

EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE ASSIGNMENTS OF MIDDLE
SCHOOL STUDENTS AS A FUNCTION OF ETHNICITY/RACE AND ECONOMIC
STATUS: A TEXAS MULTIYEAR INVESTIGATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to many of my family members, whose support and love made the dream of earning a doctorate a reality. First, I thank my husband, Tommy Schlitzberger Jr., for his encouragement to begin the program, his help taking care of the girls when I had classes, changing his work schedule to accommodate me in this program, and his continued encouragement. This program was a hurdle for our marriage and I appreciate his understanding of the time and financial sacrifices needed to complete this journey. I also dedicate this dissertation to my beautiful daughters, Kylee and Kenzie. My girls are my life and it was difficult to balance this program and two young daughters. I was often very busy doing homework and writing papers during this process. I thank both of my precious girls for their love, support and understanding during this doctoral journey. I pray their Mommy's journey in education serves as an inspiration for both of them to understand the importance of getting an education and lights a fire for them to pursue their education in the future. I also want to dedicate this dissertation to my Grandmommy, Kay Taylor. I thank my Grandmommy for her emotional support, helping with laundry piles, helping with the girls, and being my biggest cheerleader. Finally, I thank my dad, Gary Aston, and my mom, Beth Aston, for raising me in loving home, supporting me in everything I did growing up, and always encouraging me to do well in school. I thank my dad for his continued guidance, for his Christian influence, and for him teaching me to work hard. I am the first person to go to college on both sides of my family. My husband, grandmother and parents were not able to go to college. I dedicate this degree to them and my daughters because I would not have been able to earn this doctorate without their love and support.

ABSTRACT

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Purpose

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which differences were present in the reasons students were assigned an exclusionary discipline consequence (i.e., in-school suspension in study one, out-of-school suspension in study two, and Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in study three) by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) and by their economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor). Two years of Texas statewide data, over a 10-year period, were analyzed in all three articles to determine the extent to which trends were present in the reasons Texas middle school students were assigned to an exclusionary disciplinary consequence by their ethnicity/race and their economic status.

Method

A quantitative, causal comparative, non-experimental research design (Johnson & Christensen, 2012) was present in this study in which two years of Texas statewide data were analyzed and then compared over a 10-year period. Data were obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System on all students who were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence in either the 2003-2004 or the 2013-2014 school years.

Findings

Results were remarkably similar across both school years for the reasons boys were assigned to all three exclusionary discipline consequences. Across this 10-year time period, violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reason middle school boys from all four ethnic/racial groups (i.e., Black, White, Hispanic, and Asian) and from all three economic groups (i.e. Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor) were assigned to in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. Inferential statistical analyses revealed the presence of inequities in the reasons boys were assigned to one of these three exclusionary discipline consequences by student ethnicity/race and economic status. Results of the three articles in this journal-ready dissertation were congruent with the existing literature regarding the presence of inequities with respect to exclusionary discipline consequences.

KEY WORDS: Exclusionary discipline, Misbehavior reasons, In-school suspension, Out-of-school suspension, Discipline Alternative Education Program, Inequities, Student ethnicity/race, Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Student economic status, Not poor, Moderately poor, Very poor, Grade 6, 7, and 8, Texas

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Effective school discipline is needed so teachers can manage student behavior and students can learn. Disruptive behaviors such as inattentiveness, task avoidance, aggression, and hyperactivity contribute to student failure and impede learning. (Thompson & Webber, 2010). Teachers must shift from focusing on instruction to focusing on discipline when students disrupt the classroom; therefore, disruptive students negatively influence learning (DuPaul, McGoe, Eckert, & Van Brakle, 2001). School discipline is very important in schools today as controlling student behavior in the current generation of students has become more challenging for teachers. Dealing with minor student misbehaviors has to lead to increased stress for teachers, decreased energy, and increased likelihood of burnout (Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis, 2008). However, as the number of discipline referrals and suspensions for middle school students in the United States has continued to increase in the last 40 years (Losen, 2011), school exclusionary discipline practices are being re-examined to determine their effectiveness.

In the past few decades, schools have used exclusionary discipline practices, such as in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Discipline Alternative Education Program placement as a consequence for misbehavior in school. Almost one third of all students in the United States receive an exclusionary discipline consequence assignment at some point in their education (Fabelo et al., 2011). The American Academy of Pediatrics (2013) has reported exclusionary discipline practices are ineffective and has recommended the use of suspension and expulsion only as a last resort. Despite this report, among other research studies (e.g., Skiba, Shure, Middleberg, & Baker, 2011)

students continue to be suspended at high rates. Such concerns about the risks and ineffectiveness of exclusionary discipline have created a national dialogue on the effects of out-of-school suspension and expulsion (Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014).

Another concern regarding exclusionary discipline are documented inequities in discipline by ethnicity/race and student poverty (e.g., Coleman & Slate, 2016; Curtiss & Slate, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Lunenburg, 2012; Skiba et al., 2011) over the past several years. Researchers (e.g., Barnes & Slate, 2016; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Skiba et al., 2014) have documented disproportionate suspension rates exist for Black students. Black students have received more discipline consequences, such as suspensions and expulsions, and more referrals to the office than other groups of students in public schools for the last 25 years (Skiba et al., 2011). Such inequities in exclusionary discipline consequences have led to higher numbers of student retentions, school drop-outs and placements in the prison system for Black students (Boneshefski, 2014). Young men and boys of color continue to be negatively affected by exclusionary discipline practices (United States Department of Education, 2014a).

Review of the Literature on In-School Suspension, Student Ethnicity/Race, and Poverty

Almost one third of all students receive an exclusionary discipline consequence assignment at some point in their education (Fabelo et al., 2011). From 1993 to 2007, the number of students suspended in Grades 6 through Grade 12 increased from 15.2% to 21.6% (Ritter, 2018). The number of discipline referrals for middle school students in the United States has continued to increase in the last 40 years (Losen, 2011). Of note middle school students had more incidents involving troubling behavior than either

elementary school students or high school students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). An increase in the number of discipline referrals for middle school students has led to an increase in the number of in-school suspensions.

An important element in exclusionary discipline consequence assignments is the presence of a discipline gap by ethnicity/race (Ritter, 2018). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2014b), former U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, “Racial discrimination in school discipline is a real problem today, and not just an issue from 40 to 50 years ago” (para 8). Students are being assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences, such as in-school suspension, in disproportionate numbers by their ethnicity/race.

Inequities in discipline by ethnicity/race and student poverty in the education system in the United States have been documented by many researchers (e.g., Coleman & Slate, 2016; Curtiss & Slate, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Lunenburg, 2012; Ritter, 2018; Skiba et al., 2011) over the past several years. The U.S. Department of Education (2018) determined Black students made up nearly half of the total number of all students suspended in Grades 6 through 12, although Black students only account for 21.6% of student enrollment. Historically, Black students have received more discipline consequences, such as suspensions and expulsions and more referrals to the office than other groups of students in public schools for the last 25 years (Skiba et al., 2011). Black students have represented a disproportional number of referrals (Sullivan, Klingbeil, & Van Norman, 2013). Furthermore, Black students received more than three times as many expulsions or suspensions than their White peers (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014). Although the total population of students is comprised of

16% Black students, the Black students represent 32% to 42% of student suspensions or expulsions; whereas White students represent 51% of the student population but have similar suspension and expulsion ranges, from 31% to 40% (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014). The Black/White discipline gap had more than tripled, with one out of every seven Black students being suspended from school (Losen, 2011). The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2014) reported 16% of Black students were suspended from school, compared to only 5% of White students who were suspended from school. Black students continue to be excluded from school in disproportionate numbers (Ritter, 2018).

Such inequities in exclusionary discipline consequences have led to higher numbers of student retentions, school drop-outs, and placements in the prison system for Black students (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). Young men and boys of color continue to be negatively affected by exclusionary discipline practices (United States Department of Education, 2014a). With respect to the relationship of ethnicity/race and in-school suspension assignments in the state of interest for this article, Coleman and Slate (2016) analyzed data on Texas Grade 6 students to determine the degree to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments by their ethnicity/race. In their investigation, Black students received three times as many discipline consequences and Hispanic students received more than five times as many discipline consequences as White students for violating the local code of conduct. Black students received discipline referrals for fighting/mutual combat more than four times as often as Hispanic students. Clear disparities were documented by Coleman and Slate (2016) in the assignment of in-

school suspension and in the reasons students were assigned consequences for Texas middle school boys by their ethnicity/race.

In another study regarding the assignment of in-school suspension by ethnic/racial membership for middle school students, Hilberth and Slate (2014) established the presence of statistically significant inequities in the number of in-school suspension assignments for Black students. Black students were more than twice as likely to be assigned to an in-school suspension than their Grades 6, 7, and 8 White peers. Although Black students constituted 14.1% of the student population in Grade 6, one third of Black students were assigned to in-school suspension as compared to White students, who represented 34.7% of the student population, but received only 14.2% of the in-school suspensions. Similar results were present for Grade 7 and Grade 8 students, with Black students representing about 14% of the population, but receiving about 36% of the in-school suspension assignments.

In an effort to identify salient characteristics of students who were assigned to an in-school suspension, Cholewa, Hull, Babcock, and Smith (2017) examined data on high school students. Students who received free and reduced lunch and schools that had a high enrollment of Black students were two predictors of in-school suspension. Black students were 1.47 times more likely to receive in-school suspension than were their White counterparts. Student economic status and student ethnicity/race were variables that lead to exclusionary discipline assignments (Cholewa et al., 2017).

Not only have inequities been documented in the assignment of discipline consequences by student ethnicity/race, inequities have also been established in the assignment of discipline consequences by student economic status. In fact, the best

predictor of student success is family income (Reardon, 2013). Many researchers (e.g., Coleman & Slate, 2016; Noltemeyer & McLoughlin, 2010; Skiba, 2015; Tiger & Slate, 2017) have established that students who are economically disadvantaged received disproportionate behavior referrals compared to students from other groups. In one such study, Hemphill, Plenty, Herrenkohl, Tournbouro, and Catalano (2014) determined students who are underprivileged and live in poverty often receive discipline referrals that lead to school suspension. These disproportional assignments of discipline consequences can increase the achievement gap for students living in poverty, whereas students who are not living in poverty perform better than their peers (Reardon, 2013). Clear inequities exist for middle school students who live in poverty compared to their peers who are not living in poverty.

With respect to Texas, Tiger and Slate (2017) established that Grade 4 boys who were Extremely Poor (i.e., qualified for the federal free lunch program) received an in-school suspension assignment more than twice as many times than Grade 4 boys who were not living in poverty. Their findings were consistent with previous researchers (e.g., Lopez & Slate, 2016, National Assessment of Education Progress, 2016) who established strong inequities by student economic status in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences. Poverty clearly affects the assignment of student discipline assignments.

In regard to the relationship of poverty with discipline consequence assignments, Coleman and Slate (2016), in a statewide analysis of data on Texas students, documented that students in poverty were assigned more severe discipline consequences and statistically significantly more discipline consequences than students who were not in

poverty. Disparities existed in the number of students in poverty who were assigned a discipline consequence for violations of the local code of conduct. No discipline referrals were assigned for Grade 6 students who were not in poverty for serious persistent misconduct or fighting/mutual combat; however, 129 students who were economically disadvantaged were referred for serious persistent misconduct and 475 students in poverty were referred for fighting/mutual combat.

In a similar study, Tiger and Slate (2017) analyzed the extent to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments as a function of the economic status (i.e., Extremely Poor = qualified for the free lunch program; Moderately Poor = qualified for the reduced-lunch program; or Not Economically Disadvantaged = did not qualify) of Grade 4 and 5 students in Texas. Tiger and Slate (2017) documented that about 15,000 in-school suspensions were assigned to boys during the 2014-2015 school year. Statistically significant differences were present for boys in the assignment of in-school suspensions by their economic status. Grade 4 boys who were Extremely Poor received in-school suspensions at a rate twice as high than Grade 4 boys who were not economically disadvantaged. Similarly, Grade 4 boys who were Moderately Poor received almost twice as many in-school suspension assignments than boys who were Not Economically Disadvantaged. Inequities were determined in the assignment of in-school suspension by economic status.

Readers should note that in-school suspension assignments are often discretionary in nature, rather than being mandatory, as they are assigned by campus administrators. Slate, Gray, and Jones (2016) reported campus principals and administrators have extensive power to assign disciplinary consequences in a discretionary manner to

students, except in the case of zero tolerance discipline policies. Therefore, inequities may exist in the assignment of discipline consequences to students of color and to students in poverty for the same misbehavior.

Given the strong presence of disparities in ethnicity/race and economic status with regard to the assignment of discipline consequences, researchers need to investigate the reasons students are disciplined to determine if inequities also exist in student discipline referral reasons. In one such effort to examine inequities in misbehavior reasons, Curtiss and Slate (2015) analyzed the extent to which differences were present in both discipline consequence assignments and the reasons students were disciplined for Texas Grade 4 and 5 students during the 2013-2014 school year. Violations of the local code of conduct were the primary reason boys were assigned a discipline consequence. Boys also had numerous discipline referrals for persistent misconduct and fighting. With respect to permanent removal from the classroom by the teacher, 11 Grade 4 and 5 boys were permanently removed from the classroom. Clearly, inequities were present in reasons students were suspended.

In another study in Texas, Coleman and Slate (2016) investigated the extent to which disciplinary reasons and consequences given to Grade 6 Texas middle school students were inequitable in nature. Although violations of the local code of conduct were the primary reason for discipline for all students, Black and Hispanic students who were economically disadvantaged received more discipline consequences for violating the local code of conduct. In addition, Black and Hispanic students received more referrals for fighting/mutual combat than their White counterparts. Coleman and Slate (2016) determined Black and Hispanic students were assigned more exclusionary

discipline assignments than their White peers. Findings from this recent study were congruent with previous researchers (e.g., Curtiss & Slate, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014) indicating a clear lack of equity for Black and Hispanic students in the number of assignments of discipline consequences.

In response to previous literature regarding inequities in discipline consequences, Schlitzberger and Slate (2018) investigated the top five most frequent student misbehavior reasons Grade 7, 8, and 9 students in Texas were assigned a discipline consequence. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most common misbehavior reason across all grade levels, at nine times a greater percentage than other misbehavior reason. Besides violations of the local code of conduct, fighting/mutual combat, serious/persistent misbehavior, truancy of 3 unexcused absences, possession of controlled substances/drugs, and truancy of 10 unexcused absences were the top five misbehaviors determined in this study. Boys had a 2% increase of truancy of 10 unexcused absences in Grade 9 when they entered high school.

In a review by Ritter (2018), he examined changes in discipline that have recently been documented by numerous researchers (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2013; American Psychological Association, 2008; Arcia, 2006, Beck & Muschkin, 2012; Fabelo, 2011; Raffaele-Mendez, 2003; Rausch & Skiba, 2005) that determine exclusionary discipline consequences have negative effects on student achievement, grade retention, drop out, and often predict future student incarceration. The noted negative effects of exclusionary discipline in public schools have influenced some major changes in school discipline practices and policies (Ritter, 2018). In short, the pendulum has swung from school leaders using punitive exclusionary discipline practices in the

2000's to enacting limits and restrictions on how suspensions are used after a realization that the use of exclusionary disciplinary practices may have gone too far (Ritter, 2018).

Review of the Literature on Out-of-School Suspension, Student Ethnicity/Race, and Poverty

Students continue to be suspended at high rates, despite evidence that removing students from the classroom for exclusionary discipline practices, such as suspension or expulsion, does not help improve student behavior or school climate (Skiba, Shure, Middleberg, & Baker, 2012). The U.S. Department of Education (2014) reported 1.9 million students were assigned to a single out-of-school suspension, whereas 1.55 million students received multiple out-of-school suspensions during the 2011-2012 school year. Exclusionary disciplinary assignments merit concern because students who receive exclusionary discipline assignments miss instructional time, especially when they are expelled from their school campus. In the 2011-2012 school year, 3.45 million students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014). In regard to Texas, the state of interest in this article, 31% of Texas secondary students received an out-of-school suspension at least once between Grade 7 and Grade 12 (Fabelo et al., 2011).

The American Academy of Pediatrics (2013) has reported exclusionary discipline practices are ineffective and has recommended the use of suspension and expulsion only as a last resort. Such concerns about the risks and ineffectiveness of exclusionary discipline have created a national dialogue on the effects of out-of-school suspension and expulsion (Skiba et al., 2014). In an effort to reduce the number of out-of-school suspensions and stop the flow of the school-to-prison pipeline, predictors of school

discipline have been examined (e.g., McCarter, 2017; Myers, 2017; Skiba et al., 2014). Student ethnicity/race, gender, the type of misbehavior infraction, and economic status along with the school level percentage of Black enrollment, average school achievement scores, and principal perspective all contribute to the likelihood that students will be assigned to an out-of-school suspension (Skiba et al., 2014). Many researchers (e.g., Henkel, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Skiba et al., 2014; U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education, 2014) have examined the relationship of inequitable discipline consequences to student ethnicity/race. Documented in these studies (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Skiba et al., 2014) is the presence of disproportionate out-of-school suspension rates for Black students. In the 2011-2012 school year, Black boys received 18% of the total number of out-of-school suspensions, compared to 10% of Hispanic boys who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, and 5% of White boys who were assigned to out-of-school suspension (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). More recently, the U.S. Department of Education (2018) reported that although Black students comprised 21.6% of the total school enrollment in 2007, Black students received almost one half, 49%, of all suspensions in the United States.

With respect to ethnicity/race, Barnes and Slate (2016) analyzed Texas archival data on the assignment of discipline consequences by the ethnicity/race of Grade 4 and Grade 5 students. Hispanic Grade 4 students received the most out-of-school suspensions, at 31 assignments, followed by Black students, with 5 out-of-school suspension assignments. In Grade 5, Black students received almost four times the number of out-of-school suspensions as Hispanic students. Strong inequities were

present in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black and Hispanic students in Texas (Barnes & Slate, 2016).

In the state of interest for this article, Hilberth and Slate (2014) analyzed data for all Texas middle school Black and White students during the 2008-2009 school year to determine whether differences were present in the proportion of students assigned to out-of-school suspension. Grade 6 Black students received an out-of-school suspension assignment more than five times as their White counterparts. In Grade 7, Black students received 4.7 times as many out-of-school suspension discipline consequences than White students. Similarly, four times as many Grade 8 Black students were assigned to out-of-school suspension than White students. Hilberth and Slate (2014) established that although Black students represented only 14% of the student population for all three grade levels examined, Black students accounted for a disproportionate percentage of out-of-school suspensions, between 19.4% to 23.2% of assigned suspensions. Clear disparities were documented in out-of-school suspension assignments as a function of ethnicity/race.

Inequities have also been established in the assignment of discipline consequences by student economic status. In a recent investigation, Tiger and Slate (2017) analyzed data for Grade 4 and 5 students in Texas to determine the degree to which differences were present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension assignments as a function of student economic status (i.e., Extremely Poor = qualified for the free lunch program; Moderately Poor = qualified for the reduced-price lunch program; Not Economically Disadvantaged = did not qualify for either the free lunch program or the reduced-price lunch program). Over 7,000 Grade 4 boys received an out-of-school suspension in both

the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. Grade 4 boys who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than three times more than Grade 4 boys who were Not Economically Disadvantaged. Grade 4 boys who were Moderately Poor also received almost twice as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 4 boys who were Not Economically Disadvantaged.

Tiger and Slate (2017) also documented that the number of boys assigned to an out-of-school suspension in Grade 5 increased to over 10,000 boys in the 2013-2014 school year and to over 9,000 boys in the 2014-2015 school year. During the 2013-2014 school year, Grade 5 boys who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than three times the rate of Grade 5 boys who were Not Economically Disadvantaged. Grade 5 boys who were Moderately Poor were assigned twice as often to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 5 boys who were Not Economically Disadvantaged. During the 2014-2015 school year, similar results were revealed. Grade 5 boys who were Extremely Poor were assigned twice as often to an out-of-school suspension as were Grade 5 boys who were Not Economically Disadvantaged. Clear disparities were present in the assignment to out-of-school suspension for boys by their economic status.

In another study conducted in Texas, Khan and Slate (2016) examined the extent to which differences were present in the percentage of Grade 6 students who were assigned an out-of-school suspension by their ethnicity/race. Although Grade 6 Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian students who were in poverty received more out-of-school suspensions than their peers who were not in poverty, the strongest disparities were established for Black students. Black students who were economically disadvantaged

received 21.3% of out-of-school suspensions compared to 9.7% of Black students who were not in poverty and who received an out-of-school suspension. Of the Black students who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, over 87% of them were economically disadvantaged.

As a result of the strong presence of disparities in the assignment of out-of-school suspension by both student ethnicity/race and economic status, researchers need to investigate the reasons students are receiving discipline consequences to determine if inequities are also present in student discipline referral reasons. In one such study, Curtiss and Slate (2015) examined both the reasons why students were assigned to a discipline consequence and the discipline consequence that was assigned. In their investigation, Grade 5 boys had three times as many out-of-school suspension assignments as Grade 4 boys. A violation of the local code of conduct was the primary reason students were assigned to a discipline consequence in both grade levels. Coleman and Slate (2016) determined that over 99% of the reasons students were assigned to a discipline consequence were due to violations of the local code of conduct, followed by less than 1% of students who were referred for fighting/mutual combat and persistent misconduct in both grade levels.

In another recent investigation in Texas regarding reasons students were assigned to a discipline consequence, Coleman and Slate (2016) analyzed discipline referral reasons and discipline consequence assignment by student economic status and ethnicity/race for Grade 6 students. Strong disparities were documented in student economic status and the reasons students were assigned to a discipline consequence. Coleman and Slate (2016) established that 475 Grade 6 students who were economically

disadvantaged received a discipline referral for fighting/mutual combat and 129 students in poverty were assigned a discipline consequence for serious/persistent misconduct. Of note, however, is that students who were not in poverty did not receive a discipline consequence for fighting/mutual combat or serious/persistent misconduct. Students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an out-of-school suspension more than six times more often than students who were not in poverty. Black students received the most out-of-school suspensions, at a rate that was 18 times more than the out-of-school suspension rates of their White counterparts and at twice the rate as their Hispanic counterparts. Disproportionality was clearly documented in both disciplinary reason and discipline consequence data for Grade 6 Texas middle school students.

In a most recent investigation regarding inequities in discipline consequences, Schlitzberger and Slate (2018) examined the top five most frequent student misbehavior reasons that led to a discipline consequence assignment for Texas students in Grade 7, 8, and 9. Boys received about 70% of the discipline referrals across all three grade levels. The primary misbehavior reason across all grade levels was violations of the local code of conduct, which occurred nine times more often than any other misbehavior reason. Schlitzberger and Slate (2018) documented that fighting/mutual combat, serious/persistent misbehavior, possession of controlled substances/drugs, truancy of 3 unexcused absences, and truancy of 10 unexcused absences were the top five misbehaviors. Truancy of 10 unexcused absences increased by 2% for boys in Grade 9 when they entered high school.

Review of Literature on Discipline Alternative Education Program Placement, Student Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status

Initially created as a discipline consequence to manage zero-tolerance policies and reduce school violence, Discipline Alternative Education Programs were designed to offer a temporary alternative placement for students with severe misbehaviors who do not adhere to school policies (Cortez & Montecel, 1999; Henkel, Slate, & Martinez-Garcia, 2015; Hosley, 2003; Katsiyannis & Williams, 1998). Students can be removed from class and placed in a Discipline Alternative Education Program for any misbehavior that is included in a school district's local code of conduct that has been adopted by the school board (Texas Association of School Boards, 2016). Students who are assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program continue to receive academic instruction in the core curriculum in an alternate setting instead of being expelled from school (Texas Education Agency, 2010). In addition to providing academic instruction, Discipline Alternative Education Programs were designed to help address and correct the misbehaviors students exhibited to receive this exclusionary placement, while also providing a consequence for misbehavior (Booker & Mitchell, 2011).

In regard to Texas, the state of interest for this article, 128,319 Texas students were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in 2005 (Texas Education Agency, 2007). In 2012, over 90,000 students in Texas were placed in Discipline Alternative Education Programs (Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, 2013). Over 15% of Texas secondary students receive a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement at least once between Grade 7 and Grade 12 by 2011 (Fabelo et al., 2011). In addition, placement in Discipline Alternative Education Programs has changed

from mandatory placements due to zero-tolerance policies to more discretionary placements by school administration (Henkel et al., 2015). In fact, 80% of students in Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in 2010 were assigned based on discretionary reasons (Booker & Mitchell, 2010).

Unfortunately, students who received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement were likely to receive this consequence again in the following school years. Booker and Mitchell (2011) documented 8% of students who have received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement re-experienced a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement within the same school year and 37% of students re-experienced this consequence in the following school year. In another study, Constenbader and Markson (1998) established that students who had been suspended were not likely to change their precipitating misbehaviors if given another suspension assignment. That is, students who are assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement or similar consequence are likely to be assigned to this consequence again.

Inequities by student ethnicity/race and economic status are another concern regarding Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. The Texas Appleseed (2008) documented that Black students were sent to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement at more than twice the rate of their representation in school enrollment for noncriminal, discretionary offenses. Students who fall behind, misbehave, or are unsuccessful in a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement can be expelled to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement, further

negatively influencing student motivation to stay in school and academic success (Fowler, Lightsey, Monger & Aseltine, 2010).

With respect to the negative influence of being assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement, exclusionary school discipline has been related to school dropout rates and to incarceration (Fowler et al., 2010; Skiba et al., 2014). Fabelo et al. (2011) documented that students who are suspended or expelled for a discretionary violation are three times more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system in the future. Therefore, placements in Discipline Alternative Education Programs contribute to the continuation of the school-to-prison pipeline. Of note is that high school drop-outs account for 80% of Texas adult inmates (Fowler et al., 2010).

In the state of interest for this article, Texas, Lopez and Slate (2016) analyzed the extent to which differences were present in the assignment of Discipline Alternative Education Program placement by student economic status. Grade 7 and 8 students in poverty received statistically significantly more Discipline Alternative Education Program placements than their peers who were not economically disadvantaged. Grade 7 students in poverty received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement assignment four times more often than Grade 7 students who were not in poverty. Regarding Grade 8 students, students who were in poverty received more than three times the rate of Discipline Alternative Education Program placements than Grade 8 students who were not in poverty. Clear inequities were documented in the assignments of Discipline Alternative Education Program placements by student economic status. Moreover, Lopez and Slate (2016) suggested the loss of instructional time for students

who receive exclusionary discipline consequences is related to student academic performance.

Statement of the Problem

Suspensions of middle school students have continued to increase for the past 40 years (Losen, 2011). Inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences have clearly been established in public schools by ethnicity/race and student economic status (e.g., Coleman & Slate, 2016; Noltemeyer & McLoughlin, 2010; Skiba, 2015; Tiger & Slate, 2017). Students who are extremely poor (i.e., qualified for the federal free lunch program) often receive more discipline referrals than students who are not living in poverty that lead to school suspension (Hemphill et al., 2014).

Due to the strong presence of disparities in ethnic/racial inequities and economic status in the assignment suspensions of middle school students, researchers need to investigate the reasons students are receiving discipline consequences to determine if inequities are also present in student discipline referral reasons. Schlitzberger and Slate (2018) contended that school district leaders need to identify the most frequent student misbehaviors to develop practices to target those behaviors, thus reducing the number of student discipline referrals to put an end to the school-to-prison pipeline. Further, Curtiss and Slate (2015) reported discipline consequences affect student academic success and attendance, and contribute to lower motivation, lower achievement, lower self-esteem, and a higher dropout rate than students who do not receive discipline referrals or consequences. It is important for school administrators, school boards, and state legislators to identify the disparities in reasons students are receiving discipline consequences to help ensure discipline consequences are equitable.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which differences were present in the reasons students were assigned an exclusionary discipline consequence (i.e., in-school suspension in study one, out-of-school suspension in study two, and Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in study three) by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) and by their economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor). Two years of Texas statewide data, over a 10-year period, were analyzed in all three articles to determine the extent to which trends were present in the reasons Texas middle school students were assigned to an exclusionary disciplinary consequence by their ethnicity/race and their economic status.

Significance of the Study

Middle school students have more incidents of troubling behavior than elementary and high school students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Understanding the reasons why middle school students are assigned exclusionary discipline consequences is important to know. In this journal-ready dissertation, the degree to which inequities were present in the assignment of in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Discipline Alternative Education Program placements to Texas middle school boys were addressed. With separate analyses being conducted by student ethnicity/race and economic status for each of the three exclusionary disciplinary consequences, findings acquired from this multiyear study provide educational leaders with information about the most common reasons students are receiving exclusionary discipline assignments. If inequities exist in the reasons why students are assigned to the three exclusion discipline consequences examined in this journal-ready dissertation,

appropriate revisions could then be made to current school discipline programs. To date, only limited research exists in which the most common reasons middle school students were assigned to exclusionary disciplinary consequences were identified separately for boys by both student ethnicity/race and student economic status for multiple school years. More detailed information than is currently available will be provided.

Definition of Terms

The following terms, used in this study, will be defined to assist the reader in understanding the context of the three articles in this journal-ready dissertation.

Disciplinary Action

The Texas Education Agency, Section 37.002 defined disciplinary action as a suspension, expulsion, placement in an alternative education program, or other limitation in enrollment eligibility of a student by a district or school (Texas Education Agency, 2013).

Discipline Alternative Education Program Placement

A Discipline Alternative Education Program established in conformance with the Texas Education Code (TEC), §37.008, is defined as an educational and self-discipline alternative instructional program, adopted by local policy, for students in elementary through high school grades who are removed from their regular classes for mandatory and discretionary disciplinary reasons and placed in a Discipline Alternative Education Program (Texas Education Agency, 2010). As stated in the Texas Education Code Section 37.008 (2013, p. 28), every Texas school district must have a discipline education program that meets the following standards:

(a) Is provided in a setting other than a student's regular classroom; (b) is located on or off of a regular school campus; (c) provides for the students who are assigned to the discipline alternative education program to be separated from students who are not assigned to the program; (d) focuses on English language arts, mathematics, science, history, and self-discipline; (e) provides for students' educational and behavioral needs; (f) provides supervision and counseling; and (g) employs only teachers who meet all certification requirements established under Subchapter B, Chapter 21.

The Texas Education Code, Section 37 (2010) stated school districts must place any student in a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement if the student engages in the following: commission of a felony; assault causing bodily injury; selling, giving or delivering drugs, a controlled substance or an alcoholic beverage; committing a serious act while under the influence, offenses involving a volatile chemical, public lewdness or indecent exposure; harming or threatening harm to a school employee; or for making a terroristic threat of a public school. In addition, students must be placed in a Discipline Alternative Education Program if a student receives deferred prosecution for the felony of aggravated robbery, if the superintendent believes the student may have been involved in conduct defined as a felony offense other than aggravated robbery, or if a student has to register as a sex offender (Texas Education Agency, 2010). The goal of a Discipline Alternative Education Placement program is to enable students to perform academically at grade level (Texas Education Agency, 2007).

Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive behavior has been defined as behavior problems “that hamper the ability of teachers to teach and students to learn (e.g., not paying attention, hitting other children, teasing other children, yelling, crying, complaining) in early childhood, are of primary concern because they have significant implications not only for disruptive children themselves but also for their peers in learning” (McCormick, Turbeville, Barnes, & McClowry, 2014, p. 1199). The Psychology Dictionary (2018) defined disruptive behavior as “any behavior that threatens or intimidates other people” (para 1).

Economically Disadvantaged

The Texas Education Agency (2012-2013) defined an economically disadvantaged student as one who is eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program. According to the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (2017):

Schools are required to serve meals at no charge to children whose household income is at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty guidelines. Children are entitled to pay a reduced price if their household income is above 130 percent but at or below 185 percent of these guidelines. Children are automatically eligible for free school meals if their household receives food stamps, benefits under the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations or, in most cases, benefits under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. (para 11)

Ethnicity

The Texas Education Data Standards stated the United States Department of Education (USDE) requires the collection of ethnic/racial data for staff and students in all

local and state education institutions (Texas Education Data Standards, 2016-2017).

Texas Education Agency defined ethnicity for students in the United States being either Hispanic/Latino, (a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race) or Not Hispanic/Latino (Texas Education Data Standards, 2016-2017).

In-school Suspension

The United States Department of Education stated the Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 37, Section 37.002 allows a teacher to remove a student from the classroom and authorizes a principal to place a student in in-school suspension (ISS) or another disciplinary setting when removed from the classroom. Although commonly used by school districts in Texas, in-school suspension programs are not required by state law, nor does state law regulate the number of days a student is placed in ISS or staffing requirements (Issue Brief, 2013). The Texas Education Agency (2010) defined in-school suspension as the first method of disciplinary consequences for students, where a student is removed from the regular classroom and placed into a separate room. The Texas Education Agency PEIMS Data Standards (2012-2013) stated, “ISS includes any disciplinary setting other than DAEP, JJAEP, or OSS.” (p. E.6).

Inequities

The Merriam-Webster dictionary (2018) defined inequities as an instance of injustice or unfairness. Inequities exist in disciplinary consequences, as Black students received disciplinary consequences at much higher percentages than White students (Hilberth & Slate, 2014).

Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program Placement

The Texas Juvenile Justice Department (2017) stated the goal of the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) is to reduce delinquency, increase offender accountability and rehabilitate offenders through a comprehensive, coordinated community-based juvenile probation system. Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs provide an alternative setting for continued instructional support for students who have committed serious infractions and/or have been expelled for committing criminal acts (Texas Juvenile Justice Department, 2012). According to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (2012), “Students served in JJAEPs have been expelled from their home school campus or a district alternative education program (DAEP), have been placed into the program as a requirement of supervision by the juvenile court, or have been placed by a local agreement” (p.5). The Texas Education Agency’s Strategic Plan, Strategy 2.2.2 Health and Safety code for fiscal years 2017-2021 reported the state seeks to increase school safety and support schools by providing disciplined environments that reduce criminal incidents on campuses and ensuring students in disciplinary and juvenile alternative education programs have instructional and support services to be successful (Texas Education Agency, 2016).

Out-of-school Suspension

The Texas Education Agency, Section 37.005 stated a principal or administrator may suspend a student who violates the local code of conduct. A suspension must not exceed three days (Texas Education Agency, 2013). Students enrolled in Grade 2 or below may not be sent to out-of-school suspension unless the violation of conduct is

related to weapons, a violent offense, or possession of drugs or alcohol (Texas Education Agency, 2013).

Public Education Information System (PEIMS)

The Texas Education Agency (2018b) stated the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) is an electronic data collection system that includes data requested and received by the Texas Education Agency about public education, including student academic performance and demographic information, financial, personnel, and organization information.

Race

The Texas Education Agency (2015) defined race for students in Texas being classified as African American, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, White, or Multiracial. Upon employment or enrollment, all staff and students are given an opportunity to identify ethnicity and race (Texas Education Data Standards, 2016).

The Texas Education Agency's College Admissions Glossary (2015) defined the racial categories as

The racial/ethnic categories are defined as follows. Hispanic includes students of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. American Indian or Alaska Native includes students having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintain a tribal affiliation or community attachment. Asian includes students having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent. Black or African American includes students having origins in any of the black racial groups of

Africa. Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander includes students having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

White includes students having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. (para 28)

Texas Education Agency

The Texas Education Agency (2018a) is defined as the state agency in Texas lead by the commissioner of education that oversees both primary and secondary education by providing leadership, resource and guidance to help public schools meet the educational needs of all Texas students. The Texas Education Agency is made up of 20 Regional Education Service Centers that provides support to Texas publish school districts and charters. The agency provides training, services, meeting space and more for school districts in the state. The Texas Education Agency is driven by laws established by the Texas Legislature, the United States Congress, the State Board of Education, and the State Board for Educator Certification.

Literature Review Search Procedures

For the purposes of this journal-ready dissertation, the literature regarding in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Discipline Alternative Education Program placement by gender, misbehavior reasons, economic status, and ethnicity/race were examined. Phrases that were used in the search for relevant literature were: discipline, boys, gender, middle school, student, misbehavior reasons, economic status, ethnicity/race, White, Hispanic, Black, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Discipline Alternative Education Program. All searches were conducted through following databases: Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), SAGE Journals,

EBSCO Host, and the American Psychological Association (Psych NET) database that contained scholarly peer reviewed articles.

Delimitations

Delimitations in this journal-ready dissertation involved a sole focus on the reasons Texas middle school students were assigned a discipline consequence assignment. Only data on public middle school boys in Grades 6, 7, and 8 Texas in the 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 school years were analyzed in this journal-ready dissertation. Only quantitative data regarding misbehavior reasons leading to in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or Discipline Alternative Education Program placement that were present in the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System were analyzed in this journal-ready dissertation. Two student demographic characteristics (i.e., ethnicity/race and economic status) and their relationships to reasons students were assigned a discipline consequence assignment were examined. Ethnicity/race data that were analyzed that consisted of the four major ethnic/racial groups (i.e. Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) in Texas. Economic status was solely determined by student enrollment in the federal free and reduced student lunch program. This journal-ready dissertation consisted of three individual studies in which two years of Texas statewide data over a 10-year period were analyzed.

Limitations

In this journal-ready dissertation, several important limitations were addressed. Schools self-report discipline data; therefore, inaccuracies in the data reported to the Texas Education Agency by school administrators by each school campus may have occurred. Because the Texas Education Agency conducts yearly audits and penalizes

schools that do not report accurate data, this limitation is believed to be minimal. Another major limitation is schools may code misbehavior reasons or give different exclusionary discipline consequences based on campus administration. Misbehavior reasons may not be coded consistently or use the same coding for similar misbehaviors across the state. Accordingly, errors may exist in the demographic coding of student ethnicity/race or economic status that limit the fidelity of the study. A third limitation is only quantitative data were used to determine the presence of inequities in reasons boys received an in-school suspension, out-of-school suspensions, or Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. Finally, the use of archival data presents a fourth limitation. Determinations of cause-effect relationships are not possible due to archival data used in a causal-comparative study.

Assumptions

The major assumption that was made in this journal-ready dissertation was that the data provided to the Texas Education Agency from school campuses were consistent and accurate statewide in this journal-ready dissertation. Any errors that were present with regard to reporting of ethnicity/race, student economic status, in-school suspension assignments, out-of-school suspension assignments, or Discipline Alternative Education Program placement may affect the reliability of the results of this journal-ready dissertation.

Organization of the Study

In this journal-ready dissertation, three journal-ready manuscripts were generated. In the first study, the degree to which inequities were present in the reasons students were assigned to in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race (i.e. Black, Hispanic, White, and

Asian) and economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, or Very Poor) of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys in Texas middle schools in the 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 school years were addressed. In the second study, the degree to which inequities were present in the reasons students were assigned to out-of-school suspension by their ethnicity/race and economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys in Texas middle schools in the 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 school years was ascertained. In the third study, the degree to which inequities existed in the reasons students were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement as a function of their ethnicity/race and economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys in Texas middle schools in the 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 school years were determined.

Five chapters constitute this journal-ready dissertation. Chapter I includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, definition of terms, assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the three research investigations. In Chapter II, the framework for the first journal-ready article on reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys were assigned to in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race and economic status is provided. In Chapter III, readers are provided with the framework for the second journal-ready dissertation investigation on reasons middle school boys were assigned to out-of-school suspension by their ethnicity/race and economic status. In Chapter IV, reasons middle school boys were assigned to Discipline Alternative Education Program placement by ethnicity/race and economic status was discussed. Finally, Chapter V entails a discussion of research results of all three studies, implications for policy and practice, and recommendations for research in the future.

CHAPTER II

INEQUITIES IN THE REASONS MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS WERE ASSIGNED TO AN IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION BY THEIR ETHNICITY/RACE AND ECONOMIC STATUS: A TEXAS MULTIYEAR ANALYSIS

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

Abstract

In this investigation, the most frequent reasons boys were assigned to in-school suspension and the extent to which in-school suspension assignment differed as a function of their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, White, Hispanic, and Asian) and their economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor) for Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys were determined. Archival data, obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System on all Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys, were analyzed for the 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 school years. In all instances, the most frequent reason boys were assigned to an in-school suspension was for violations of the local code of conduct. With respect to ethnicity/race and economic status, inferential statistical procedures revealed the presence of statistically significant differences in the reasons Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. Recommendations for future research, along with suggestions for policy and practice, were provided.

Keywords: Misbehavior reasons, In-school suspension, Inequities, Student ethnicity/race, Student economic status, Grade 6, 7, and 8, Texas

INEQUITIES IN THE REASONS MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS WERE ASSIGNED TO
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Almost one third of all students receive an exclusionary discipline consequence assignment at some point in their education (Fabelo et al., 2011). From 1993 to 2007, the number of students suspended in Grades 6 through Grade 12 increased from 15.2% to 21.6% (Ritter, 2018). The number of discipline referrals for middle school students in the United States has continued to increase in the last 40 years (Losen, 2011). Of note middle school students had more incidents involving troubling behavior than either elementary school students or high school students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). An increase in the number of discipline referrals for middle school students has led to an increase in the number of in-school suspensions.

An important element in exclusionary discipline consequence assignments is the presence of a discipline gap by ethnicity/race (Gregory & Mosely, 2004). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2014b), former U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, “Racial discrimination in school discipline is a real problem today, and not just an issue from 40 to 50 years ago” (para 8). Students are being assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences, such as in-school suspension, in disproportionate numbers by their ethnicity/race.

Inequities in discipline by ethnicity/race and student poverty in the education system in the United States have been documented by many researchers (e.g., Coleman & Slate, 2016; Curtiss & Slate, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Ritter, 2018; Skiba et al., 2011) over the past several years. The U.S. Department of Education (2018) determined

Black students made up nearly half of the total number of all students suspended in Grades 6 through 12, although Black students only account for 21.6% of student enrollment. Historically, Black students have received more discipline consequences, such as suspensions and expulsions and more referrals to the office than other groups of students in public schools for the last 25 years (Skiba et al., 2011). Black students have represented a disproportional number of referrals (Sullivan, Klingbeil, & Van Norman, 2013). Furthermore, Black students received more than three times as many expulsions or suspensions than their White peers (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014). Although the total population of students is comprised of 16% Black students, the Black students represent 32% to 42% of student suspensions or expulsions; whereas White students represent 51% of the student population but have similar suspension and expulsion ranges, from 31% to 40% (U.S. Department of Education for Civil Rights, 2014). The Black/White discipline gap had more than tripled, with one out of every seven Black students being suspended from school (Losen, 2011). The Civil Rights Data Collection (2014) reported 16% of Black students were suspended from school, compared to only 5% of White students who were suspended from school. Black students continue to be excluded from school in disproportionate numbers (Ritter, 2018).

Such inequities in exclusionary discipline consequences have led to higher numbers of student retentions, school drop-outs, and placements in the prison system for Black students (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). Young men and boys of color continued to be negatively affected by exclusionary discipline practices (United States Department of Education, 2014a). With respect to the relationship of ethnicity/race and in-school suspension assignments in the state of interest for this article, Coleman and Slate (2016)

analyzed data on Texas Grade 6 students to determine the degree to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments by their ethnicity/race. In their investigation, Black students received three times as many discipline consequences and Hispanic students received more than five times as many discipline consequences as White students for violating the local code of conduct. Black students received discipline referrals for fighting/mutual combat more than four times as many times as Hispanic students. Clear disparities were documented by Coleman and Slate (2016) in the assignment of in-school suspension and in the reasons students were assigned consequences for Texas middle school boys by their ethnicity/race.

In another study regarding the assignment of in-school suspension by ethnic/racial membership for middle school students, Hilberth and Slate (2014) established the presence of statistically significant inequities in the number of in-school suspension assignments for Black students. Black students were more than twice as likely to be assigned to an in-school suspension than were their Grades 6, 7, and 8 White peers. Although Black students constituted 14.1% of the student population in Grade 6, one third of Black students were assigned to in-school suspension as compared to White students, who represented 34.7% of the student population, but received only 14.2% of the in-school suspensions. Similar results were present for Grade 7 and Grade 8 students, with Black students representing about 14% of the population, but receiving about 36% of the in-school suspension assignments.

In an effort to identify salient characteristics of students who were assigned to an in-school suspension, Cholewa, Hull, Babcock, and Smith (2017) examined data on high school students. Students who received free and reduced lunch and schools that had a

high enrollment of Black students were two predictors of in-school suspension. Black students were 1.47 times more likely to receive in-school suspension than were their White counterparts. Student economic status and student ethnicity/race were variables that lead to exclusionary discipline assignments (Cholewa et al., 2017).

Not only have inequities been documented in the assignment of discipline consequences by student ethnicity/race, inequities have also been established in the assignment of discipline consequences by student economic status. In fact, the best predictor of student success is family income (Reardon, 2013). Many researchers (e.g., Coleman & Slate, 2016; Noltemeyer & McLoughlin, 2010; Skiba, 2015; Tiger & Slate, 2017) have established that students who are economically disadvantaged received disproportionate behavior referrals compared to students from other groups. In one such study, Hemphill, Plenty, Herrenkohl, Tournbouro, and Catalano (2014) determined students who are underprivileged and live in poverty often receive discipline referrals that lead to school suspension. These disproportional assignments of discipline consequences can increase the achievement gap for students living in poverty, whereas students who are not living in poverty perform better than their peers (Reardon, 2013). Clear inequities exist for middle school students who live in poverty compared to their peers who are not living in poverty.

With respect to Texas, Tiger and Slate (2017) established that Grade 4 boys who were Extremely Poor (i.e., qualified for the federal free lunch program) received an in-school suspension assignment more than twice as many times than Grade 4 boys who were not living in poverty. Their findings were consistent with previous researchers (e.g., Lopez & Slate, 2016, National Assessment of Education Progress, 2016) who

established strong inequities by student economic status in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences. Poverty clearly affects the assignment of student discipline assignments.

In regard to the relationship of poverty with discipline consequence assignments, Coleman and Slate (2016), in a statewide analysis of data on Texas students, documented that students in poverty were assigned more severe discipline consequences and statistically significantly more discipline consequences than students who were not in poverty. Disparities existed in the number of students in poverty who were assigned a discipline consequence for violations of the local code of conduct. No discipline referrals were assigned for Grade 6 students who were not in poverty for serious persistent misconduct or fighting/mutual combat; however, 129 students who were economically disadvantaged were referred for serious persistent misconduct and 475 students in poverty were referred for fighting/mutual combat.

In a similar study, Tiger and Slate (2017) analyzed the extent to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments as a function of the economic status (i.e., Extremely Poor = qualified for the free lunch program; Moderately Poor = qualified for the reduced-lunch program; or Not Economically Disadvantaged = did not qualify) of Grade 4 and 5 students in Texas. Tiger and Slate (2017) documented that about 15,000 in-school suspensions were assigned to boys during the 2014-2015 school year. Statistically significant differences were present for boys in the assignment of in-school suspensions by their economic status. Grade 4 boys who were Extremely Poor received in-school suspensions at a rate twice as high than Grade 4 boys who were not economically disadvantaged. Similarly, Grade 4 boys who were Moderately Poor

received almost twice as many in-school suspension assignments than boys who were Not Economically Disadvantaged. Inequities were determined in the assignment of in-school suspension by economic status.

Readers should note that in-school suspension assignments are often discretionary in nature, rather than being mandatory, as they are assigned by campus administrators. Slate, Gray, and Jones (2016) reported campus principals and administrators have extensive power to assign disciplinary consequences in a discretionary manner to students, except in the case of zero tolerance discipline policies. Therefore, inequities may exist in the assignment of discipline consequences to students of color and to students in poverty for the same misbehavior.

Given the strong presence of disparities in ethnicity/race and economic status with regard to the assignment of discipline consequences, researchers need to investigate the reasons students are disciplined to determine if inequities also exist in student discipline referral reasons. In one such effort to examine inequities in misbehavior reasons, Curtiss and Slate (2015) analyzed the extent to which differences were present in both discipline consequence assignments and the reasons students were disciplined for Texas Grade 4 and 5 students during the 2013-2014 school year. Violations of the code of conduct was the primary reason boys were assigned a discipline consequence. Boys also had numerous discipline referrals for persistent misconduct and fighting. With respect to permanent removal from the classroom by the teacher, 11 Grade 4 and 5 boys were permanently removed from the classroom. Clearly, inequities were present in reasons students were suspended.

In another study in Texas, Coleman and Slate (2016) investigated the extent to which disciplinary reasons and consequences given to Grade 6 Texas middle school students were inequitable in nature. Although violations of the local code of conduct were the primary reason for discipline for all students, Black and Hispanic students who were economically disadvantaged received more discipline consequences for violating the local code of conduct. In addition, Black and Hispanic students received more referrals for fighting/mutual combat than their White counterparts. Coleman and Slate (2016) determined Black and Hispanic students were assigned more exclusionary discipline assignments than their White peers. Findings from this recent study were congruent with previous researchers (e.g., Curtiss & Slate, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014) indicating a clear lack of equity for Black and Hispanic students in the number of assignments of discipline consequences.

In response to previous literature regarding inequities in discipline consequences, Schlitzberger and Slate (2018) investigated the top five most frequent student misbehavior reasons Grade 7, 8, and 9 students in Texas were assigned a discipline consequence. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most common misbehavior reason across all grade levels, at nine times a greater percentage than other misbehavior reasons. Besides violation of the local code of conduct, fighting/mutual combat, serious/persistent misbehavior, truancy of 3 unexcused absences, possession of controlled substances/drugs and truancy of 10 unexcused absences were the top five misbehaviors determined in this study. Boys had a 2% increase of truancy of 10 unexcused absences in Grade 9 when they entered high school.

In a review by Ritter (2018), he examined changes in discipline that have recently been documented by numerous researchers (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2013; American Psychological Association, 2008; Arcia, 2006, Beck & Muschkin, 2012; Fabelo, 2011; Raffaele-Mendez, 2003; Rausch & Skiba, 2005) that determine exclusionary discipline consequences have negative effects on student achievement, grade retention, drop out, and often predict future student incarceration. The noted negative effects of exclusionary discipline in public schools have influenced some major changes in school discipline practices and policies (Ritter, 2018). In short, the pendulum has swung from school leaders using punitive exclusionary discipline practices in the 2000's to enacting limits and restrictions on how suspensions are used after a realization that the use of exclusionary disciplinary practices may have gone too far (Ritter, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Suspensions of middle school students have continued to increase for the past 40 years (Losen 2011). Inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences have clearly been established in public schools by ethnicity/race and student economic status (e.g., Coleman & Slate, 2016; Noltemeyer & McLoughlin, 2010; Skiba, 2015; Tiger & Slate, 2017). Students who are extremely poor (i.e., qualified for the federal free lunch program) often receive more discipline referrals than students who are not living in poverty that lead to school suspension (Hemphill et al., 2014).

Schlitzberger and Slate (2018) contended school district leaders need to identify the most frequent student misbehaviors to develop practices to target those behaviors, thus reducing the number of student discipline referrals to put an end to the school-to-prison pipeline. Further, Curtiss and Slate (2015) reported discipline consequences affect

student academic success and attendance, and contribute to lower motivation, lower achievement, lower self-esteem, and a higher dropout rate than students who do not receive discipline referrals or consequences. It is important for school administrators, school boards, and state legislators to identify the disparities in discipline to help ensure discipline consequences are equitable.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. A second purpose was to ascertain the degree to which the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension differed by their economic status (i.e., Not Economically Disadvantaged, Moderately Poor, and Poor). A third purpose of this empirical, multiyear analysis was to examine the extent to which the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension differed by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian). For these three purposes of this article, two years of archival statewide data over a 10-year period were analyzed. As such, the degree to which trends were present in the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension were addressed. Finally, the extent to which trends were present in the relationship between economic status and the ethnicity/race of middle school boys and the most frequent reasons they were assigned to an in-school suspension were determined.

Significance of the Study

Middle school students have more incidents of troubling behavior than elementary and high school students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Understanding

reasons why middle school students are assigned exclusionary discipline consequences is important to know. In this study, the degree to which inequities were present in the assignment of in-school suspension to Texas middle school boys was addressed. With separate analyses being conducted by student economic status and ethnicity/race, findings acquired from this multiyear study provided educational leaders with information about the most common reasons students are receiving exclusionary discipline assignments to help target the misbehaviors to decrease discipline issues. If inequities exist in the reasons why students are assigned to in-school suspensions, revisions could then be made to current school discipline programs. To date, only limited research exists in which the most common reasons middle school students were assigned to in-school suspension were identified separately for boys by both student economic status and ethnicity/race for multiple school years. More detailed information than is currently available will be provided.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this investigation: (a) What were the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension?; (b) What were the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian)?; (c) What were the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status (i.e., Not Economically Disadvantaged, Moderately Poor, and Poor)?; (d) What is the effect of ethnicity/race on the reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension?; (e) What is the effect of economic status on the reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school

suspension?; (f) What trend is present in the reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension?; (g) What trend is present in the relationship between ethnicity/race and the reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension? ; and (h) What trend is present in the relationship between economic status and the reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension? The first three research questions were repeated for the 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 school years, whereas the last five research questions involved a comparison across this 10-year period.

Method

Research Design

In this study, a quantitative, causal comparative, non-experimental research design (Johnson & Christensen, 2012) was present. Statewide archival data that represented past events, which were previously obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System, were analyzed herein (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). In this study, the independent variables were the ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) as well as the economic status of boys (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor) in Grades 6, 7, and 8 in Texas. The dependent variables were the reasons students were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2003-2004 school year and in the 2013-2014 school year.

Participants and Instrumentation

Students for whom data were analyzed were Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys who were assigned to an in-school suspension in either the 2003-2004 school year or in the 2013-2014 school year. An in-school suspension occurs when students are removed from the classroom and placed in an alternative setting (Texas Education Agency, 2010).

that boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. Permanent removal from the classroom by the teacher was the third most frequent reason (3.0%) boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. The fourth most common reason that boys were assigned to an in-school suspension was serious/persistent misconduct (0.4%). Controlled substance/drugs, tobacco use, and criminal mischief were the fifth, sixth and seventh most frequent reasons boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. Table 2.1 contains the frequencies and percentages of the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2003-2004 school year.

Insert Table 2.1 about here

Next, data on all Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys in Texas who were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2013-2014 school year were analyzed. A total of 201,513 Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys had been assigned to an in-school suspension. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most common reasons (93.3%) boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. Fighting/Mutual combat was the second most frequent reason (5%) that boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. The use of controlled substance/drugs was the third most frequent reason (0.6%). Tobacco use was the fourth most common reason (0.4%) that boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. Assault of a non-district employee and non-legal knife use were the fifth and sixth most frequent reasons boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. The frequencies and percentages of the most frequent reasons that middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2013-2014 school year are revealed in Table 2.2.

Insert Table 2.2 about here

Regarding the degree to which trends were present in the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension for both school years, statistically significant results were present. Strong trends were clearly evident across both school years and compared across the 10-year span. Across the 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 school years, violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reason boys received in-school suspension. Fighting/mutual combat was the second most frequent reason boys received in-school suspension across both school years.

Most Frequent Reasons for In-school Suspension Assignments by Ethnicity/Race

The most frequent reasons Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian boys were assigned to an in-school suspension were analyzed for the 2003-2004 school year. For all four ethnic/racial groups, violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reason boys were assigned to an in-school suspension, 91% for all groups. The second most frequent reason boys in all four ethnic/racial groups was being assigned to an in-school suspension for fighting/mutual combat. Permanent removal from the classroom by the teacher was the third most frequent reason for all four ethnic/racial groups of boys. Controlled substance/drugs were the fourth most frequent reason for in-school suspension for all ethnic/racial groups of boys. Readers are directed to Table 2.3 for the frequencies and percentages of the most frequent reasons boys by their ethnicity/race were assigned to an in-school suspension.

Insert Table 2.3 about here

Regarding the most frequent reasons boys by their ethnicity/race were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2013-2014 school year, a descriptive analysis was conducted. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reasons boys were assigned to an in-school suspension for all four ethnic/racial groups. Similar to the 2003-2004 school year, fighting/mutual combat was the second most frequent reason boys were assigned to in-school suspension for all four ethnic/racial groups. Tobacco use was the third most frequent reason for White and Asian boys being assigned to an in-school suspension; whereas the use of controlled substance/drugs was the third most frequent reason Hispanic and Black boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. Frequencies and percentages of the most frequent reasons that middle school boys by their ethnicity/race were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2013-2014 school year are revealed in Table 2.4.

Insert Table 2.4 about here

Regarding the degree to which trends were present in the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension as a function of ethnicity/race, statistically significant results were present for both school years. Strong trends were clearly evident across the 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 school years and compared across the 10-year span. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most

frequent reason boys from all four ethnic groups received in-school suspension. Similar to trends in the most frequent reason boys were assigned in-school suspension, fighting/mutual combat was the second most frequent reason boys received in-school suspension for all four ethnic groups for both school years.

Most Frequent Reasons for In-school Suspension Assignments by Student Economic Status

The most frequent reasons boys by their economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor) were assigned to an in-school suspension were not available for the 2003-2014 school year because the Texas Education Agency did not list student economic status in the dataset that they provided. As such, for this research question, data from only the 2013-2014 school year school year could be examined. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reasons boys who were Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor were assigned an in-school suspension. The second most frequent reason boys from the three economic groups were assigned to an in-school suspension was fighting/mutual combat. The third most frequent reason boys were assigned to in-school suspension was tobacco use for boys who were Not Poor and Moderately Poor, whereas the use of controlled substance/drugs was the third most frequent reason for boys who were Very Poor. Table 2.5 contains the frequencies and percentages of the most frequent reasons boys were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status.

Concerning the degree to which trends were present in the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension as a function of student economic status, trends were not able to be analyzed. The 2003-2004 school year dataset

from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System did not list student economic status in the data they provided. As such, trends were not able to be determined for reason boys were assigned to in-school suspension by student economic status.

Insert Table 2.5 about here

Differences in Reasons for In-school Suspension Assignments by Ethnicity/Race

To determine whether a difference was present in the most frequent reasons Texas middle school boys by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) were assigned an in-school suspension, Pearson chi-square statistics were calculated.

Frequency data were present for the reasons students were assigned to an in-school suspension and categorical data were present for student ethnicity/race. As such, this procedure is an appropriate statistical procedure when both variables are nominal (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). The available sample size was large and the size per cell was more than five. Thus; the assumptions were met for using a chi-square. Results will now be provided for the 2003-2004 school year and the 2013-2014 school year.

Regarding the fourth research question for the 2003-2004 school year, the result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 1054.16, p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V was below small, .04 (Cohen, 1988). Statistically significant disparities were present in the reasons Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian students were assigned to an in-school suspension. Hispanic students received an in-school suspension for fighting/mutual combat two times more than Black students. Four times as many

Hispanic students received an in-school suspension for the use of a controlled substance/drugs than White students. Hispanic and Black students received in-school suspensions for assault on district employees and school-related gang violence, whereas White and Asian students did not commit these offenses. The majority of students who were assigned to an in-school suspension for tobacco usage were White and Hispanic. Readers are directed to Table 2.3 for the descriptive statistics on the analysis.

Concerning the fourth research question for the 2013-2014 school year, the result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 969.07, p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .04 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 2.4, statistically significant disparities were revealed in the reasons Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. Hispanic boys received an in-school suspension for violations of the local code of conduct more than twice as many times as White or Black students, and 58 times more than Asian boys. Similar to the 2003-2004 school year, Hispanic boys received twice as many in-school suspensions than White boys and 40 times more than Asian boys due to fighting/mutual combat. Hispanic boys were assigned to an in-school suspension for the use of controlled substances/drugs six times more than White students and Black boys, and 125 times more than Asian boys. Hispanic boys received an in-school suspension for tobacco use more than seven times than Black boys. Finally, Hispanic middle school boys had the most in-school suspensions for every misbehavior reason.

Differences in Reasons for In-school Suspension Assignments by Student Economic Status

To determine whether a difference was present in the most frequent reasons by their economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor), Pearson chi-square statistics were calculated. Frequency data were present for the reasons students were assigned to an in-school suspension and categorical data were present for student economic status. As such, this procedure is an appropriate statistical procedure when both variables are nominal (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). The available sample size provided was large and the size per cell was more than five. Thus, the assumptions were met for using a chi-square. As noted previously, data on in-school suspension by economic status were not available for the 2003-2004 school year. Results will now be provided for the 2013-2014 school year.

Regarding the 2013-2014 school year on the extent to which differences were present in in-school suspension assignments by the economic status of middle school boys, the result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 177.92, p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .22 (Cohen, 1988). Statistically significant disparities were present in the reasons students who were Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor were assigned to an in-school suspension. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reasons (i.e., over 93%) students, regardless of their economic status, were assigned to an in-school suspension. Of note, however, was that students who were Moderately Poor and students who were Very Poor received twice as many in-school suspensions for violations of the local code of conduct than students who were Not Poor. Students who were Very Poor were assigned to an in-school suspension

for fighting/mutual combat more than two and a half times more often than students who were Not Poor and almost nine times more often than students who were Moderately Poor. Fifteen times as many students who were Very Poor received an in-school suspension for the use of controlled substance/drugs than students who were Moderately Poor and more than five times more often than students who were Not Poor. Students who were Very Poor were the only group of boys who were suspended for assaulting a school district employee. Of importance is the fact students who were Very Poor received more in-school suspension assignments for every misbehavior reason analyzed during the 2013-2014 school year. Readers are directed to Table 2.5 for the descriptive statistics on the analysis.

 Insert Table 2.5 about here

Discussion

In this investigation, the most frequent reasons students were assigned to an in-school suspension and the extent to which differences were present in in-school suspension assignments for Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys by their ethnicity/race and economic status were addressed. Two school years of statewide archival data were obtained and analyzed across the 10-year period from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System to determine the most frequent reasons students were assigned to in-school suspension and if statistically significant differences were present in the reasons students were assigned to an in-school suspension by ethnicity/race and student economic status.

Connections with Existing Literature

Results from this multiyear Texas statewide investigation were congruent with results of previous researchers (e.g., Coleman & Slate, 2016; Noltemeyer & McLoughlin, 2010; Skiba, 2015; Tiger & Slate, 2017) regarding the presence of inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences by ethnicity/race and student economic status. In this empirical statewide Texas investigation of two school years of data, across a 10-year period, violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reason middle school boys in Grades 6, 7, and 8 were assigned to in-school suspension for all instances for Black, White, Hispanic, and Asian boys and for the three economic groups of boys. Hispanic boys and boys who were Very Poor had the highest number of referrals to in-school suspension for every misbehavior reason.

In previous investigations by Schlitzberger and Slate (2018) and Curtiss and Slate (2015), the most frequent reasons students were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence were addressed. Results of this investigation were congruent with their results. As such, more information is now available on the reasons boys receive an in-school suspension, particularly related to their ethnicity/race and economic status.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Based upon the results of this multiyear, Texas statewide investigation, several implications for policy and practice can be made. First, educational leaders and school administrators need to analyze the data concerning reasons boys received in-school suspension on their school campuses and in their school districts to the most frequent reasons boys were suspended. By auditing the reasons boys receive in-school suspension, educational leaders and administrators could use this information to

determine if disproportionalities exist and understand which misbehaviors lead to the assignment of in-school suspension. Another implication is to examine the students who are receiving in-school suspension to provide them with more support to help reduce misbehaviors. School district leaders must provide the students who have discipline referrals additional intervention and support. Such intervention could include support from the school counselors to build relationships with students who have behavior problems and to offer behavioral interventions in an effort to improve behavior by working with the student socially and emotionally. A third implication is to analyze the behavior management training administrators, teachers, and staff receive in their school district. Teachers should be prepared and trained to know how to manage discipline to maximize instruction. School district-wide behavior management system should be in place to ensure teachers are equipped with strategies to manage student misbehavior. Educational leaders and school administrators could use this information to target the reasons students receive in-school suspension and improve training teachers receive on behavior management techniques in the classroom.

A fourth implication is that educational leaders and school administrators need to examine the reasons students are suspended as a function of ethnicity/race and economic status to delineate the most common reasons for this exclusionary discipline assignment by ethnicity/race and economic status. Educational leaders could determine if inequities are present in their school district in the number of students receiving in-school suspension for particular misbehavior reasons by ethnic/racial groups or economic status. By examining this information, educational leaders and school administrators could work to eliminate disproportionate discipline referrals on their campus and target the groups

with more referrals determine if additional intervention and support could be added to decrease the number of referrals. A final recommendation is for Texas policymakers to require a statewide analysis of the reasons students receive in-school suspension to determine the degree to which inequities are present in the number of students referred to in-school suspension for each misbehavior reason. These determinations could reveal if students' rights to a free and appropriate education have been violated.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several suggestions can be made for future research based upon the results of this Texas, multiyear investigation. Because this study was limited to Grade, 6, 7, and 8, future studies could be conducted over other grade levels. Next, because this study was limited to boys in Texas, researchers are encouraged to extend this study to other states to ascertain the degree to which results delineated herein are generalizable to other states. In this study, data on only boys were analyzed. As such, researchers are encouraged to analyze similar data on girls. The extent to which results based entirely on boys would be generalizable to girls is not known. Researchers are also recommended to analyze data on girls by other student demographic characteristics such as ethnicity/race and economic status. Given the research findings of inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences by student ethnicity/race and economic status, these same inequities might be present with respect to the reasons students receive a discipline consequence. Qualitative studies are recommended to obtain information directly from students and from teachers. Such information would provide a more nuanced approach to understanding student misbehavior than is possible with archival data. Finally, only two school years of data were used in this study. As such, future researchers are encouraged

to analyze data from multiple years and/or more recent years to improve the generalizability of the results.

Conclusion

In this article, the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension and the extent to which ethnic/racial and economic status differences were present were addressed. Two years of archival statewide data from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System over a 10-year period were analyzed. In both school years, the most frequent reason boys received an in-school suspension was violations of the local code of conduct. Inferential statistical analyses revealed the presence of inequities in the reasons students were assigned to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race and by their economic status. As such, findings of this multiyear Texas statewide investigation were congruent with results of previous researchers (e.g., Coleman & Slate, 2016; Noltemeyer & McLoughlin, 2010; Skiba, 2015; Tiger & Slate, 2017) regarding the presence of inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences by ethnicity/race and student economic status. The reasons boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension were disproportionate across the four ethnic/racial groups and by student economic status, with Hispanic boys and boys who were Very Poor receiving the most suspensions for each behavior reason.

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Table 2.1

Descriptive Statistics for the Most Frequent Reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 Boys Were Assigned to an In-school Suspension in the 2003-2004 School Year

Student Misbehavior	<i>n</i>	Percent
Violated Local Code of Conduct	235,546	91.60
Fighting/Mutual Combat	10,845	4.20
Permanent Removal by Teacher	7,622	3.00
Serious/Persistent Misconduct	1,008	0.40
Tobacco Use	590	0.20
Controlled Substance/Drugs	519	0.20
Criminal Mischief	443	0.20
Assault -Non-District Employee	215	0.10
Truancy- 3 to at least 10 unexcused absences	166	0.10
School-Related Gang Violence	97	0.0003
Truancy- Parent Contribute To	55	0.0002
Terroristic Threat	47	0.0001
Conduct Punishable as a Felony	44	0.0001
Alcohol Violation	42	0.0001
Assault- District Employee	36	0.0001

Table 2.2

Descriptive Statistics for the Most Frequent Reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 Boys Were Assigned to an In-school Suspension in the 2013-2014 School Year

Student Misbehavior	<i>n</i>	Percent
Violated Local Code of Conduct	187,929	93.30
Fighting/Mutual Combat	10,077	5.00
Controlled Substance/Drugs	1,169	0.60
Tobacco Use	906	0.40
Assault-Non-district Employee	355	0.20
Non-illegal Knife	317	0.20
Permanent Removal by Teacher	241	0.10
Criminal Mischief	239	0.10
Alcohol Violation	86	0.0004
Terroristic Threat	80	0.0003
Assault-District Employee	63	0.0003
Conduct Punishable as a Felony	46	0.0002
Serious Misbehavior While in DAEP	5	0.000002

Table 2.3

Descriptive Statistics for the Most Frequent Reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 Boys Were Assigned to an In-school Suspension by Their Ethnicity/Race in the 2003-2004 School Year

Reasons	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian
	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age
Violated Local Code of Conduct	(<i>n</i> = 77,840) 91.0%	(<i>n</i> = 104,368) 91.8%	(<i>n</i> = 50,615) 91.6%	(<i>n</i> = 2,358) 91.8%
Fighting/Mutual Combat	(<i>n</i> = 3,771) 4.4%	(<i>n</i> = 4,329) 3.8%	(<i>n</i> = 2,577) 4.7%	(<i>n</i> = 140) 5.5%
Permanent Removal by Teacher	(<i>n</i> = 2,903) 3.4%	(<i>n</i> = 3,072) 2.7%	(<i>n</i> = 1,562) 2.8%	(<i>n</i> = 65) 2.5%
Controlled Substance/Drugs	(<i>n</i> = 90) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 397) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 32) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Tobacco Use	(<i>n</i> = 350) 0.4%	(<i>n</i> = 195) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 45) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
School-Related Gang Violence	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%	(<i>n</i> = 87) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 10) 0.0%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Alcohol Violations	(<i>n</i> = 26) 0.0%	(<i>n</i> = 16) 0.0%	(<i>n</i> = 90) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Assault Non-district Employee	(<i>n</i> = 34) 0.0%	(<i>n</i> = 130) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 51) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Criminal Mischief	(<i>n</i> = 91) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 308) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 44) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Serious/Persistent Misconduct	(<i>n</i> = 325) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 425) 0.4%	(<i>n</i> = 253) 0.5%	(<i>n</i> = 5) 0.0%

Note: Top 10 Most Frequent Reasons included in Table 2.3. Some reasons with few discipline assignments were not included.

Table 2.4

Descriptive Statistics for the Most Frequent Reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 Boys Were Assigned to an In-school Suspension by Their Ethnicity/Race in the 2013-2014 School Year

Reasons	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian
	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age
Violated Local Code of Conduct	(<i>n</i> = 42,708) 93.4%	(<i>n</i> = 97,187) 93.5%	(<i>n</i> = 42,036) 92.3%	(<i>n</i> = 1,661) 92.5%
Fighting/Mutual Combat	(<i>n</i> = 2,233) 4.9%	(<i>n</i> = 4,462) 4.3%	(<i>n</i> = 3,049) 6.7%	(<i>n</i> = 111) 6.2%
Permanent Removal by Teacher	(<i>n</i> = 56) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 143) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 42) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0%
Controlled Substance/Drugs	(<i>n</i> = 136) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 877) 0.8%	(<i>n</i> = 136) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 7) 0.4%
Tobacco Use	(<i>n</i> = 324) 0.7%	(<i>n</i> = 493) 0.5%	(<i>n</i> = 63) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 11) 0.6%
Non-illegal Knife	(<i>n</i> = 93) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 189) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 30) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Alcohol Violations	(<i>n</i> = 24) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 50) 0.0004%	(<i>n</i> = 7) 0.0001%	(<i>n</i> = 5) 0.3%
Assault Non-district Employee	(<i>n</i> = 60) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 198) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 97) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Criminal Mischief	(<i>n</i> = 32) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 192) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 15) 0.0003%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Terroristic Threat	(<i>n</i> = 21) 0.0004%	(<i>n</i> = 38) 0.0003%	(<i>n</i> = 21) 0.0004%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%

Note: Top 10 Most Frequent Reasons included in Table 2.4. Some reasons with few discipline assignments were not included.

Table 2.5

Descriptive Statistics for the Most Frequent Reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 Boys Were Assigned to an In-school Suspension by Their Economic Status in the 2013-2014 School Year

Reasons	Not Poor	Moderately Poor	Very Poor
	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age
Violated Local Code of Conduct	(<i>n</i> = 41,319) 93.3%	(<i>n</i> = 11,991) 93.5%	(<i>n</i> = 113,750) 93.1%
Fighting/Mutual Combat	(<i>n</i> = 2,325) 5.3%	(<i>n</i> = 678) 5.3%	(<i>n</i> = 6,067) 5.0%
Permanent Removal by Teacher	(<i>n</i> = 28) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 12) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 195) 2%
Controlled Substance/Drugs	(<i>n</i> = 155) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 51) 0.4%	(<i>n</i> = 795) 0.7%
Tobacco Use	(<i>n</i> = 255) 0.6%	(<i>n</i> = 59) 0.5%	(<i>n</i> = 564) 0.5%
Non-illegal Knife	(<i>n</i> = 68) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 20) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 207) 0.2%
Alcohol Violations	(<i>n</i> = 31) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0%	(<i>n</i> = 55) 0.0004%
Assault Non-district Employee	(<i>n</i> = 48) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 20) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 232) 0.2%
Criminal Mischief	(<i>n</i> = 30) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0%	(<i>n</i> = 141) 0.1%
Terroristic Threat	(<i>n</i> = 14) 0.0003%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0%	(<i>n</i> = 51) 0.0%

Note: Top 10 Most Frequent Reasons included in Table 2.5. Some reasons with few discipline assignments were not included.

CHAPTER III

INEQUITIES IN THE REASONS MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS WERE ASSIGNED TO AN OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION BY THEIR ETHNICITY/RACE AND ECONOMIC STATUS: A TEXAS MULTIYEAR ANALYSIS

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

Abstract

In this investigation, the most frequent reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension and the extent to which out-of-school suspension assignments differed as a function of their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, White, Hispanic, and Asian) and their economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor) were examined. Archival data for the 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 school years were obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System on all middle school boys. Violations of the local code of conduct were determined to be the most frequent reason boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Inferential statistical procedures revealed the presence of statistically significant differences in the reasons boys were assigned to this exclusionary discipline consequence in both school years. Recommendations for research and implications for policy and for practice were discussed.

Keywords: Misbehavior Reasons, Out-of-school Suspension, Inequities, Student Ethnicity/Race, Student Economic Status, Grade 6, 7, and 8, Texas

INEQUITIES IN THE REASONS MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS WERE ASSIGNED TO AN OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION BY THEIR ETHNICITY/RACE AND ECONOMIC STATUS: A TEXAS MULTIYEAR ANALYSIS

Students continue to be suspended at high rates, despite evidence that removing students from the classroom for exclusionary discipline practices, such as suspension or expulsion, does not help improve student behavior or school climate (Skiba, Shure, Middleberg, & Baker, 2012). The U.S. Department of Education (2014) reported 1.9 million students were assigned to a single out-of-school suspension, whereas 1.55 million students received multiple out-of-school suspensions during the 2011-2012 school year. Exclusionary disciplinary assignments merit concern because students who receive exclusionary discipline assignments miss instructional time, especially when they are expelled from their school campus. In the 2011-2012 school year, 3.45 million students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014). In regard to Texas, the state of interest in this article, 31% of Texas secondary students received an out-of-school suspension at least once between Grade 7 and Grade 12 (Fabelo et al., 2011).

The American Academy of Pediatrics (2013) has reported exclusionary discipline practices are ineffective and has recommended the use of suspension and expulsion only as a last resort. Such concerns about the risks and ineffectiveness of exclusionary discipline have created a national dialogue on the effects of out-of-school suspension and expulsion (Skiba et al., 2014). In an effort to reduce the number of out-of-school suspensions and stop the flow of the school-to-prison pipeline, predictors of school discipline have been examined (e.g., McCarter, 2017; Myers, 2017; Skiba et al., 2014).

Student ethnicity/race, gender, the type of misbehavior infraction, and economic status along with the school level percentage of Black enrollment, average school achievement scores, and principal perspective all contribute to the likelihood that students will be assigned to an out-of-school suspension (Skiba et al., 2014). Many researchers (e.g., Henkel, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Skiba et al., 2014; U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education, 2014) have examined the relationship of inequitable discipline consequences to student ethnicity/race.

Documented in these studies (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Skiba et al., 2014) is the presence of disproportionate out-of-school suspension rates for Black students. In the 2011-2012 school year, Black boys received 18% of the total number of out-of-school suspensions, compared to 10% of Hispanic boys who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, and 5% of White boys who were assigned to out-of-school suspension (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). More recently, the U.S. Department of Education (2018) reported that although the total school enrollment in 2007 was comprised of 21.6% Black students, the Black students received almost one half, 49%, of all suspensions in the United States.

With respect to ethnicity/race, Barnes and Slate (2016) analyzed Texas archival data on the assignment of discipline consequences by the ethnicity/race of Grade 4 and Grade 5 students. Hispanic Grade 4 students received the most out-of-school suspensions, at 31 assignments, followed by Black students, with 5 out-of-school suspension assignments. In Grade 5, Black students received almost four times the number of out-of-school suspensions as Hispanic students. Strong inequities were

present in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black and Hispanic students in Texas (Barnes & Slate, 2016).

In the state of interest for this article, Hilberth and Slate (2014) analyzed data for all Texas middle school Black and White students during the 2008-2009 school year to determine whether differences were present in the proportion of students assigned to out-of-school suspension. Grade 6 Black students received an out-of-school suspension assignment more than five times as their White counterparts. In Grade 7, Black students received 4.7 times as many out-of-school suspension discipline consequences than White students. Similarly, four times as many Grade 8 Black students were assigned to out-of-school suspension than White students. Hilberth and Slate (2014) established that although Black students represented only 14% of the student population for all three grade levels examined, Black students accounted for a disproportionate percentage of out-of-school suspensions, between 19.4% to 23.2% of suspensions received. Clear disparities were documented in out-of-school suspension assignments as a function of ethnicity/race.

Inequities have also been established in the assignment of discipline consequences by student economic status. In a recent investigation, Tiger and Slate (2017) analyzed data for Grade 4 and 5 students in Texas to determine the degree to which differences were present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension assignments as a function of student economic status (i.e., Extremely Poor = qualified for the free lunch program; Moderately Poor = qualified for the reduced-price lunch program; Not Economically Disadvantaged = did not qualify for either the free lunch program or the reduced-price lunch program). Over 7,000 Grade 4 boys received an out-of-school suspension in both

the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. Grade 4 boys who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than three times more than Grade 4 boys who were Not Economically Disadvantaged. Grade 4 boys who were Moderately Poor also received almost twice as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 4 boys who were Not Economically Disadvantaged.

Tiger and Slate (2017) also documented that the number of boys assigned to an out-of-school suspension in Grade 5 increased to over 10,000 boys in the 2013-2014 school year and to over 9,000 boys in the 2014-2015 school year. During the 2013-2014 school year, Grade 5 boys who were Extremely Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension more than three times the rate of Grade 5 boys who were Not Economically Disadvantaged. Grade 5 boys who were Moderately Poor were assigned twice as often to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 5 boys who were Not Economically Disadvantaged. During the 2014-2015 school year, similar results were revealed. Grade 5 boys who were Extremely Poor were assigned twice as often to an out-of-school suspension as were Grade 5 boys who were Not Economically Disadvantaged. Clear disparities were present in the assignment to out-of-school suspension for boys by their economic status.

In another study conducted in Texas, Khan and Slate (2016) examined the extent to which differences were present in the percentage of Grade 6 students who were assigned an out-of-school suspension by their ethnicity/race. Although Grade 6 Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian students who were in poverty received more out-of-school suspensions than their peers who were not in poverty, the strongest disparities were established for Black students. Black students who were economically disadvantaged

received 21.3% of out-of-school suspensions compared to 9.7% of Black students who were not in poverty and who received an out-of-school suspension. Of the Black students who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, over 87% of them were economically disadvantaged.

As a result of the strong presence of disparities in the assignment of out-of-school suspension by both student ethnicity/race and economic status, researchers need to investigate the reasons students are receiving discipline consequences to determine if inequities are also present in student discipline referral reasons. In one such study, Curtiss and Slate (2015) examined both the reasons why students were assigned to a discipline consequence and the discipline consequence that was assigned. In their investigation, Grade 5 boys had three times as many out-of-school suspension assignments as Grade 4 boys. A violation of the local code of conduct was the primary reason students were assigned to a discipline consequence in both grade levels. Coleman and Slate (2016) determined that over 99% of the reasons students were assigned to a discipline consequence were due to violations of the local code of conduct, followed by less than 1% of students who were referred for fighting/mutual combat and persistent misconduct in both grade levels.

In another recent investigation in Texas regarding reasons students were assigned to a discipline consequence, Coleman and Slate (2016) analyzed discipline referral reasons and discipline consequence assignment by student economic status and ethnicity/race for Grade 6 students. Strong disparities were documented in student economic status and the reasons students were assigned to a discipline consequence. Coleman and Slate (2016) established that 475 Grade 6 students who were economically

disadvantaged received a discipline referral for fighting/mutual combat and 129 students in poverty were assigned a discipline consequence for serious/persistent misconduct. Of note, however, is that students who were not in poverty did not receive a discipline consequence for fighting/mutual combat or serious/persistent misconduct. Students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an out-of-school suspension more than six times more often than students who were not in poverty. Black students received the most out-of-school suspensions, at a rate that was 18 times more than the out-of-school suspension rates of their White counterparts and at twice the rate as their Hispanic counterparts. Disproportionality was clearly documented in both disciplinary reason and discipline consequence data for Grade 6 Texas middle school students.

In a most recent investigation regarding inequities in discipline consequences, Schlitzberger and Slate (2018) examined the top five most frequent student misbehavior reasons that led to a discipline consequence assignment for Texas students in Grade 7, 8, and 9. Boys received about 70% of the discipline referrals across all three grade levels. The primary misbehavior reason across all grade levels was violations of the local code of conduct, which occurred nine times more often than any other misbehavior reason. Schlitzberger and Slate (2018) documented that fighting/mutual combat, serious/persistent misbehavior, possession of controlled substances/drugs, truancy of 3 unexcused absences, and truancy of 10 unexcused absences were the top five misbehaviors. Truancy of 10 unexcused absences increased by 2% for boys in Grade 9 when they entered high school.

Statement of the Problem

The U.S. Department of Education (2014) reported 1.9 million students received a single out-of-school suspension whereas 1.55 million students were assigned multiple out-of-school suspensions during the 2011-2012 school year. Thirty-one percent of Texas secondary students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at least one time (Fabelo et al., 2011). Disparities in out-of-school suspension assignments by ethnicity/race and student economic status have been clearly documented by researchers (e.g., Henkel, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Skiba et al., 2014). Fabelo et al. (2011) documented that Black students received three times as many out-of-school suspensions and were 31% more likely to receive a school disciplinary placement than their White counterparts and about almost twice as many as Hispanic students (Fabelo et al., 2011). In addition to student ethnicity/race, student economic status effects out-of-school suspension assignments. Coleman and Slate (2016) established that students who were living in poverty were assigned out-of-school suspension more than six times more than students who were not economically disadvantaged. As a result of the strong presence of disparities in racial/ethnic inequities and economic status in the assignment of out-of-school suspension, researchers need to investigate the reasons students are receiving discipline consequences to determine if inequities are also present in student discipline referral reasons. Such efforts could result in information that could be used to assist educational leaders in decreasing the misbehavior, thus decreasing the number of out-of-school suspensions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. A second purpose of this empirical, multiyear analysis was to examine the extent to which the reasons middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension differed by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian). A third purpose was to ascertain the degree to which the reasons middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension differed by their economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor). For these three purposes of this article, two years of archival statewide data over a 10-year period were analyzed. As such, the degree to which trends were present in the reasons middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension were addressed. Finally, the extent to which trends were present in the relationship between ethnicity/race and the economic status of middle school boys and the reasons they were assigned to an out-of-school suspension was determined.

Significance of the Study

Research exists on out-of-school suspension rates, on inequities in suspension by student ethnicity/race and economic status on student misbehaviors leading to out-of-school suspension; however, research is limited on the most frequent reasons students were suspended and over all three variables concurrently over multiple years. Results from this research investigation added to the body of literature regarding the reasons middle school boys are assigned out-of-school suspensions. With a reported 1.9 million students received a single out-of-school suspension and 1.55 million students who received multiple out-of-school suspensions during the 2011-2012 school year (U.S.

Department of Education, 2014), results from this investigation may have practical implications for school districts. They could use this information to target the most frequent misbehavior reasons to decrease the out-of-school suspension rates for students of all ethnicities/races and socio-economic backgrounds. If teachers, school counselors, and school principals understand the most common reasons students are receiving out-of-school suspension and any inequities present, schools can work with students to target behaviors and support students which in turn has the potential to decrease the number of out-of-school suspensions.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this investigation: (a) What were the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension?; (b) What were the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian)?; (c) What were the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension by their economic status (i.e., Not Economically Disadvantaged, Moderately Poor, and Poor)?; (d) What is the effect of ethnicity/race on the reasons middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension?; (e) What is the effect of economic status on the reasons middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension?; (f) What trend is present in the reasons middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension?; (g) What trend is present in the relationship between ethnicity/race and the reasons middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension?; and (h) What trend is present in the relationship between economic status and the reasons middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school

suspension? The first three research questions were repeated for the 2003-2004 school year and for the 2013-2014 school year whereas the last five research questions involved a comparison across this 10-year period.

Method

Research Design

This nonexperimental quantitative study was a casual comparative design because the out-of-school suspensions have already occurred (Creswell, 2014). Archival data, which was previously collected from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System, were used to examine the relationship of reasons students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension by their ethnicity/race and by their economic status in the 2003-2004 school year and in the 2013-2014 school year. The independent variables in this investigation were student ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) and student economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor). The dependent variables were the reasons students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. The sample of students whose data were analyzed herein were boys in Grades 6, 7, and 8 in Texas.

Participants and Instrumentation

Archival data were requested from the Texas Education Public Education Information Management System for the 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 school years for the reasons middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. An out-of-school suspension occurs when students are removed from the school setting and prohibited from attending school for a period of time that may not exceed three days (Texas Education Agency, 2013).

A Public Education Information Request to the Texas Education Agency was previously submitted to attain the data utilized in this research investigation. Data were only analyzed from a dataset of reasons middle school boys in Grades 6, 7, and 8 in Texas were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. These data included student ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) and economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor). The assumption was made that the data provided by the Texas Education Agency were accurately reported due to the fact that the Texas Education Agency regularly completes routine audits of school campuses and school districts.

Results

In the first three research questions of this study, descriptive statistics were calculated on the most frequent reasons boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. The reasons for boys being assigned to an out-of-school suspension were calculated first for all students, and then separately by ethnicity/race, and then by student economic status.

Most Frequent Reasons Boys Were Assigned to Out-of-school Suspension

In this research investigation, Texas statewide data on all Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2003-2004 school year were analyzed. A total of 118,163 Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys had been assigned an out-of-school suspension. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most common reasons as this category constituted 77.1% of the reasons that boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Fighting/Mutual combat was the second most frequent reason boys received an out-of-school suspension. Serious/persistent misconduct was the third most

frequent reason boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. The fourth most common reason that boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension was permanent removal by the teacher. Controlled substance/drugs were the fifth most frequent misbehavior reason boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Table 3.1 contains the frequencies and percentages of the most common reasons middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2003-2004 school year.

Insert Table 3.1 about here

Next, Texas statewide data on all Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2013-2014 school year were analyzed. A total of 99,696 Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys had been assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most common reason as it constituted 75.6% of the reasons that boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Fighting/Mutual combat was the second most frequent reason boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. The use of controlled substance/drugs was the third most frequent reason. Assault of non-district employee was the fourth most common reason that boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Tobacco use was the fifth most frequent reason boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Frequencies and percentages of the most frequent reasons that middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2013-2014 school year are revealed in Table 3.2.

Insert Table 3.2 about here

With respect to whether trends were present in the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, results for both school years were examined. Strong trends were clearly evident from the 2003-2004 school year to the 2013-2014 school years. The most frequent reason boys were assigned to out-of-school suspension across this 10-year period was violations of the local code of conduct. Fighting/mutual combat was the second most frequent reason boys received out-of-school suspension across this 10-year period.

Most Frequent Reasons for Out-of-school Suspension Assignments by

Ethnicity/Race

The most frequent reasons Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension were analyzed for the 2003-2004 school year. For all four ethnic/racial groups, violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reason boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, at about 77% for all groups. The second most frequent reason boys in all four ethnic/racial groups were assigned to an out-of-school suspension was for fighting/mutual combat. Serious/persistent misconduct was the third most frequent reason for White, Hispanic and Black students, whereas permanent removal from the classroom by a teacher was the third most frequent reason for Asian students. Permanent removal from the classroom by the teacher was the fourth most frequent reason for out-of-school suspension for White, and Black students, whereas controlled substance/drugs

were the fourth most frequent reason for Hispanic students and serious/persistent misconduct for Asian students. Table 3.3 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Insert Table 3.3 about here

Regarding the most frequent reasons boys by their ethnicity/race were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2013-2014 school year, a descriptive analysis was conducted. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reasons boys in all four ethnic/racial groups were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Similar to the 2003-2004 school year, fighting/mutual combat was the second most frequent reason boys in all four ethnic/racial groups were assigned to out-of-school suspension. The use of controlled substance/drugs was the third most frequent reason for all four ethnic/racial groups. Assault of a non-district employee was the fourth most frequent reason boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension for White, Hispanic, and Black boys; whereas alcohol violations were the fourth most frequent reason Asian boys were assigned to out-of-school suspension. The descriptive statistics for the 2013-2014 school year are revealed in Table 3.4.

Insert Table 3.4 about here

With respect to the presence of trends in the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension as a function of their ethnicity/race,

results from the two school years were examined. Strong trends were clearly evident in the reasons students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension from the 2003-2004 school year to the 2013-2014 school year. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reason boys from all four ethnic/racial groups received an out-of-school suspension assignment across this 10-year period. Fighting/mutual combat was the second most frequent reason boys received out-of-school suspension for all four ethnic/racial groups over this 10-year period.

Most Frequent Reasons for Out-of-school Suspension Assignments by Student Economic Status

The most frequent reasons boys by their economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor) were assigned to an out-of-school suspension were not available for the 2003-2014 school year because the Texas Education Agency did not list student economic status in the dataset that they provided. Therefore, for this research question, data from only the 2013-2014 school year could be examined. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reasons boys who were Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor were assigned an out-of-school suspension. The second most frequent reason boys from the three economic groups were assigned to an out-of-school suspension was fighting/mutual combat. The third most frequent reason boys were assigned to out-of-school suspension was serious misbehavior while in a Discipline Alternative Education Program for boys who were Not Poor, whereas the use of controlled substance/drugs was the third most frequent reason for boys who were Moderately Poor and Very Poor. The fourth most frequent reason boys in all three economic groups were assigned to out-of-school suspension was assault of a non-district

employee. Table 3.5 contains the frequencies and percentages of the most frequent reasons boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension by their economic status.

 Insert Table 3.5 about here

With respect to the trend question previously posed, because the 2003-2004 school year dataset regarding out-of-school suspension from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System did not list student economic status in the data they provided trends were not able to be determined for reason boys were assigned to out-of-school suspension by student economic status.

Differences in Reasons for Out-of-school Suspension Assignments by Ethnicity/Race

To determine whether a difference was present in the most frequent reasons Texas middle school boys by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) were assigned an out-of-school suspension, Pearson chi-square statistics were calculated. Frequency data were present for the reasons students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension and categorical data were present for student ethnicity/race. As such, this procedure is an appropriate statistical procedure when both variables are nominal (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). The available sample size was large and the size per cell was more than five. Thus, the assumptions were met for using a chi-square. Results will now be provided for the 2003-2004 school year and the 2013-2014 school year.

Concerning the fourth research question for the 2003-2004 school year, the result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 1072.79, p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V was below small, .05 (Cohen, 1988). Statistically significant disparities were

present in the reasons Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Hispanic students received an out-of-school suspension for violations of the local code of conduct and fighting/mutual combat two times more than White students and more than one and one half as many times as Black students. Seven times as many Hispanic students received an out-of-school suspension for the use of controlled substance/drugs than Black students and more than three times as many referrals for controlled substance/drugs than White students. Almost three times as many Hispanic students received an out-of-school suspension for serious/persistent misconduct than White students and twice as many times than Black students. Hispanic students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension for assault of a non-district employee three times more often than White students and twice as often as Black students. The majority of students who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension for criminal mischief were Hispanic. Readers are directed to Table 3.3 for the descriptive statistics on the analysis.

Concerning the fourth research question for the 2013-2014 school year, the result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1)=1852.23, p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 3.4, statistically significant disparities were revealed in the reasons Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Hispanic boys received an out-of-school suspension for violations of the local code of conduct more than four times as often for White students, more than twice as often as Black students, and 83 times more than Asian boys. Similar to the 2003-2004 school year, Hispanic boys received more than four times as many out-of-school suspensions than White boys and 59 times more than Asian boys due to fighting/mutual combat. Hispanic boys were assigned to an out-

of-school suspension for the use of controlled substances/drugs five times more than White students, more than six times as many as Black boys, and 181 times more than Asian boys. Hispanic boys received an out-of-school suspension for assault of a non-district employee almost four times as many as White boys and almost twice as often as Black boys. Finally, Hispanic middle school boys had the most students referred to out-of-school suspension for every misbehavior reason.

Differences in Reasons for Out-of-school Suspension Assignments by Student

Economic Status

To determine whether a difference was present in the most frequent reasons boys were assigned to out-of-school suspension by their economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor), Pearson chi-square statistics were calculated. Frequency data were present for the reasons students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension and categorical data were present for student economic status. As such, this procedure is an appropriate statistical procedure when both variables are nominal (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). The available sample size provided was large and the size per cell was more than five. Thus, the assumptions were met for using a chi-square. As previously discussed, no data were available on student economic status for the 2003-2004 school year. Results will now be provided for the 2013-2014 school year.

Regarding the 2013-2014 school year on the extent to which differences were present in the reasons students by their economic status were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, the result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 110.22, p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .03. (Cohen, 1988). Statistically significant disparities were present in the reasons students who were Not Poor,

Moderately Poor, and Very Poor were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reasons (i.e., over 74%) students who were Not Poor and Moderately Poor received an out-of-school suspension; whereas fighting/mutual combat was the most frequent reason boys who were Very Poor received an out-of-school suspension. Of note, students who were Very Poor received were assigned to four times as many out-of-school suspensions for violations of the local code of conduct than students who were Not Poor. Students who were Very Poor were assigned to an out-of-school suspension for fighting/mutual combat about five times more often than students who were Not Poor and over 11 times more often than students who were Moderately Poor. Over 12 times as many students who were Very Poor received an out-of-school suspension for the use of a controlled substance/drugs than students who were Moderately Poor and more than four times more often than students who were Not Poor. Students who were Very Poor were suspended for assaulting a school district employee more than five times as often as students who were Not Poor. Of importance is students who were Very Poor received more out-of-school suspension assignments for every misbehavior reason analyzed during the 2013-2014 school year. Readers are directed to Table 3.5 for the descriptive statistics on the analysis.

 Insert Table 3.5 about here

Discussion

In this investigation, the most frequent reasons students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension for Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys by their ethnicity/race and

economic status were addressed. Two school years of statewide archival data were obtained and analyzed across the 10-year period from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System to determine the most frequent reasons students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Another purpose of this study was to ascertain the extent to which differences were present in the reasons students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension by their ethnicity/race and economic status.

Connections with Existing Literature

Results from this multiyear Texas statewide investigation were congruent with results of previous researchers (e.g., Henkel, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Skiba et al., 2014; Tiger & Slate, 2017, U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education, 2014) who documented the presence of inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences by student ethnicity/race and economic status. In this empirical statewide Texas investigation, two school years of data were analyzed across a 10-year period. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reason middle school boys in Grades 6, 7, and 8 were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Statistically significant differences were present in the reasons boys were assigned to out-of-school suspension as a function of ethnicity/race and student economic status.

In previous investigations by Curtiss and Slate (2015), Coleman and Slate (2016), and Schlitzberger and Slate (2018), the most frequent reasons boys received discipline consequence assignments indicated the presence of strong disparities by student ethnicity/race and economic status. As such, results of this investigation provide more information on the reasons boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. In

addition, findings from this study regarding clear disparities in reasons boys are assigned to out-of-school suspension by ethnicity/race and student economic status are congruent with the previous literature.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Several implications for policy and practice can be made from the results of this multiyear, empirical statewide analysis. First, educational leaders and school administrators need to analyze the reasons boys received out-of-school suspension on their school campuses and school districts to determine the most frequent reasons boys are suspended. Educational leaders could examine if disproportionalities are present in the reasons boys receive out-of-school suspension. As such, examining the reasons boys are assigned to an out-of-school suspension, educational leaders and administrators could use this information to target the common misbehaviors students exhibited to improve behavior in those areas. Another implication is to provide to students who are assigned to an out-of-school suspension more support to help reduce their misbehaviors. School district leaders could provide the students who have behavior issues with additional intervention and support, such as additional support from school counselors. A third implication is to analyze the behavior management training administrators, teachers, and staff receive in their school district. Teachers should be sufficiently prepared and trained to know how to manage discipline. School districts should provide teachers with training in a district-wide behavior management system to deal with student misbehaviors. Educational leaders and school administrators could use this information to improve training teachers receive on behavior management techniques in the classroom. Another implication is that educational leaders and school administrators need to audit the reasons

students are suspended separately by student ethnicity/race and economic status to delineate if inequities are present in the reasons students are assigned to an out-of-school suspension in their school districts. By examining this information, educational leaders and school administrators could determine if students of a particular ethnic/racial group or economic status receive more out-of-school suspensions. As such, educational leaders could then work to eliminate disproportionate discipline referrals on their campus. A final recommendation is for policymakers to require an analysis of the reasons students are assigned to an out-of-school suspension to determine the degree to which inequities are present in the assignment of in-school suspension for each misbehavior reason. Such inequities could be indicative of civil rights violations to receive a free and appropriate education.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon the results of this 10-year statewide analysis, several recommendations for future research can be made. First, because this study was limited to students in Grade 6, 7, and 8, future researchers are encouraged to examine data on students at other grade levels. Second, because this study was limited to Texas, researchers are encouraged to analyze data from other states to determine the extent to which the findings discussed herein would be generalizable to other states. Another suggestion for future research is to analyze data on girls. In this investigation, data on only boys were analyzed. The degree to which girls are assigned to out-of-school suspension for the same reasons that boys are assigned to this consequence is not known. Future researchers could examine data on girls in other grade levels to see if results are similar. In addition, researchers could also examine data on girls from other states. Next,

future researchers could examine data on girls by other demographic characteristics, such as by ethnicity/race or student economic status to determine if statistically significant disparities are present in the reasons girls receive out-of-school suspension by economic status. Because the most frequent reason boys received out-of-school suspension were identified, a future qualitative study is recommended to determine why boys are misbehaving. Finally, because two years of data were used in this study, future researchers are encouraged to analyze data from other school years to improve the generalizability of the results.

Conclusion

In this article, the most frequent reasons that Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension were addressed, along with the degree to which the most frequent reasons differed by their ethnicity/race and economic status. Two years of archival statewide data from the Texas Education Agency Public Information Management System over a 10-year period were analyzed. In this 10-year period, violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reason boys received out-of-school suspension. Inferential statistical analyses revealed the presence of inequities in the reasons boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension by their ethnicity/race and economic status. Results from this multiyear Texas statewide investigation were congruent with results of previous researchers who documented the presence of disparities in misbehavior reasons (Curtiss & Slate, 2015; Schlitzberger & Slate, 2018) by student ethnicity/race and economic status.

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Table 3.1

Descriptive Statistics for the Most Frequent Reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 Boys Were Assigned to an Out-of-school Suspension in the 2003-2004 School Year

Student Misbehavior	<i>n</i>	Percent
Violated Local Code of Conduct	90,697	77.10
Fighting/Mutual Combat	16,198	13.80
Serious/Persistent Misconduct	3,397	2.90
Permanent Removal by the Teacher	2,485	2.10
Controlled Substance/Drugs	2,362	2.00
Assault Non-district Employee	748	0.60
Criminal Mischief	452	0.40
Tobacco Use	373	0.30
Terroristic Threat	197	0.20
Conduct Punishable as a Felony	187	0.20
Assault District Employee	185	0.20
Alcohol Violation	133	0.10
School-Related Gang Violence	131	0.10
Truancy 3 to at least 10 Unexcused Absences	41	0.0003

Table 3.2

Descriptive Statistics for the Most Frequent Reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 Boys Were Assigned to an Out-of-school Suspension in the 2013-2014 School Year

Student Misbehavior	<i>n</i>	Percent
Violated Local Code of Conduct	74,849	75.60
Fighting/Mutual Combat	16,898	17.10
Controlled Substance/Drugs	3,671	3.70
Assault Non-district Employee	904	0.90
Tobacco Use	548	0.60
Non-illegal Knife	489	0.50
Serious Misbehavior While in DAEP	343	0.30
Terroristic Threat	330	0.30
Assault District Employee	283	0.30
Alcohol Violation	244	0.203
Criminal Mischief	221	0.20
Conduct Punishable as a Felony	124	0.10
Permanent Removal by Teacher	57	0.10

Table 3.3

Descriptive Statistics for the Most Frequent Reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 Boys Were Assigned to an Out-of-school Suspension by Their Ethnicity/Race in the 2003-2004 School Year

Reasons	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian
	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age
Violated Local Code of Conduct	(<i>n</i> = 19,575) 77.0%	(<i>n</i> = 43,498) 76.9%	(<i>n</i> = 26,612) 77.5%	(<i>n</i> = 800) 79.5%
Fighting/Mutual Combat	(<i>n</i> = 3,428) 13.5%	(<i>n</i> = 7,221) 12.8%	(<i>n</i> = 5,362) 15.6%	(<i>n</i> = 157) 15.6%
Permanent Removal by Teacher	(<i>n</i> = 632) 2.5%	(<i>n</i> = 1,105) 1.9%	(<i>n</i> = 719) 2.1%	(<i>n</i> = 14) 1.4%
Controlled Substance/Drugs	(<i>n</i> = 570) 2.2%	(<i>n</i> = 1,559) 2.8%	(<i>n</i> = 215) 0.6%	(<i>n</i> = 11) 1.1%
Tobacco Use	(<i>n</i> = 123) 0.5%	(<i>n</i> = 193) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 57) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Terroristic Threat	(<i>n</i> = 55) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 102) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 40) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Assault District Employee	(<i>n</i> = 50) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 87) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 40) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Assault Non-district Employee	(<i>n</i> = 117) 0.5%	(<i>n</i> = 409) 0.7%	(<i>n</i> = 211) 0.6%	(<i>n</i> = 11) 1.1%
Criminal Mischief	(<i>n</i> = 57) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 335) 0.6%	(<i>n</i> = 60) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Serious/Persistent Misconduct	(<i>n</i> = 695) 2.7%	(<i>n</i> = 1,752) 3.1%	(<i>n</i> = 926) 2.7%	(<i>n</i> = 13) 1.3%

Note: Top 10 Most Frequent Reasons included in Table 3.3. Some reasons with few discipline assignments were not included.

Table 3.4

Descriptive Statistics for the Most Frequent Reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 Boys Were Assigned to an Out-of-school Suspension by Their Ethnicity/Race in the 2013-2014 School Year

Reasons	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian
	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age
Violated Local Code of Conduct	(<i>n</i> = 10,054) 77.0%	(<i>n</i> = 41,029) 75.6%	(<i>n</i> = 21,854) 73.7%	(<i>n</i> = 497) 75.6%
Fighting/Mutual Combat	(<i>n</i> = 1,817) 13.9%	(<i>n</i> = 7,963) 14.7%	(<i>n</i> = 6,644) 22.4%	(<i>n</i> = 134) 20.4%
Serious Misbehavior While in DAEP	(<i>n</i> = 86) 0.7%	(<i>n</i> = 164) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 93) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0%
Controlled Substance/Drugs	(<i>n</i> = 500) 3.8%	(<i>n</i> = 2,716) 5.0%	(<i>n</i> = 406) 1.4%	(<i>n</i> = 15) 2.3%
Tobacco Use	(<i>n</i> = 113) 0.9%	(<i>n</i> = 361) 0.7%	(<i>n</i> = 69) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 5) 0.8%
Non-illegal Knife	(<i>n</i> = 106) 0.8%	(<i>n</i> = 306) 0.6%	(<i>n</i> = 77) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Alcohol Violations	(<i>n</i> = 47) 0.4%	(<i>n</i> = 171) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 20) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 6) 0.9%
Assault Non-district Employee	(<i>n</i> = 130) 1.0%	(<i>n</i> = 504) 0.9%	(<i>n</i> = 261) 0.9%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Criminal Mischief	(<i>n</i> = 32) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 167) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 22) 0.1%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Terroristic Threat	(<i>n</i> = 81) 0.6%	(<i>n</i> = 169) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 75) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%

Note: Top 10 Most Frequent Reasons included in Table 3.4. Some reasons with few discipline assignments were not included.

Table 3.5

Descriptive Statistics for the Most Frequent Reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 Boys Were Assigned to an Out-of-school Suspension by Their Economic Status in the 2013-2014 School Year

Reasons	Not Poor	Moderately Poor	Very Poor
	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age
Violated Local Code of Conduct	(<i>n</i> = 10,850) 74.4%	(<i>n</i> = 3,884) 75.5%	(<i>n</i> = 48,524) 75.9%
Fighting/Mutual Combat	(<i>n</i> = 2,625) 17.9%	(<i>n</i> = 945) 18.4%	(<i>n</i> = 10,926) 17.1%
Serious Misbehavior	(<i>n</i> = 841) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 10) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 275) 4%
While in DAEP	(<i>n</i> = 524) 3.6%	(<i>n</i> = 176) 3.44%	(<i>n</i> = 2209) 3.4%
Controlled Substance/Drugs	(<i>n</i> = 128) 0.9%	(<i>n</i> = 23) 0.4%	(<i>n</i> = 344) 0.5%
Tobacco Use	(<i>n</i> = 106) 0.7%	(<i>n</i> = 34) 0.7%	(<i>n</i> = 306) 0.5%
Non-illegal Knife	(<i>n</i> = 57) 0.4%	(<i>n</i> = 10) 0.2%	(<i>n</i> = 160) 0.2%
Alcohol Violations	(<i>n</i> = 131) 0.9%	(<i>n</i> = 38) 0.7%	(<i>n</i> = 569) 0.9%
Assault Non-district Employee	(<i>n</i> = 30) 42%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0%	(<i>n</i> = 175) 0.3%
Assault District Employee	(<i>n</i> = 55) 0.4%	(<i>n</i> = 16) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 191) 0.3%
Terroristic Threat			

Note: Top 10 Most Frequent Reasons included in Table 3.5. Some reasons with few discipline assignments were not included.

CHAPTER IV

INEQUITIES IN THE REASONS MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS WERE ASSIGNED TO A DISCIPLINE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM PLACEMENT BY THEIR ETHNICITY/RACE AND ECONOMIC STATUS: A TEXAS MULTIYEAR ANALYSIS

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

Abstract

In this investigation, the most frequent reasons Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement and the extent to which these placements differed as a function of ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, White, Hispanic, and Asian) and student economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor) were determined. Archival data were obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System on all students in Grades 6, 7, and 8 for the 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 school years. Violations of the local code of conduct were determined to be the most frequent reason boys were assigned to Discipline Alternative Education Program placements. Inferential statistical procedures revealed the presence of statistically significant differences in the reasons boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in both school years. The majority of the Discipline Alternative Education Program placements were for the use of controlled substance/drugs, criminal mischief and assault of a school district employees. Implications for policy and for practice, as well as recommendations for future research, were discussed.

Keywords: Exclusionary Discipline, Misbehavior Reasons, Discipline Alternative Education Program placement, Inequities, Student Ethnicity/Race, Student Economic Status, Not Poor, Moderately Poor, Very Poor, Grade 6, 7, and 8, Texas

INEQUITIES IN THE REASONS MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS WERE ASSIGNED TO A
DISCIPLINE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM PLACEMENT BY THEIR
ETHNICITY/RACE AND ECONOMIC STATUS: A TEXAS MULTIYEAR
ANALYSIS

Initially created as a discipline consequence to manage zero-tolerance policies and reduce school violence, Discipline Alternative Education Programs were designed to offer a temporary alternative placement for students with severe misbehaviors who do not adhere to school policies (Cortez & Montecel, 1999; Henkel, Slate, & Martinez-Garcia, 2015; Hosley, 2003; Katsiyannis & Williams, 1998). Students can be removed from class and placed in a Discipline Alternative Education Program for any misbehavior that is included in a school district's local code of conduct that has been adopted by the school board (Texas Association of School Boards, 2016). Students who are assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program continue to receive academic instruction in the core curriculum in an alternate setting instead of being expelled from school (Texas Education Agency, 2010). In addition to providing academic instruction, Discipline Alternative Education Programs were designed to help address and correct the misbehaviors students exhibited to receive this exclusionary placement, while also providing a consequence for misbehavior (Booker & Mitchell, 2011).

In regard to Texas, the state of interest for this article, 128,319 Texas students were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in 2005 (Texas Education Agency, 2007). In 2012, over 90,000 students in Texas were placed in Discipline Alternative Education Programs (Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, 2013). Over 15% of Texas secondary students receive a Discipline Alternative Education

Program placement at least once between Grade 7 and Grade 12 by 2011 (Fabelo et al., 2011). In addition, placement in Discipline Alternative Education Programs has changed from mandatory placements due to zero-tolerance policies to more discretionary placements by school administration (Henkel et al., 2015). In fact, 80% of students in Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in 2010 were assigned based on discretionary reasons (Booker & Mitchell, 2010).

Unfortunately, students who received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement were likely to receive this consequence again in the following school years. Booker and Mitchell (2011) documented 8% of students who have received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement re-experienced a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement within the same school year and 37% of students re-experienced this consequence in the following school year. In another study, Constenbader and Markson (1998) established that students who had been suspended were not likely to change their precipitating misbehaviors if given another suspension assignment. That is, students who are assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement or similar consequence are likely to be assigned to this consequence again.

Inequities by student ethnicity/race and economic status are another concern regarding Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. The Texas Appleseed (2008) documented that Black students were sent to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement at more than twice the rate of their representation in school enrollment for noncriminal, discretionary offenses. Students who fall behind, misbehave, or are unsuccessful in a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement can be

expelled to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement, further negatively influencing student motivation to stay in school and achieve academic success (Fowler, Lightsey, Monger & Aseltine, 2010).

With respect to the negative influence of being assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement, exclusionary school discipline has been related to school dropout rates and to incarceration (Fowler et al., 2010; Skiba et al., 2014). Fabelo et al. (2011) documented that students who are suspended or expelled for a discretionary violation are three times more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system in the future. Therefore, placements in Discipline Alternative Education Programs contribute to the continuation of the school-to-prison pipeline. Of note is that high school drop-outs account for 80% of Texas adult inmates (Fowler et al., 2010).

In Texas, Lopez and Slate (2016) analyzed the extent to which differences were present in the assignment of Discipline Alternative Education Program placement by student economic status. Grade 7 and 8 students in poverty received statistically significantly more Discipline Alternative Education Program placements than their peers who were not economically disadvantaged. Grade 7 students in poverty received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement assignment four times more often than Grade 7 students who were not in poverty. Regarding Grade 8 students, students who were in poverty received more than three times the rate of Discipline Alternative Education Program placements than Grade 8 students who were not in poverty. Clear inequities were documented in the assignment of Discipline Alternative Education Program placements by student economic status. Moreover, Lopez and Slate (2016)

suggested the loss of instructional time for students who receive exclusionary discipline consequences is related to student academic performance.

Statement of the Problem

Students are being suspended or expelled at inequitable rates as a result of discipline consequences in public schools (Ritter, 2018; Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, 2018). A discipline gap exists in public schools between student groups and by ethnicity/race (Ritter, 2018). When students receive exclusionary discipline assignments, such as placement in a Discipline Alternative Education Program, students do not attend classes; therefore, they miss classroom instruction from teachers. According to Tiger and Slate (2017), low student achievement and higher student dropout rates result when students miss class due to exclusionary discipline assignments. Boneshefski and Runge (2014) stated inequities exist regarding students of color receiving disproportional discipline consequence, which have led to higher numbers of student retention in a grade level, school drop-out, and future placement in the prison (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014).

Consistent with the extant literature (e.g., Fowler et al., 2010; Ritter, 2018; Skiba et al., 2014), experts in the fields of education, mental health and criminal justice have determined school discipline is linked to school dropout and incarceration. In response to recent literature (e.g., Anderson & Ritter, 2017; Curran & Kitchin, 2018), school discipline reform is taking place in schools across the country (Ritter, 2018). Educational leaders, policymakers, and legislators need to identify the disparities in assignments to Discipline Alternative Education Program placement to help ensure discipline consequences are equitable.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. A second purpose of this empirical, multiyear analysis was to examine the extent to which the reasons middle school boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement differed by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian). A third purpose was to ascertain the degree to which the reasons middle school boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement differed by their economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor). For these three purposes of this article, two years of archival statewide data were analyzed. As such, the degree to which trends were present in the reasons middle school boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement were addressed. Finally, the extent to which trends were present in the relationship between the ethnicity/race and economic status of middle school boys and the reasons they were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement were determined.

Significance of the Study

Researchers (e.g., Coleman & Slate, 2016; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Skiba, Michael & Nardo, 2000) have examined the link between ethnicity/race and discipline for many years. Several studies are available concerning the effect of discipline on student achievement as a function of ethnicity/race and economic status. Few researchers, however, have analyzed the reasons students were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement as a function of their ethnicity/race and economic status across multiple years.

It is important to understand the reasons students from poor Black and Hispanic backgrounds receive more discipline assignments. Discovering the disparities between different ethnic/racial groups and economic backgrounds are important to address discipline issues. If educational leaders understand the reasons students are receiving discipline assignments most frequently, perhaps they can generate programs or interventions to address this issue.

Considering the negative effects of receiving repeated exclusionary discipline consequences and the presence of inequities in a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement, the reasons that students are assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement need to be identified. Determining common misbehavior reasons and inequities in discipline consequence assignments could help to address common misbehavior problems, and decrease the number of referrals, thus reducing the number of assignments to Discipline Alternative Education Program placement.

To date, only limited research exists in which inequities in reasons students were assigned to Discipline Alternative Education Programs have been examined. More detailed information than is currently available in the existing research literature will be provided. Through these results, educational leaders could examine their own school campuses to ascertain the generalizability of these results to their own settings.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this investigation: (a) What were the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement?; (b) What were the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program

placement by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian)?; (c) What were the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement by their economic status (i.e. Not Economically Disadvantaged, Moderately Poor, and Poor)?; (d) What is the effect of ethnicity/race on the reasons middle school boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement?; (e) What is the effect of economic status on the reasons middle school boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement?; (f) What trend is present in the reasons middle school boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement?; (g) What trend is present in the relationship between ethnicity/race and the reasons middle school boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement?; and (h) What trend is present in the relationship between economic status and the reasons middle school boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement? The first three research questions were repeated for the 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 school years whereas the last five research questions involved a comparison across all 10 school years.

Method

Research Design

In this nonexperimental quantitative study, a causal comparative design was utilized because the student misbehaviors and subsequent assignments to Discipline Alternative Education Program placement have already occurred (Creswell, 2014). Archival data were used to examine the degree to which reasons students were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement differed by ethnicity/race and

student economic status in Texas middle school in the 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 school years. The independent variables in this investigation are student ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) and student economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor). The dependent variables were the reasons students were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement.

Participants and Instrumentation

A request to the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System was made and then was fulfilled for the 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 school years for Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 8 boys who were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. The data included (a) reasons students were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement; (b) student ethnicity/race (i.e. Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian); and (c) student economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor). Data were only obtained on boys who were enrolled in public school districts in Texas.

Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs were created to provide students with an appropriate educational setting while they are suspended from school (Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, 2013). A Discipline Alternative Education Program placement is defined as an educational and self-discipline alternative instructional program, adopted by local policy, for students in elementary through high school grades who are removed from their regular classes for mandatory and discretionary disciplinary reasons and placed in a Discipline Alternative Education Program (Texas Education Agency, 2010). According to the Texas Education Code Section 37.008 (2013), every Texas school district must have a discipline education program.

Results

In the first three research questions of this study, descriptive statistics were calculated on the most frequent reasons boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. The reasons that boys were assigned to this consequence were calculated first for all students, and then separately by ethnicity/race, and then by student economic status.

Most Frequent Reasons Boys Were Assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program

Texas statewide data on all Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys who were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in the 2003-2004 school year were analyzed. A total of 37,982 Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in this school year. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most common reasons boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. The use of controlled substance/drugs was the second most frequent reason, followed by fighting/mutual combat, that boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. The fourth most common reason that boys were assigned to this consequence was for assaulting assault a non-district employee. Serious/persistent misconduct was the fifth most frequent misbehavior reason boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program. Table 4.1 contains the frequencies and percentages of the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in the 2003-2004 school year.

Insert Table 4.1 about here

Next, Texas statewide data on all Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys who were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in the 2013-2014 school year were analyzed. A total of 25,797 Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys had been assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most common reason boys were assigned to this consequence. Controlled substance/drugs were the second most frequent reason, followed by fighting/mutual combat. The fourth most common reason that boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement was for assaulting a non-district employee. Terroristic threats were the fifth most frequent misbehavior reason that boys were assigned to this consequence. Delineated in Table 4.2 are the frequencies and percentages of the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in the 2013-2014 school year.

Insert Table 4.2 about here

Regarding the degree to which trends were present in the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement, the results for both school years were examined. Strong trends were clearly evident across the 10-year period. The most frequent reason boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement across this 10-year period was

violations of the local code of conduct. Use of controlled substance/drugs was the second most frequent reason boys received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in both school years. The third reason boys received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement was for fighting/mutual combat across this 10-year period.

Most Frequent Reasons for Discipline Alternative Education Program Placements by Ethnicity/Race

The most frequent reasons Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement were analyzed for the 2003-2004 school year. For all four ethnic/racial groups, violation of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reason boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. The second most frequent reason White, Hispanic, and Asian boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement was for the use of controlled substance/drugs; whereas the second most frequent reason for Black boys was fighting/mutual combat. Assault of a non-district employee was the third most frequent reason Black and Asian boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement, whereas the third most frequent reason for White and Hispanic boys was for fighting/mutual combat. Permanent removal from the classroom was the fourth most frequent reason for Discipline Alternative Education Program placement for White and Asian boys; whereas the fourth most frequent reason for Hispanic boys was serious/persistent misconduct. The fourth most frequent reason Black boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement was the use of controlled substance/drugs. Readers are directed to Table 4.3 for

the frequencies and percentages of the most frequent reasons boys by their ethnicity/race were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement.

Insert Table 4.3 about here

Regarding the most frequent reasons boys by their ethnicity/race were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in the 2013-2014 school year, a descriptive analysis was conducted. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reasons boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement for all four ethnic/racial groups. Use of controlled substance/drugs were the second most frequent reason boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement for all four ethnic/racial groups. Fighting/mutual combat and Assault of a non-district employee were the third most frequent reason White boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. Fighting/mutual combat was the third most frequent reasons for Hispanic and Black boys. Alcohol violations were the third most frequent reason Asian boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. The frequencies and percentages of the most frequent reasons that middle school boys by their ethnicity/race were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program by ethnicity/race in the 2013-2014 school year are revealed in Table 4.4

Insert Table 4.4 about here

With respect to whether trends were present in the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement as a function of their ethnicity/race, results from the two school years were examined. Strong trends were clearly evident in reasons students were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement from the 2003-2004 school year to the 2013-2014 school year. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reason boys in the four ethnic/racial groups received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement across this 10-year period. The use of controlled substance/drugs was the second most frequent reason White, Hispanic, and Asian boys received an out-of-school suspension across this 10-year period. For Black boys, the second most frequent reason was not consistent, as fighting/mutual combat was the second most frequent reason in the 2003-2004 school year and use of controlled substance/drugs was the second most frequent reason in the 2013-2014 school year.

Most Frequent Reasons for Discipline Alternative Education Program Placements by Student Economic Status

The most frequent reasons boys by their economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor) were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program were not available for the 2003-2014 school year because the Texas Education Agency did not list student economic status in the dataset that they provided. Therefore, for this research question, data from only the 2013-2014 school year could be examined. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reasons boys who were Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor were assigned a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. The second most frequent reason boys from

the three economic groups were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement was the use of controlled substance/drugs. The third most frequent reason boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement was fighting/mutual combat for boys from all three economic groups. Assault of a non-district employee was the fourth most frequent reason boys in all three economic groups were assigned a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. Table 4.5 contains the frequencies and percentages of the most frequent reasons boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement by their economic status. Because only one year of school data were available for student economic status, the trend question previously posed could not be addressed.

Insert Table 4.5 about here

Differences in Reasons for Discipline Alternative Education Program Placements by Ethnicity/Race

To determine whether a difference was present in the most frequent reasons Texas middle school boys by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) were assigned a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement, Pearson chi-square statistics were calculated. Frequency data were present for the reasons students were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement and categorical data were present for student ethnicity/race. Accordingly, this procedure is an appropriate statistical procedure when both variables are nominal (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). The available sample size was large and the size per cell was more than five. Thus; the

assumptions were met for using a chi-square. Results will now be provided for the 2003-2004 school year and the 2013-2014 school year.

Concerning the fourth research question for the 2003-2004 school year, the result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 923.44, p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V was below small, .09 (Cohen, 1988). Statistically significant disparities were present in the reasons Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian students were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. Hispanic students received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement for violations of the local code of conduct almost twice as often as White students and more than two times as many than Black students. Almost seven times as many Hispanic students received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement for the use of controlled substance/drugs more than Black students and Hispanic students had almost three times as many referrals for use of controlled substance/drugs than White students. Almost twice as many Hispanic students received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement for fighting/mutual combat than White students and one and a half times as often as Black students. Hispanic students were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement for assault of a non-district employee three times more often than White students and almost twice as often as Black students. The majority of students who were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement for criminal mischief and conduct punishable as a felony were Hispanic. Readers are directed to Table 4.3 for the descriptive statistics on the analysis.

Concerning the fourth research question for the 2013-2014 school year, the result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 1055.81, p < .001$. The effect size for this finding,

Cramer's V, was small, .12 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 4.4, statistically significant disparities were revealed in the reasons Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. Hispanic boys received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement for violations of the local code of conduct more than twice as often than White and Black students and 134 times more than Asian boys. Similar to the 2003-2004 school year, Hispanic boys received substantially more referrals for the use of controlled substance/drugs than boys from the other ethnic/racial groups, at almost six times more often than White or Black students and 175 times more than Asian boys. Hispanic boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement for fighting/mutual combat almost four times more than White students, almost one and a half times as often as Black boys, and 126 times more than Asian boys. Hispanic boys received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement for assault of a non-district employee over three times as often as White boys and almost one and a half times as often as Black boys.

Differences in Reasons for Discipline Alternative Education Program Assignments by Student Economic Status

To determine whether a difference was present in the most frequent reasons boys were assigned to Discipline Alternative Education Program by their economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor), Pearson chi-square statistics were calculated. Frequency data were present for the reasons students were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement and categorical data were present for student economic status. As such, this procedure is an appropriate statistical procedure when both variables are nominal (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). The

available sample size provided was large and the size per cell was more than five. Thus, the assumptions were met for using a chi-square. As previously discussed, no data were available on student economic status for the 2003-2004 school year. Results will now be provided for the 2013-2014 school year.

Regarding the 2013-2014 school year on the extent to which differences were present in the reasons students by their economic status were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement, the result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 111.07, p < .001$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .05. (Cohen, 1988). Statistically significant disparities were present in the reasons students who were Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reasons (i.e., over 60%) students who were Not Poor and Moderately Poor received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. The use of controlled substance/drugs was the second most frequent reason boys from all student economic status were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. Of note, students who were Very Poor were assigned to 13 times as many Discipline Alternative Education Program placements for violations of the local code of conduct than students who were Moderately Poor and four and a half times as often as student who were Not Poor. Students who were Very Poor were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement for the use of controlled substance/drugs 15 times more often than students who were Moderately Poor and over four and a half times more often than students who were Not Poor. Over 13 times as many students who were Very Poor received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement for the

fighting/mutual combat than students who were Moderately Poor and almost six times more often than students who were Not Poor. Students who were Very Poor were suspended for assaulting a school district employee 42 times as often as students who were Moderately Poor and more than four times as often as students who were Not Poor. Of importance is students who were Very Poor received more Discipline Alternative Education Program placements for every misbehavior reason analyzed during the 2013-2014 school year. Readers are directed to Table 4.5 for the descriptive statistics on the analysis.

 Insert Table 4.5 about here

Discussion

In this investigation, the most frequent reasons Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in Texas by their ethnicity/race and economic status were addressed. Two school years of statewide archival data were obtained and analyzed across a 10-year period from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System.

Connections with Existing Literature

Results from this multiyear Texas statewide investigation were congruent with results of previous researchers (e.g., Coleman & Slate, 2016; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Lopez & Slate, 2016; Skiba, Michael, & Nardo, 2000) who examined the link between ethnicity/race, economic status, and discipline. In this multiyear statewide investigation of two school years of data, across a 10-year period, violations of the local code of

conduct were the most frequent reason middle school boys in Grades 6, 7, and 8 were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement from the four ethnic/racial groups (i.e., Black, White, Hispanic, and Asian) and the three economic status groups (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor). Statistically significant differences were present in the reasons boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement as a function of their ethnicity/race and economic status.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Several implications for policy and practice can be made from the results of this multiyear, empirical statewide analysis. First, educational leaders and school administrators need to analyze the reasons boys receive a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in their school districts to determine the most frequent reasons boys are assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. By examining the reasons boys receive a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement, educational leaders and administrators could see if disproportionalities are present in the reasons boys receive this discipline consequence. As such, educational leaders could use this information to target misbehaviors for which this discipline consequence is assigned. Another implication is to offer the students who received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement more support to help reduce misbehavior. School district leaders could provide the students who have behavior issues with additional support and intervention, such as additional support from the school counselors or district mentors. A third implication is for educational leaders and school administrators to analyze the behavior management training available to administrators, teachers, and staff in their school district. School districts leaders should ensure teachers

are prepared and trained to know how to manage discipline. Behavior management systems should be in place for teachers to have strategies to deal with student misbehavior. Educational leaders and school administrators could use this information to improve training teachers receive on behavior management. Another implication is that educational leaders and school administrators should examine the reasons students are placed in a Discipline Alternative Education Program as a function of ethnicity/race and economic status. Examining the most common reasons could help school district leaders determine if inequities are present in the assignment of Discipline Alternative Education Programs by student ethnicity/race and economic status. By examining this information, educational leaders and school administrators could work to eliminate disproportionate discipline referrals on their campus. A final recommendation is for Texas policymakers to require an analysis of the reasons boys are assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement to determine the degree to which inequities are present. Inequities could be indicative of civil rights violations to receive an appropriate and free education.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon the findings of this 10-year analysis, several recommendations for future research can be made. First, because this study was limited to Grade 6, 7 and 8, researchers are encouraged to analyze data at other grade levels. Second, because this study was limited to Texas, researchers are encouraged to examine similar data on boys in other states. The degree to which results based solely on Texas data would be generalizable to other states is not known. Third, data on only boys were analyzed in this study. As such, future researchers are encouraged to examine the most frequent reasons

girls are assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. In addition, data on girls in other grade levels could be examined. Another suggestion for future research would be to extend a study on girls to states other than Texas. Another recommendation is to conduct research over the reasons girls received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement as a function of their ethnicity/race to see if results are similar to the findings delineated in this article. Moreover, future researchers could examine data on girls as a function of their economic status to see if disparities are present. Finally, because reasons boys received a Discipline Alternative Education Program were identified, future researchers would be encouraged to conduct a qualitative study to determine why boys are misbehaving.

Conclusion

In this study, the most frequent reasons Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement were determined. Moreover, the extent to which the reasons boys were assigned to this consequence was examined to ascertain whether ethnic/racial and economic differences were present. Two years of archival statewide data over a 10-year period from the Texas Education Agency Public Information Management System were analyzed. In each of the school years, violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reason boys received a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. Inferential statistical analyses revealed the presence of inequities in the reasons boys were assigned to this exclusionary discipline consequence. Results from this multiyear Texas statewide investigation were congruent with results of previous researchers (e.g., Coleman & Slate, 2016; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Lopez & Slate, 2016; Skiba, Michael, & Nardo, 2000).

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Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics for the Most Frequent Reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 Boys Were Assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2003-2004 School Year

Student Misbehavior	<i>n</i>	Percent
Violated Local Code of Conduct	27,494	73.90
Controlled Substance/Drugs	3,390	9.10
Fighting/Mutual Combat	1,851	5.00
Assault Non-district Employee	1,140	3.10
Serious/Persistent Misconduct	942	2.50
Permanent Removal by Teacher	643	1.70
Conduct Punishable as a Felony	363	1.00
Assault District Employee	314	0.80
Terroristic Threat	297	0.80
Criminal Mischief	249	0.70
Alcohol Violation	191	0.50
School-Related Gang Violence	183	0.50
Tobacco Use	115	0.30
Truancy 3 to at least 10 Unexcused Absences	12	0.00

Table 4.2

Descriptive Statistics for the Most Frequent Reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 Boys Were Assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2013-2014 School Year

Student Misbehavior	<i>n</i>	Percent
Violated Local Code of Conduct	14,890	59.60
Controlled Substance/Drugs	5,257	21.00
Fighting/Mutual Combat	1,524	6.10
Assault Non-district Employee	1,284	5.10
Terroristic Threat	442	1.80
Assault District Employee	324	1.30
Alcohol Violation	323	1.30
Conduct Punishable as a Felony	302	1.20
Non-illegal knife	248	1.00
Criminal Mischief	191	0.80
Tobacco Use	119	0.50
Serious Misbehavior While in DAEP	75	0.30
Permanent Removal by Teacher	22	0.10

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics for the Most Frequent Reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 Boys Were Assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program Placement by Their Ethnicity/Race in the 2003-2004 School Year

Reasons	White <i>n</i> and %age	Hispanic <i>n</i> and %age	Black <i>n</i> and %age	Asian <i>n</i> and %age
Violated Local Code of Conduct	(<i>n</i> = 7,393) 76.3%	(<i>n</i> = 13,275) 71.1%	(<i>n</i> = 6,543) 77.0%	(<i>n</i> = 214) 83.3%
Fighting/Mutual Combat	(<i>n</i> = 459) 4.7%	(<i>n</i> = 836) 4.4%	(<i>n</i> = 544) 6.4%	(<i>n</i> = 12) 4.7%
Permanent Removal by Teacher	(<i>n</i> = 211) 2.1%	(<i>n</i> = 285) 1.5%	(<i>n</i> = 147) 1.7%	(<i>n</i> = 14) 1.4%
Controlled Substance/Drugs	(<i>n</i> = 811) 8.4%	(<i>n</i> = 2,222) 11.9%	(<i>n</i> = 331) 3.8%	(<i>n</i> = 16) 6.2%
Alcohol Violation	(<i>n</i> = 76) 0.8%	(<i>n</i> = 91) 0.5%	(<i>n</i> = 24) 0.3%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Terroristic Threat	(<i>n</i> = 95) 1.0%	(<i>n</i> = 152) 0.8%	(<i>n</i> = 50) 0.6%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Conduct Punishable as a Felony	(<i>n</i> = 91) 0.9%	(<i>n</i> = 208) 1.1%	(<i>n</i> = 64) 0.8%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Assault Non-district Employee	(<i>n</i> = 191) 2.0%	(<i>n</i> = 601) 3.2%	(<i>n</i> = 333) 3.9%	(<i>n</i> = 15) 5.8%
Criminal Mischief	(<i>n</i> = 48) 0.5%	(<i>n</i> = 165) 0.9%	(<i>n</i> = 36) 0.4%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0.0%
Serious/Persistent Misconduct	(<i>n</i> = 185) 1.9%	(<i>n</i> = 463) 2.5%	(<i>n</i> = 294) 3.5%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0%

Note: Top 10 Most Frequent Reasons included in Table 4.3. Some reasons with few discipline assignments were not included.

Table 4.4

Descriptive Statistics for the Most Frequent Reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 Boys Were Assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program Placement by Their Ethnicity/Race in the 2013-2014 School Year

Reasons	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian
	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age
Violated Local	(<i>n</i> = 2,898)	(<i>n</i> = 7,797)	(<i>n</i> = 3,810)	(<i>n</i> = 58)
Code of Conduct	65.2%	54.6%	66.4%	59.2%
Fighting/Mutual	(<i>n</i> = 205)	(<i>n</i> = 761)	(<i>n</i> = 524)	(<i>n</i> = 6)
Combat	4.6%	5.3%	9.1%	6.1%
Conduct Punishable	(<i>n</i> = 43)	(<i>n</i> = 182)	(<i>n</i> = 77)	(<i>n</i> = 0)
as a Felony	1.0%	1.2%	1.3%	0%
Controlled	(<i>n</i> = 674)	(<i>n</i> = 3,859)	(<i>n</i> = 645)	(<i>n</i> = 22)
Substance/Drugs	15.2%	27.0%	11.2%	22.4%
Tobacco Use	(<i>n</i> = 43)	(<i>n</i> = 67)	(<i>n</i> = 9)	(<i>n</i> = 0)
	1.0%	0.5%	0.2%	0%
Non-illegal Knife	(<i>n</i> = 65)	(<i>n</i> = 155)	(<i>n</i> = 28)	(<i>n</i> = 0)
	1.4%	1.1%	0.5%	0.0%
Alcohol Violations	(<i>n</i> = 74)	(<i>n</i> = 203)	(<i>n</i> = 34)	(<i>n</i> = 7)
	1.7%	1.4%	0.6%	7.1%
Assault Non-district	(<i>n</i> = 205)	(<i>n</i> = 691)	(<i>n</i> = 365)	(<i>n</i> = 5)
Employee	4.6%	4.8%	6.4%	5.1%
Assault District	(<i>n</i> = 59)	(<i>n</i> = 154)	(<i>n</i> = 103)	(<i>n</i> = 0)
Employee	1.3%	1.0%	1.8%	0.0%
Terroristic Threat	(<i>n</i> = 108)	(<i>n</i> = 221)	(<i>n</i> = 107)	(<i>n</i> = 0)
	2.4%	1.5%	1.9%	0.0%

Note: Top 10 Most Frequent Reasons included in Table 4.4. Some reasons with few discipline assignments were not included.

Table 4.5

Descriptive Statistics for the Most Frequent Reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 Boys Were Assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program Placement by Their Economic Status in the 2013-2014 School Year

Reasons	Not Poor	Moderately Poor	Very Poor
	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age	<i>n</i> and %age
Violated Local Code of Conduct	(<i>n</i> = 2,247) 60.6%	(<i>n</i> = 759) 63.9%	(<i>n</i> = 10,286) 60.3%
Fighting/Mutual Combat	(<i>n</i> = 193) 5.2%	(<i>n</i> = 82) 6.9%	(<i>n</i> = 1,124) 6.6%
Conduct Punishable as a Felony	(<i>n</i> = 33) 0.9%	(<i>n</i> = 5) 0.4%	(<i>n</i> = 214) 1.3%
Controlled Substance/Drugs	(<i>n</i> = 738) 19.9%	(<i>n</i> = 229) 19.3%	(<i>n</i> = 3,444) 20.2%
Tobacco Use	(<i>n</i> = 20) 0.5%	(<i>n</i> = 0) 0%	(<i>n</i> = 93) 0.5%
Non-illegal Knife	(<i>n</i> = 48) 1.3%	(<i>n</i> = 19) 1.6%	(<i>n</i> = 146) 0.9%
Alcohol Violations	(<i>n</i> = 92) 2.5%	(<i>n</i> = 15) 1.3%	(<i>n</i> = 197) 1.2%
Assault Non-district Employee	(<i>n</i> = 180) 4.9%	(<i>n</i> = 49) 4.1%	(<i>n</i> = 859) 5.0%
Assault District Employee	(<i>n</i> = 48) 1.3%	(<i>n</i> = 5) 0.4%	(<i>n</i> = 210) 1.2%
Terroristic Threat	(<i>n</i> = 73) 2.0%	(<i>n</i> = 25) 2.1%	(<i>n</i> = 273) 1.5%

Note: Top 10 Most Frequent Reasons included in Table 4.5. Some reasons with few discipline assignments were not included.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which differences were present in the reasons students were assigned an exclusionary discipline consequence (i.e., in-school suspension in study one, out-of-school suspension in study two, and Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in study three) by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) and by their economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor). Two years of Texas statewide data, over a 10-year period, were analyzed in all three articles to determine the extent to which trends were present in the reasons Texas middle school students were assigned to an exclusionary disciplinary consequence by their ethnicity/race and their economic status. As such, trends were determined in the most frequent reasons Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys were assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences in Texas. In this Chapter V is a discussion of the results of each of the three articles. Implications for policy and practice are also included. Finally, recommendations for future research are given.

Summary of Results of Article One

In the first study, the most frequent reasons Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys were assigned to an in-school suspension for by their ethnicity/race and economic status were addressed. Two school years of statewide archival data were obtained and analyzed across the 10-year time period from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System. Results from this multiyear Texas statewide investigation were congruent with results of previous researchers (e.g., Coleman & Slate, 2016; Noltemeyer & McLoughlin, 2010; Skiba, 2015; Tiger & Slate, 2017) regarding the

presence of inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences by ethnicity/race and student economic status. In this empirical statewide Texas investigation of two school years of data, across a 10-year period, violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reason middle school boys in Grades 6, 7, and 8 were assigned to in-school suspension for all instances for Black, White, Hispanic, and Asian boys and for the three economic groups. Hispanic boys and boys who were Very Poor had the highest number of referrals to in-school suspension for every misbehavior reason.

Summary of Results of Article Two

In the second article, the most frequent reasons Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension by their ethnicity/race and economic status were addressed. Two school years of statewide archival data were obtained and analyzed across the 10-year time period from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System to determine the most frequent reasons students were assigned to out-of-school suspension. Another purpose was to ascertain the degree to which statistically significant differences were present in the reasons students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension by their ethnicity/race and economic status.

Results from this multiyear Texas statewide investigation were congruent with results of previous researchers (e.g., Henkel, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Skiba et al., 2014; Tiger & Slate, 2017, U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reason middle school boys in Grades 6, 7, and 8 were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Statistically significant differences were present in the reasons boys

were assigned to out-of-school suspension as a function of ethnicity/race and student economic status.

Summary of Results of Article Three

In the third article, the most frequent reasons Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in Texas by their ethnicity/race and economic status were addressed. Two school years of statewide archival data were obtained and analyzed across a 10-year time period from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System.

In this multiyear statewide investigation of two school years of data, across a 10-year period, violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reason middle school boys in Grades 6, 7, and 8 were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement from the four ethnic/racial groups (i.e., Black, White, Hispanic, and Asian) and the three economic status groups (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Very Poor). Statistically significant differences were present in the reasons boys were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement as a function of their ethnicity/race and economic status.

Connections with the Existing Research Literature

Results from the three articles in this journal-ready dissertation were congruent with results of previous researchers (e.g., Coleman & Slate, 2016; Noltemeyer & McLoughlin, 2010; Skiba, 2015; Tiger & Slate, 2017) regarding the presence of inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences by ethnicity/race and student economic status. In the analyses of two school years of data in each of the three articles, , across a 10-year period, violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent

reason middle school boys in Grades 6, 7, and 8 were assigned to in-school suspension, to an out-of-school suspension, and to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement. In previous investigations by Schlitzberger and Slate (2018) and Curtiss and Slate (2015), the most frequent reasons students were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence were addressed. Results of the three investigations in this journal-ready dissertation were congruent with their results. As such, more information is now available on the reasons boys are assigned to an in-school suspension, to an out-of-school suspension, and to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement, as related to their ethnicity/race and economic status.

Implications for Policy and for Practice

Based upon the results of the three articles conducted in this journal-ready dissertation several implications for policy and practice can be made. First, educational leaders and school administrators need to analyze the reasons boys received any exclusionary discipline consequence on their school campuses. By auditing the reasons boys are assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence, educational leaders and administrators could use this information to determine if disproportionalities exist in the reasons students are assigned these discipline consequences. Another implication is to examine the support services provided to students and to teachers to assist in the reduction of student misbehaviors. School district leaders must provide the students who have discipline referrals additional intervention and support. Such interventions could include support from the school counselors to build relationships with students who have behavior problems and to offer behavioral interventions. A third implication is to analyze the behavior management training that administrators, teachers, and staff receive in their

school district. Teachers should be prepared and trained to know how to manage discipline to maximize instruction. School district-wide behavior management system should be in place to ensure teachers are equipped with strategies to manage student misbehavior. Educational leaders and school administrators could use this information to target the reasons students are assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence and to improve the training teachers receive on behavior management techniques in the classroom.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon the results of the three articles in this journal-ready dissertation, several suggestions can be made for future research. First, because all three studies were limited to data on students in Grades 6, 7, and 8, researchers are encouraged to analyze data on students in both lower grade levels and in higher grade levels. The extent to which the results delineated herein on middle school boys are generalizable to either elementary school boys or to high school boys is not known. Second, because all three articles were restricted to data analyses on only boys, researchers are encouraged to extend this study to analyze data on girls. The degree to which the results of the three articles in this journal-ready dissertation would be generalizable to girls is not known. Third, because the data that were analyzed in all three articles were from Texas schools, researchers are encouraged to replicate these investigations in states other than Texas. Whether the results from the three articles in this journal-ready dissertation would generalize to boys in other states is unclear.

Fourth, researchers are recommended to analyze reasons students are assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence by other student demographic characteristics

such as ethnicity/race and economic status. Given the research findings of inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences by student ethnicity/race and economic status, these same inequities might be present with respect to the reasons students are assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence. Fifth, only two school years of data were analyzed in the three articles in this journal-ready dissertation. As such, future researchers are encouraged to analyze data from multiple years and/or more recent years to improve the generalizability of the results.

Sixth, the results of the three articles discussed herein were based solely on quantitative data. Accordingly, researchers are recommended to conduct mixed-methods and/or qualitative investigations into the reasons students are assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences. Such information would provide a more nuanced approach to understanding student misbehavior than is possible with archival data.

Conclusion

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which differences were present in the reasons students were assigned an exclusionary discipline consequence (i.e., in-school suspension in study one, out-of-school suspension in study two, and Discipline Alternative Education Program placement in study three) by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian) and by their economic status (i.e., Not Economically Disadvantaged, Moderately Poor, and Poor). Two years of archival statewide data from the Texas Education Agency Public Information Management System over a 10-year period were analyzed. Violations of the local code of conduct were the most frequent reasons middle school boys were assigned to all three exclusionary discipline consequences for both school years. As such, findings of this

multiyear Texas statewide investigation were congruent with results of previous researchers (e.g., Coleman & Slate, 2016; Henkel, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Noltemeyer & McLoughlin, 2010; Skiba, 2015; Tiger & Slate, 2017; U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education, 2014) regarding the presence of disparities in the assignment of discipline consequences and disparities in misbehavior reasons (Curtiss & Slate, 2015; Schlitzberger & Slate, 2018) by student ethnicity/race and economic status. Results were consistent across all three grade levels and across both school years of data that were analyzed over a 10-year period. Clearly established in the three articles of this journal-ready dissertation was the presence of inequities in the reasons middle school boys were assigned to an in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement by their ethnicity/race and by their economic status. As such, these inequities were indicative of civil rights violations to receive a free and appropriate education.

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APPENDIX



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/

DATE: September 5, 2018

TO: Shara Schlitzberger [Faculty Sponsor: Dr. John Slate]

FROM: Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: *Exclusionary Discipline Assignments of Middle School Students as a Function of Ethnicity/Race and Economic Status: A Texas Multiyear Investigation [T/D]*

PROTOCOL #: 2018-07-41469

SUBMISSION TYPE: INITIAL SUBMISSION

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: September 5, 2018

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

Shara B. Schlitzberger

Educational History

Doctorate of Education—Educational Leadership, December 2018

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

Dissertation: Exclusionary Disciplinary Consequence Assignments of Middle School Students as a Function of Ethnicity/Race and Economic Status: A Texas Multiyear Investigation

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Professional Licensure and Certifications

State of Texas School Counseling Certification (PK-12)

State of Texas Generalist Teaching Certification (EC-4)

Publications

Schlitzberger, S. B., & Slate, J. R. (2018). A descriptive analysis of the most common student misbehaviors for Texas middle school students. *Journal of Educational System*, 2(1), 34-40.

Presentations

Schlitzberger, S. (2017, October). *A descriptive analysis of the most common student misbehaviors for Texas middle school students*. Paper presented at the Graduate Research Exchange at the Fall meeting for the Texas Council of Professors of Educational Administration (TCPEA), Dallas, TX.

Work or Professional Experiences

High School Counselor, Clear Falls High School, Clear Creek Independent School District, 2018-Current

Middle School Counselor, Alexander Middle School, Pearland Independent School District, 2016-2008

Elementary School Counselor, Silverlake Elementary, Pearland Independent School District, 2014-2016

Fourth Grade Teacher, Sparks Elementary, Pasadena Independent School District, 2013-2014

Second Grade Teacher, Laura Bush Elementary, Pasadena Independent School District, 2011-2013

First Grade Teacher, Eagle Heights Christian Academy, Pearland, TX, 2009-2011

Fifth Grade Science Tutor, Alexander Middle School, Pearland Independent School District, 2007-2008

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Who's Who Among America's Teachers Winner, 2005-2006