determination of whether the results obtained herein are similar across ethnic/racial groups of students. Furthermore, researchers are encouraged to analyze student degree of poverty and its relationship to disciplinary consequence assignment separately for boys and for girls. The degree to which the results previously discussed would generalize to boys and to girls is not known. Given that the data analyzed in this journal-ready dissertation were on only middle school students, researchers are encouraged to extend this study to students enrolled in other grade levels, such as elementary schools and high schools. These extended analyses would help determine if the inequities delineated herein are also occurring at the elementary school or high school levels. Another recommendation

would be for investigators to extend this study to other states. The degree to which the inequities delineated herein are generalizable to students in other states is not known.

Researchers are encouraged to examine discipline consequences as a function of other student characteristics such as English Language Learner and at-risk students. Having a more detailed understanding of the presence of inequities in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension would add to the existing literature on discipline. In addition, research should be conducted on the disciplinary consequences of Discipline Alternative Education Placement, Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Placement, and expulsion to ascertain whether inequities exist in their assignment. A final recommendation for future research would be to analyze the reasons why students are assigned a discipline consequence. Are students being assigned discipline consequences in public schools based on their ethnicity/race rather than on their misbehavior? Has the desegregation and equality intended from the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision, not materialized? Are public schools, in fact in a more iniquitous state where students who are economically disadvantaged are disciplined as disproportionately as Black and Hispanic students? Based on the results from this study, research should be conducted on the most effective discipline systems and programs to implement in schools to reduce economic and ethnic/racial biases.

Conclusion

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which differences might be present in discipline consequence assignments by student demographic characteristics in Texas middle schools. In the first investigation, the degree to which discipline consequence assignments differed by the degree of student

economic disadvantage (i.e., Not Economically Disadvantaged, Moderately Poor, or Extremely Poor) was examined. In the second study, the extent to which discipline consequence assignments differed by student ethnicity/race (i.e., Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black) was addressed. Finally, in the third investigation, the degree to which discipline consequence assignments differed by student gender within each of the four major ethnic/racial groups (i.e., Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black) in Texas was determined. These discipline consequences were analyzed for three school years. As such, this multiyear analysis permitted a determination of trends in the differential assignment of discipline consequences. Data resulting from this 3-year statewide analysis were reflective of strong inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences by student degree of economic disadvantage, by student gender within each of the four major ethnic/racial groups (i.e., Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black), and by student gender within each of the four major ethnic/racial groups (i.e., Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black).

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APPENDIX



<p>Institutional Review Board Office of Research and Sponsored Programs 903 Bowers Blvd, Huntsville, TX 77341-2448 Phone: 936.294.4875 Fax: 936.294.3622 irb@shsu.edu www.shsu.edu/~rgs_www/irb/</p>
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DATE: December 9, 2016

TO: Mikia Barnes [Faculty Sponsor: Dr. John Slate]

FROM: Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: *Differences in Disciplinary Consequence Assignments by Ethnicity/Race, Gender, and Poverty in Texas Middle School: A Statewide Study [T/D]*

PROTOCOL #: 2016-10-32463

SUBMISSION TYPE: INITIAL REVIEW

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: December 9, 2016

REVIEW CATEGORY: Category 4—research involving existing, publicly available data usually has little, if any, associated risk, particularly if subject identifiers are removed from the data or specimens.

Thank you for your submission of Initial Review materials for this project. The Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

*** What should investigators do when considering changes to an exempt study that could make it nonexempt?**

It is the PI's responsibility to consult with the IRB whenever questions arise about whether planned changes to an exempt study might make that study nonexempt human subjects research. In this case, please make available sufficient information to the IRB so it can make a correct determination.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 936-294-4875 or irb@shsu.edu. Please include your project title and protocol number in all correspondence with this committee.

Sincerely,

Donna Desforges
 IRB Chair, PHSC

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Sam Houston State University IRB's records

VITA**Mikia Barnes*****Educational History***

Doctorate of Education – Educational Leadership, May, 2017

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

Dissertation: Differences in Discipline Consequence Assignments by Ethnicity/Race, Gender, and Poverty in Texas Middle Schools: A Statewide Analysis

Master of Education – Administration, December 2010

Lamar University, Beaumont, TX

Bachelor of Science – Biology, May, 2002

Alcorn State University, Lorman, MS

Professional Experience

Assistant Principal, Spring Independent School District, 2014-Present

Instructional Coach, Spring Independent School District, 2013-2014

Education Consultant, Engage Learning, Corpus Christi, TX, 2011-2014

Fifth and Sixth Grade Teacher, Spring Independent School District, 2005-2013

Fourth Grade Teacher, Aldine Independent School District, 2004-2005

Second Grade Teacher, Aldine Independent School District, 2002-2003

Recognitions

Link Elementary, Houston Area Alliance of Black School Educators Teacher of the Year, 2008

Outstanding Fifth Grade Teacher, 2007

Publications

Barnes, M. J., & Slate, J. R. (2016). Grade 4 and 5 inequities in disciplinary consequences by ethnicity/race and gender. *Journal of Global Research in Education and Social Science*, 5(4), 216-221.

Presentations

Barnes, M. J., & Slate, J. R. (2016, January). *Grade 4 and 5 inequities in disciplinary consequences by ethnicity/race and gender*. Paper presented at the Texas Association of School Administrators MidWinter Conference, Austin, TX.