

Variables Associated With the Disciplinary Actions Received  
by Middle and High School African-American Students  
in Public Schools: A Synthesis of Studies

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VARIABLES ASSOCIATED WITH THE DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS  
RECEIVED BY MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: A SYNTHESIS OF STUDIES

by  
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(ABSTRACT)

This project was a synthesis of studies of the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools. This synthesis was conducted for three reasons: (1) to identify and collect studies on the variables associated with the disciplining of African-American students, (2) to examine how the variables contribute to African-American students being disproportionately disciplined when compared to other ethnic groups, and (3) to examine how the variables could be managed so that the need to discipline African-American students is reduced.

Twenty-nine variables were identified from a synthesis of 13 studies. These variables were placed into three categories: personal variables, environmental variables, and institutional variables. Twenty-three variables were found to be associated with the number of disciplinary actions received by African-American students. These variables are listed below by category:

Personal variables. Parental involvement, socioeconomic status, fondness of teacher, ethnicity, gender, feelings of alienation (powerlessness, normlessness), attitude toward peers, and social involvement (participation in school activities, number of positions of responsibility, frequency of association with adults, and frequency of association with African-Americans).

Environmental variable. Peer pressure.

Institutional variables. Enforcement of school rules, organizational climate, sports activities, school violence, desegregation (influx of black students), level of satisfaction with the school environment (student activities, communication, school work,

and decision-making opportunities), and in combination, perceived leader behaviors, perceived school climate, and school size.

Ten variables that contribute to the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by African-American students when compared to other ethnic groups were found. These variables are listed below by category:

Personal variables. Grades in the previous semester, past discipline record, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, feelings of alienation (personal incapacity, guidelessness).

Environmental variable. School socioeconomic status.

Institutional variables. Student demeanor rating, desegregation (influx of African-American students).

Recommendations were made for managing the variables to reduce the need to discipline African-American students. Recommendations included implementing initiatives on working with students in poverty, providing cultural diversity workshops for faculty, and analyzing discipline data for disparities in the number of disciplinary actions received by students.

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## DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to disciplined African-American males everywhere.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION: DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY

Discipline is a critical issue in public middle and high schools. Students who are continuously the recipients of disciplinary actions in school often have poor academic achievement. The disciplining of African-American students in desegregated public schools began to be studied following the landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. Researchers studying the disciplining of African-American students in desegregated public schools found that African-American students were disproportionately represented in the disciplinary actions received by students (Bakersville, 1978; Frahm, 1983; Goldsmith, 1979; Larkin 1982; Mason, 1980; Robinson, 1979).

Today, studies on the disciplining of African-American students in public schools continue to indicate that African-American students, especially African-American males, are receiving a disproportionate number of disciplinary actions when compared to other ethnic groups (Gregory, 1995; Morgan, 1991; Panko-Stilmock, 1996; Wu, Pink, Crane, & Mole, 1982). The disproportionate number of African-American students receiving disciplinary actions has been attributed to a combination of personal, environmental, and institutional variables (Ciminillo 1980; James-Brown, 1995; Kunjufu, 1988; McIntyre, 1984; Townsend, 2000; Williams, 1989).

The question of how the variables associated with the disciplining of African-American students can be managed so that the need to discipline them is reduced continues to be a problem in education for administrators, teachers, and others. School districts, educators, colleges, parents, and all others who may directly or indirectly be involved with the disciplining of African-American students in public schools can benefit from a synthesis of the research findings on the variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by African-American students in public schools.

#### Statement of the Problem

According to Gibbs (1988), a good school setting is one in which a climate conducive to effective teaching and learning is present. School systems and individual schools attempt to ensure that these conditions are met by developing policies pertaining to school conduct, which include negative sanctions to be imposed when these policies

are violated. Such sanctions have come to be known as student discipline. African-American students receive disciplinary actions in school more than any other ethnic group. As a result, African American students may become disenchanting with school and their academic success is jeopardized.

In this study, the researcher sought to identify the variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools. The researcher focused on how these variables contribute to the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by African-American students in comparison to other ethnic groups. The researcher examined how these variables could be managed to improve the interactions between African-American students and those in the educational system that work with them so that the need to discipline African-American students is reduced.

#### Context of the Problem

Researchers investigating the disciplining of African-American students in public middle and high schools have found that when compared to other ethnic groups, African-American students were being disproportionately disciplined (Campbell, Achilles, Faires, & Martin, 1982; Morris & Goldring, 1999; South Carolina Human Affairs Commission, 1976; Thornton & Trent, 1988; Townsend, 2000). In 1972, John Bell, Chief of the Education Branch of Region 5, Office of Civil Rights (as cited in Hudgens, 1977), notified the superintendent of the Dallas Independent School System of a possible violation of the civil rights of African-American students. The letter stated that his finding was based on preliminary analysis of school system data which indicated that African-American students comprised less than 22% percent of the total enrollment in the schools studied, but received 40% of the total student suspensions in each of ten categories of reasons for suspension. In a report on suspension in Boston's high schools, Miller (1975) reported that during the 1973-1974 school year African-American students represented 28% of the student population, but received 34% of the suspensions. In junior high school, African-American students comprised 40% of the student enrollment, but received 48% of the suspensions.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (as cited in Montgomery, 1977), registered a complaint against the Little Rock, Arkansas, School

System for alleged discrimination against African-American students. Five hundred forty-six African-American students and 105 white students were suspended during the first semester of the 1974-1975 school year. Eighty-five percent of the suspensions during the school year were received by African-American students and 15 percent of the suspensions during the 1974-1975 school year were received by white students.

In 1975, the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) released a national study on discipline in public schools. The CDF obtained and analyzed suspension data submitted to the Office of Civil Rights by 2,862 school districts in which 24,188,681 children attend school. Findings showed that over a million students were suspended during the 1972-1973 school year (see Table 1). The single most frequent reason students were suspended was for fighting (36%). Most of the other infractions for which schools imposed suspensions on students were for nonviolent reasons (e.g., truancy and tardiness, disobeying teacher, talking back to teacher). CDF found that the percentage of African-American students suspended (6%) was greater than the percentage of students suspended from any other ethnic group. African-American students' average length of suspension (4.46 days) was longer than the average length of suspension of students from any other ethnic group (see Table 2). Furthermore, CDF found that although African-American students accounted for 27% of the enrollment of the reporting districts, they constituted approximately 40% of the suspensions. African-American students were suspended three times as often as whites in elementary school and twice as often as whites in secondary school.

Findings from more current studies on the disciplining of African-American students show that the disproportionate disciplining of African-American students in public schools still exists. The Florida Department of Education (1983) found that for the 1981-1982 school year 86,875 students were suspended throughout Florida. African-American students received 32,946 or 38% of the suspensions, while white students received 49,248 or 57% of the suspensions. The percentages of African-American and white students in Florida's school system were 23% and 68%, respectively. Expulsions and in-school suspensions showed a disparity as well. A study conducted by the National Coalition of Advocates for Students (1988) found that in 1984 the proportion of African-American students suspended at the state level ranged from a high of 21% in Wisconsin

Table 1

Number and Percentage of Students Suspended by State, Ranked by PercentageSuspended (1972-1973)<sup>a</sup>

Rank	State	Number suspended	Percent suspended <sup>b</sup>
1	Rhode Island	2,558	8.8
2	Louisiana	72,792	8.6
3	Connecticut	14,609	7.2
4	Pennsylvania	43,842	6.8
5	Wisconsin	12,759	6.8
6	New Jersey	36,554	6.4
7	South Carolina	39,214	6.2
8	Idaho	1,709	6.1
9	Delaware	3,904	5.9
10	Illinois	55,004	5.6
11	Virginia	39,365	5.4
12	Florida	76,185	5.1
13	Kansas	9,230	5.1
14	Ohio	38,566	4.8
15	Michigan	31,111	4.6
16	Indiana	18,612	4.3
17	California	141,768	4.0
18	North Carolina	40,615	3.9
19	Georgia	38,725	3.9
20	Maryland	32,030	3.9
21	Colorado	13,333	3.9
22	Arkansas	10,338	3.9
23	Massachusetts	9,041	3.9
24	Minnesota	4,308	3.7
25	Tennessee	20,880	3.6
26	Missouri	12,368	3.6
27	Oregon	2,280	3.5
28	Kentucky	9,746	3.4
29	Oklahoma	9,886	3.2
30	Wyoming	779	3.1
31	Texas	63,466	2.8
32	Mississippi	14,096	2.8
33	New York	43,245	2.7
34	Alabama	19,948	2.6
35	Alaska	1,981	2.6

(table continues)

Table 1 (continued)

Rank	State	Number suspended	Percent suspended <sup>b</sup>
36	West Virginia	4,265	2.5
37	New Mexico	5,844	2.4
38	Iowa	2,923	2.4
39	Nevada	2,698	2.3
40	Utah	1,954	2.0
41	North Dakota	58	2.0
42	Washington	3,459	1.9
43	District of Columbia	2,657	1.9
44	Arizona	2,733	1.0
45	South Dakota	247	1.0
46	Montana	29	0.2
47	Nebraska	66	0.1
Total		1,011,780	

Note. Adapted from Children's Defense Fund. (1975). School suspensions: Are they helping children? Cambridge, MA: Author.

<sup>a</sup>No districts in Hawaii, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont were surveyed by Office of Civil Right.

<sup>b</sup>Percentage of the state's public school students suspended.

Table 2

Totals From the Office of Civil Rights Survey of Students Suspended During the 1972-

1973 School Year

Ethnicity	October enrollment	Number suspended	Average length of suspension in days	Percentage suspended
White	15,163,546	471,948	3.55	3.1
Black	6,553,104	392,437	4.46	6.0
Spanish	2,153,923	57,402	3.53	2.7
Indian	141,720	3,955	3.60	2.8
Asian	176,388	1,987	3.13	1.1
Total	24,188,681	1,012,347	4.01	4.2

Note. Adapted from Children's Defense Fund. (1975). School suspensions: Are they helping children? Cambridge, MA: Author.

to a low of 1% in North Dakota. African-American students were suspended at rates well in excess of white students in all but two (North Dakota and Massachusetts) of the fifty states. A study by the New Orleans School Board (as cited in Thrasher, 1997) revealed that African-American males made up 43% of the school population. Yet, they accounted for 65% of the suspensions and 80% of the expulsions during the 1986-87 school year. In the 1990-1991 school year, Oakland, California, public schools were comprised of 56% African Americans. African-American students accounted for 80% of all suspensions (Commission for Positive Change in Oakland Public Schools, 1992).

Gregory (1995) conducted a study using secondary analyses of data obtained from an Office of Civil Rights 1992 biennial census survey on the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary action for students. The survey was given to 4,692 of the nation's public schools and to over 43,034 public school students across the nation. Using only the data from the 30 states (and the District of Columbia) in which corporal punishment was still legal, Gregory found that African-American students were more likely to receive corporal punishment when compared to white students. African-American males received the most corporal punishment. They were almost three times more likely to be hit in school by an adult than a white male and sixteen times more likely to be hit than a white female. Gregory also found that African-American males were twice as likely to be suspended when compared to white males and six times more likely to be suspended than white females (see Table 3).

The 1998 Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Compliance Report from the Office of Civil Rights provided data on the disciplinary actions received by American students in public schools in the United States. Data from the report showed that African-American students receive a disproportionate number of the disciplinary actions in public schools. African-American students comprised 17% of the student population of the United States. Yet, they received 37% of the corporal punishments, 33% of the suspensions, and 31% of the expulsions given to students as disciplinary actions in public schools during the 1997-1998 school year.

Data from the 1998 Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Compliance Report for each state show that African-American students are the most frequent recipients of corporal punishment in public schools. For the 21 states reporting data on

Table 3

Corporal Punishment and Suspension Likelihood Ratios of African-American Students

Versus Other Comparison Groups (1995)

Comparison groups	Likelihood ratios
	<u>Corporal punishment</u>
AA <sup>a</sup> students to white students	3.26 to 1
AA <sup>a</sup> males to white males	2.81 to 1
AA <sup>a</sup> males to white females	16.00 to 1
	<u>Suspension</u>
AA <sup>a</sup> males to white males	2.14 to 1
AA <sup>a</sup> males to white females	6.29 to 1

Note. Adapted from Gregory, J. F. (1995). The crime of punishment: Racial and gender disparities in the use of corporal punishment in U.S. public schools. Journal of Negro Education, 64 (4), 454-462. Adapted with the permission of the publisher.

<sup>a</sup>AA=American-American.

the use of corporal punishment, African-American students received a disproportionate amount of corporal punishment in 15 (68%) of the states. The greatest disproportion between the percentage of African-American students enrolled in public schools and the percentage of African-American students receiving corporal punishment occurred in the states of Wyoming and Arizona. In Arizona, African-Americans students comprised 4% of the student population in public schools, but received 19% of the corporal punishments given as a disciplinary measure to students. In Wyoming, African-Americans were 1% of the student population. Yet, they received 5% of the corporal punishments.

Findings from the 1998 Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Compliance Report for each state indicated that African-American students are the most frequent recipients of suspensions in public schools. In 48 (96%) of the fifty states, African-American students received a disproportionate number of the suspensions in public schools. Only two states, Nevada and Oregon, did not suspend African-American students in disproportion to their percentage of enrollment. The greatest disproportion between the percentage of African-American students enrolled in public schools and the percentage of African-American students receiving suspensions occurred in the states of Minnesota and Iowa. In Minnesota, African-American students were 6% of the public school population, but received 26% of the suspensions given to students. In Iowa, African-American students were 4% of the public school population and received 15% of the suspensions.

Findings from the 1998 Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Compliance Report for each state indicated that African-American students are the most frequent recipients of expulsions in public schools. In 40 (83)% of the 48 states that use expulsion as a disciplinary action, African-American students received a disproportionate number of expulsions. The greatest disproportion between the percentage of African-American students enrolled in public schools and the percentage of African-American students receiving expulsions occurred in the states of Rhode Island and Missouri. In Rhode Island, African-American students were 7% of the public school population, but received 35% of the expulsions given to students as a disciplinary action. In Missouri, African-American students were 17% of the public school population and received 59% of the expulsions.

Data from the 1998 Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Compliance Report on the disciplining of African-American students in public schools for the researcher's home state, Virginia, indicated that African-American students received a disproportionate number of the disciplinary actions. African-American students were 28% of the public school enrollment. They received 49% of the suspensions and 51% of the expulsions. Corporal punishment was not measured because it is illegal in Virginia.

Within the locality in which the researcher conducted this research project, findings from a study done by the Montgomery County School System show that there was a great disparity in the number of discipline being received by African-American students in comparison to white students. During the 1994 through 1996 school years, 65% of the county's 396 black students were disciplined at least once. Of the 8,783 non-black students, 40% were disciplined (Lu, 1998). One finding was that at one of the county's high schools, all 40 of the African-American males attending had been disciplined at least once (Lu, 1998).

The disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by African-American students in public schools appears to be a mirror image of the disproportionate numbers found when examining the plight of African-Americans in larger society. America is not an easy place for African-Americans to live. Stereotyping and other forms of discrimination through the media and other arenas of society toward African-Americans have led to a life of turmoil for many blacks. The following statistics provide a snapshot of the African-American experience in America:

- African-American males are more than twice as likely to be unemployed as white males (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1988).
- There are more blacks in federal prisons (38%, Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2001) than who have completed a bachelor's degree (14%, U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).
- Since 1983, 44% of all African-American children ages 9-18 lived in households where the father was absent, and 71% of all African-American families living below the poverty line were headed by females (Brown et. al, 1990).
- African-American males represent 6% of the country's population, but more than 50% of the prison population (Rowan, 1996).

- Homicide is the leading cause of death among African-American males between the ages of 15 and 24 (Mathews, 1996).
- African-American students represent 17% of the U.S. public school enrollment, but 41% of the students in special education (Kunjufu, 1986).
- African-American students are twice as likely as whites to be suspended from school, physically punished by school officials, or labeled mentally retarded (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1988).

#### Purpose of the Study

Personal, environmental, and institutional variables that affect the disciplining of African-American students were identified in this study. The results of the study may be used to promote educational reform within public education. School districts, educators, universities, parents, and others involved in the disciplining of African-American students may use the data to manage the personal, environmental, and institutional variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by African-American students in public schools. The areas of curriculum, personnel, and pedagogy may be restructured to make the educational experience of African-American students a more successful one.

The study also included analysis of how personal, environmental, and institutional variables contribute to the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by African-American students in public schools. The disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by African-American students in public schools suggests the need for schools to recognize that this condition demands immediate attention. The information gathered in this study may be helpful to others as they create policies and programs for the disciplining of students. The results of this study may aid school personnel in eliminating gaps in their understanding of the variables that affect the disciplining of African-American students. This study is a base for future research on African-American students and the variables associated with disciplining them fairly and effectively within public schools.

#### Guiding Questions

Three guiding questions provided direction for this synthesis of studies. The guiding questions are:

What are the personal, environmental, and institutional variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools?

How do the personal, environmental, and institutional variables contribute to the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools?

How can educators more effectively manage the personal, environmental, and institutional variables associated with the disciplining of middle and high school African-American students in public schools so that the need to discipline them is reduced?

#### Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions applied.

African-American students--American students of African descent. The terms African American and black are used interchangeably.

Disciplinary actions—Any consequence given to a student for misbehavior as a result of being referred to an administrator by a teacher. Examples include detention, suspension, expulsion, and corporal punishment.

Disproportionate number—A number or percentage of disciplinary actions received by an ethnic group of students that is greater than their number or percentage of enrollment within the school or school system. Example: A school system with a population of 10% African-American students with discipline data indicating that more than 10% of its African-American population received discipline actions would be considered to have a disproportionate percentage of disciplinary actions for African-American students.

Environmental variables—Characteristics of the student's environment.

Institutional variables—Characteristics of the institution that have an influence on the disciplining of African-American students (e.g., tracking).

Personal variables—Characteristics of individuals that contribute to their educational experience. Personal variables included race, gender,

socioeconomic status, and others that emerged from the studies reviewed.

Pre-study review of the literature—Review conducted in the manner of the usual literature review. The purpose of this review was to ascertain the literature on the disciplining of African-American students in public schools. One hundred thirteen articles and studies were examined as a part of this literature review. From the pre-study literature review, 13 studies became a part of the synthesis.

#### Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 includes an introduction and development of the study, statement of the problem, context of the problem, purpose of the study, guiding questions, definitions of terms used in the study, and the organization of the study. Chapter 2 contains a pre-study review of the literature on personal, environmental, and institutional variables related to the disciplining of African-American students in public schools, a summary of the literature review, and a pre-study conceptual model. Chapter 3 contains the research methodology, the search sources for the studies in the synthesis, criteria for selection of the studies, and the list of the studies in the synthesis. Chapter 3 also includes methods used in synthesizing the findings of the studies and a community of scholars. Chapter 4 includes a summary and discussion of each study, a summary of findings for the studies in the synthesis, and three post-study conceptual models. Chapter 5 includes a summary; conclusions, analysis of variables, and recommendations for educators; a discussion; and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### PRE-STUDY REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study is a synthesis of findings from 13 studies on the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools. The review of the literature evolved from conceptual pieces as well as studies. Three categories of variables emerged from the literature: personal variables, environmental variables, and institutional variables.

#### Personal Variables

Personal variables are those characteristics of individuals that contribute to their educational experience. From the review of the literature six personal variables emerged. These personal variables are socioeconomic status, race, gender, self-esteem, academic achievement, and feelings of alienation.

#### Socioeconomic Status

Greene & Brydon (1975) reported that in urban schools students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are often perceived in the classroom as intellectually deprived and unlikely to achieve. This stereotypic outlook determines the classroom atmosphere and the student-teacher relationship. Green and Brydon concluded that the racial views and middle class contempt of many teachers for low economic students have obstructed communication between students and teachers. Consequently, students of low-socioeconomic status are disciplined more.

Neill (1976) attributed the higher rate of suspensions of minorities to their low economic status, not racial bias. Neill stated that schools are middle class institutions with middle class teachers and administrators. When compared to white children, African-American children were twice as likely to be poor, live with a parent who has been separated, and live in female-headed families. Females head 71% percent of all black families living below the poverty line, and 44% of all black children live in households where the father is absent (Brown et al, 1990). The middle class environment is a different cultural orientation for the low socioeconomic minority student. Consequently, the chances of minority students not encountering problems in school are very low.

Other researchers have studied the relationship between socioeconomic status and discipline within public schools. Ratcliff (1980) conducted a survey of 116 schools in the states of Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia and found that blacks received a significantly higher proportion of punishment than their white classmates. Ratcliff stated that race and ethnicity played an important part in who got punished. If a student was poor, his chances of receiving corporal punishment were about four or five times greater than those of a student who was not poor. Wu, Pink, Crane, & Mole (1982), using data from the Safe Schools Study, studied a number of variables and their relationships to suspension. They found that students with fathers had no full-time jobs and those who were on free lunch were the most likely to get suspended. Skiba, Peterson, & Williams (1997) examined issues related to discipline in 19 middle schools. They concluded that the number of the disciplinary actions received by students were based on race, socioeconomic status, and gender.

According to Irvine (1990) many educators speculate that low-income black children bring to school a set of anti-social behaviors and traits that emanate from a culture of poverty. They justify their harsh treatment of these students by citing instances of an undisciplined and unstructured home life, a lack of positive role models, an early exposure to crime and delinquency, and disrespect for adult authority figures. Irvine further stated that such a view totally ignores important factors like teachers stereotyping students; teachers' attitudes about race, class, and gender; and the degree of teacher subjectivity in dispensing punishment unequally.

### Race

There is evidence that African-American students are disproportionately disciplined due to blatant racism (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1988; Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982). According to Joe Larkin (1982), given the pervasive discrimination in the larger society, the mere fact that a statistical racial disparity in discipline actions exists in many public schools is sufficient evidence to conclude that "blatant racism" is operating. He further stated that racially disproportionate discipline and discriminatory discipline are synonymous concepts.

Wu et al. (1982) compiled data from the National Safe School Study (1976) to examine factors that influence disciplinary actions for student misconduct. The survey

involved a sample of more than 4,500 elementary and secondary schools with over 31,000 students. When the factors of attitude, behavior, academic performance, and socioeconomic status were controlled in the study, the number of suspensions, expulsions, and corporal punishments received by students was higher for non-whites than whites. Wu et al. concluded that racial discrimination was a factor that influenced disciplinary actions.

### Gender

Discipline research indicates that school discipline is administered in a biased fashion with males receiving more frequent and harsher discipline (Panko-Stilmock, 1996). A study conducted by Schmidt (1982) on junior high suspended and non-suspended students found that males were suspended at over twice the rate of females. Wu et al.(1982), using data from the Safe School Study, found that male students in every school location and at every level studied were more likely to be suspended than females. McFadden, Marsh, Price, Barrie Jo, & Hwang (1992) addressed the issue of gender and discipline interventions. In their study, 4,391 discipline files from nine K-12 schools in Florida were examined. The analysis of the data indicated that in each of the misbehavior categories males were more prevalent than females. Seventy five percent of the students receiving in-school suspension were male, 81% of the students receiving corporal punishment were male, and 75% of all suspended students were male.

African-American males have been found to be the greatest recipients of disciplinary action in several studies. Grant (as cited in Panko-Stilmock, 1996) in a longitudinal study found that white females receive the least number of reprimands in school, while African-American males receive the most. Hale-Benson (1986) identified masculinity as a reason for behavioral problems. She argued that traditional classrooms are oriented toward feminine values and that teachers are disproportionately female. The behaviors that they encourage and tolerate are more natural for girls. As a result, males, especially black males, seem to have the most discipline problems. The 1998 Elementary and Secondary Civil Rights Compliance Report showed that African-Americans received a disproportionate number of disciplinary actions in public schools. Within the African-American group of students, African-American males received 73% of the corporal punishments, 64% of the suspensions, and 74% of the expulsions.

### Self-esteem

Researchers have addressed the issue of self-esteem among minority students. They concluded that positive self-esteem is essential in the educational success of African American students (Hale-Benson 1986; Kunjufu, 1986; Patton, 1981). Wilson (1991) found that the treatment of black students via the schools' processes can have a devaluating effect over an extended period of time. In a survey which asked how students ranked the probable achievement of various students by ethnic group, white, Asian, black, and Hispanic students all agreed that Whites and Asians would do well, and felt that Blacks and Hispanics would fare the worst. If black students agree with the devaluation of themselves by others and place little or no value on their ability to compete, then the stage is set for non-academic behavior— behavior viewed as unacceptable by the school (Ray, 1994).

African-American students may not do well in school, not as a result of lack of ability, but rather as a consequence of their struggles with discrimination and their internalization of the way that the dominant race feels about them (Anderson, 1994). African-American students have positive perceptions of their general ability in early grades, but a decrease in self-perception is noted the longer they stay in school. Unjust factors such as African-American students being unfairly labeled as behavior problems and over-referred for special education affect the self-concept of African-American youth in a negative manner as they progress through their educational experience in public schools (Kunjufu, 1986).

### Academic Achievement

The correlation between academic achievement and misbehavior is assumed to be quite high (MacLeod, 1987; Moyer & Motta, 1982). National research investigating academic achievement and ethnic group differences consistently showed lower test scores for African-American students than white students (Winfield, 1991). Wu (1980), using data from the Safe School Study, showed a positive correlation between the suspension rates in a school and the percentage of lower ability students in the school.

The researcher's experience within his school district has been that African-American students are on the lower rungs of academic achievement when compared to white students. The researcher's district is not different from other school systems across

America that are trying to close the achievement gap between minorities and whites. Underachieving students tend to be alienated from school and exhibit misbehavior, whereas those who are invested and successful in school tend not to have discipline issues (Addo, 1997). Given the disproportionate underachievement of black students compared to white students, one would expect that black students would receive a disproportionate number of disciplinary measures.

### Feelings of Alienation

A high degree of alienation among African-American students may account for the dysfunction (violence, disruptive behavior, and high levels of suspension) they often exhibit in school behavior (Charles, 1981). Bronfenbrenner (1974) defined alienation as the feeling and fact of disconnectedness from people and activities. According to Slaughter (as cited in Epps, 1974) educators create feelings of alienation in African-American students in a number of ways. The lack of response by schools to the social background differences in blacks and curricula that ignore the contributions of minorities contribute to feelings of alienation in black students. Slaughter believed the schools' limited efforts to establish constructive relationships with black parents and the repudiation of the historical and cultural traditions of black people exacerbate the problem. Slaughter felt that some African-American students deal with this situation by rejecting school experiences as irrelevant to their own goals, or they may regard the judgments of the school as unfair and thus escape the effect of what would otherwise be negative experiences and judgments.

Six personal variables emerged from the review of the literature. These personal variables were socioeconomic status, race, gender, self-esteem, academic achievement, and feelings of alienation. These personal variables provided the direction for the search for studies to examine for inclusion in the synthesis.

### Environmental Variables

Environmental variables are characteristics of the student's environment. Environmental variables affect how the student views school and contribute to the academic and behavioral success of the student. The environmental variables that emerged from the review of the literature are a set of cultural differences, level of family

support, involvement with community institutions, and cultural frame of reference (oppositional or non-oppositional).

### Cultural Differences

#### Cultural Bicompetence

African-American students often have cultural backgrounds and behavior patterns that are different from those found in the middle class educational environment (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1988). African-American youth who are unable to manage these cultural differences while in the school setting are more susceptible to the disciplinary actions of the school (Larkin, 1982). According to Bleachman (1991), African-American students must learn to be biculturally competent. Bleachman defined bicultural competence as the capacity to operate with ease in two social contexts while maintaining a sense of pride in one's own origins and distinct identity. To develop bicultural competence, African-American students must know the rules of each culture and be able to use them at the appropriate times. To be successful in school, African-American students must learn that the mode of operation at home may be different from that required in school. Success in school may mean having to use one language at home and another at school or handling conflict one way in the neighborhood (e.g., fighting) while resolving it another way at school (e.g., conflict mediation).

Some researchers suggest that cultural gaps influence the disciplining of African-American students. Morgan (1991) stated that many African-American students experience a cultural gap in public schools. A cultural gap is created when students are not biculturally competent and when teachers and administrators are unfamiliar with the environmental factors that contribute to the behavior of many African-American students within the classroom. When teachers and administrators are unaware that the cultural background of African-American students may put them at odds with the expectations of the school, they cannot be effective disciplining African-American students (Bleachman, 1991; Montgomery, 1977).

Noguera (1996) suggested that a “knowledge gap” contributes to the problem behavior exhibited by African-American students in public schools. Noguera explained that a knowledge gap exists between the personnel in schools and the African-American students with whom they work. This knowledge gap exists because the training of

educators has not included the courses and hands-on experience to facilitate understanding the environment in which African-American students live (Mason, 1996). Most teachers who work with African-American students do not live in the same community as their students. The teachers' knowledge about their students' neighborhood and lifestyle is very limited (Hill, 1989). Often, teachers and administrators do not understand that students may dress, walk, and communicate in a different manner when at home or in their community. Noguera suggested that teachers and administrators fill in this knowledge gap with stereotypes about their students based on past experiences and from what they have picked up indirectly. As a result, when the culture of the students' home or neighborhood is brought to school, teachers and administrators are not equipped to address this culture as a part of a comprehensive discipline plan.

### Social Skills

Taylor (1993) suggested that many African-American children live in a sub-standard environment where they are denied the appropriate mental, physical, and social stimulation. These conditions impede normal development in all areas of functioning. Taylor stated that when black students are unable to maintain dispositions, habits, and attitudes customarily associated with character, they are at a disadvantage in the public school. As a result, they may display disruptive behavior and be unable to respond to the traditional classroom environment because they lack the necessary social skills.

Taylor (1993) conducted a study that was designed to determine if a one-year structured social skills program would improve academic achievement, interpersonal skills, and attendance in young African-American males. Thirty-two fourth grade African-American boys identified as having poor interpersonal skills participated in the one-year program. A pre-assessment inventory was administered to the participants. The results indicated a variety of social skill deficits and formed the basis for the skills to be taught in the program. The social skills program included instruction in improving attention, problem solving, sense of belonging, bonding, and group skills. The findings of the study indicated that discipline referrals were slightly reduced (see Table 4).

Interviews conducted with several of the teachers participating in the study indicated that they saw substantial improvement in the students' behavior, improved self-confidence

Table 4

Percentage of Office Referrals for Students Participating in a Social Skills Program

Number of times referred	Pre-program number of students referred	<u>%</u>	Post-program number of students referred	<u>%</u>
0	29	91	31	97
1	2	7	1	3
2	1	3	0	0

Note. From Taylor, G. (1993). The relationship between social skills development, academic achievement, and interpersonal relations of African-American males. (Report No. SP 036 380). Maryland: (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 390 819)

and motivation within the students, and a greater ability to interact with others socially (Taylor, 1993).

Patton (1981) suggested that the ability of many low-achieving African-American males to function satisfactorily in social groups and to maintain attitudes customarily associated with character and personality is usually below the expected level of the school. This lack of social skills can cause African-American students to get into trouble in school because they exhibit negative behaviors learned and imitated from their environments. The schools often cannot control these behaviors, thus creating conflict and tension between the children and school (Mastueda & Heimer, 1987).

Teachers can reduce the perceived behavior problems of African-American students by teaching them the necessary social skills in the school environment (Patton, 1981). Patton stated that teachers have to reconceptualize their role if they are going to effectively discipline African-American students. Teachers must stop trying to control student behavior using punitive measures of discipline (e.g., detention, corporal punishment). Instead, the teacher should teach strategies that promote self-direction and self-control to African-American students. This type of behavior management allows teachers and students to work together as opposed to being against each other when resolving discipline issues.

#### Cultural Frame of Reference (Oppositional, Non-oppositional)

Ogbu (1978) attributed the lack of success of African-American students in school to an oppositional cultural frame of reference. African-American students protect their identity by maintaining boundaries between themselves and white Americans. They regard certain forms of behavior, symbols, and meanings as characteristic of white Americans. At the same time they emphasize other forms of behavior, events, symbols, and meanings as more appropriate for them because these are not a part of the white culture. To behave in a manner defined as falling within a white cultural frame of reference is considered as “acting white” and is viewed in a negative manner by their peers (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Consequently, instead of attempting to achieve, many African-American students succumb to negative peer pressure to avoid being perceived as “acting white.” They disregard achievement and attempt to disrupt class or display other negative behaviors that impede their academic success.

Ogbu (1978) believed that the oppositional cultural frame of reference being used by African-American students in school could be explained from a comparative perspective as it related to minorities. He characterized African-American minorities as involuntary or caste-like minorities. These minorities are people who did not initially choose to become members of a society. They have been brought into a society through slavery, conquest, or colonization. Ogbu stated that involuntary minorities acquire new cultural features and reinterpret old ones to cope with domination and oppression.

#### Level of Family Support

Perhaps the largest single influence on any child is the quality of family life (Campbell, 1991; Edelman, 1997; Holt, 1990; Larkin, 1982). The family is the primary institution in which motivation for education and achievement is created and encouraged (Mathews, 1996). American students with discipline problems in school often have a lack of family support. Their parents may not be involved in their educational experience because as youngsters they had bad school experiences, or they don't are unsure of how to make a difference in the educational experience of the child. In many cases, the parents feel alienated from the school and take no part in the school life of their child because school officials have made no effort to reach out to them (Charles, 1981). Children who do not receive adequate social and emotional support toward being successful in school from home often seek attention in inappropriate ways in the classroom (Ciminillo, 1980).

#### Involvement of Community Institutions

Some researchers attribute the lack of success of African-American students in school to the declining role of traditional black community institutions. Marable (1992) stated that in many black communities a lack of leadership by traditional black institutions has caused a decline in the importance of community values such as family, religion, education, self-improvement, and social cohesion. The black church, once the foundation and focal point of the black community, has lost its appeal and influence. In many black communities, the church has a diminished or no role in the education of its community members. Similarly, the effectiveness of the political organizations in many black communities has been weakened as a result of losing the wealthier and better educated members of the inner cities to middle class communities (Calabrese, 1991;

Gibbs, 1988; Ogbu, 1978). Many blacks in inner cities no longer seem to feel committed to or responsible for each other. Rather than a sense of shared community and common purpose which once characterized black neighborhoods, these inner cities now reflect a sense of hopelessness, alienation, and frustration (Gibbs; Hacker, 1995).

Five environmental variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools emerged from the review of the literature. The first was a set of cultural differences. The set of cultural differences included the variables bicultural competence and social skills. Other environmental variables were cultural frame of reference (oppositional, non-oppositional), level of family support, and involvement of community institutions. These environmental variables provided the direction for the search for studies to include in the synthesis.

#### Institutional Variables

Institutional variables are characteristics of the institution that have an influence on the disciplining of African-American students. Five institutional variables emerged from the literature review. These are teacher expectations, stereotyping, teacher subjectivity, tracking, and learning styles.

#### Teacher Expectations

A number of researchers attribute the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools to low teacher expectations (Garibaldi, 1991; Hopkins 1997; Morgan, 1991). Garibaldi in a report to the Committee to Study the Status of the Black Males in New Orleans Public Schools reported that from a survey of teachers in the district, 60% of them did not think that African-American males valued education or deemed it important. Furthermore, 56% of the teachers in the district did not expect African-American males to attend college. The results of the survey seem to validate the notion that many teachers have low expectations for African-American males (Hopkins). The level of achievement of African-American students depends on what adults expect of them. If African-American students perceive that they are not wanted or undervalued, they tend to react accordingly. Teachers who hold low expectations for African-American students push them toward misbehavior (Opotow, 1990).

Morgan (1991) asserted that the disproportionate disciplining of African-American students is due to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Morgan believed that teachers have lower expectations academically and behaviorally for African-American students than they do for their white peers. African-American students recognize this. The lower expectations of teachers for them, coupled with the frustrations they encounter within the classroom on a daily basis, eventually cause the self-fulfilling prophecy to happen. As a result, African American students exhibit non-affirming behaviors academically and socially by not doing homework, arriving to class empty-handed, and manifesting other negative behaviors which result in removal from class or school (Ray, 1994).

Other researchers have found that low teacher expectations are associated with the disciplinary actions received by African-American students in public schools. Jacobson and Rosenthal (1968) stated that teachers often view minorities as intellectually deprived students who are unlikely to succeed. Gottfredson, Gottfredson, and Hybl (1993) suggested that many times teachers lower their expectations for students whom they perceive as behavior problems and limit those students' opportunities for learning. In a study conducted in 1995, Carpenter found that 60% (N=10) of teachers surveyed revealed that they do not hold high expectations for African-American males. Their expectations for the ability of their African-American males to master and demonstrate acceptable behavioral and social competency skills were low. In addition, Carpenter (1995) found that teachers least enjoy working with African-American male students, and some of them disclosed having a fear of African-American males during discipline incidents.

### Stereotyping

The stereotyping of African-Americans has long been a problem in America. Media portrayals of African-Americans depict them as over-aggressive, violent, lazy, and dishonest. These negative stereotypes have become prevalent in public schools (Foster, 1995; Goldsmith, 1979; Gottlieb, 1964; Steele, 1997; Woolridge & Richman, 1985).

Stereotyping in public schools occurs when teachers see African-American students by virtue of their race, sex, and socioeconomic class to be potential behavior problems. Foster (1995) reported that the disproportionate involvement of black students, and particularly black males, in discipline actions is often due to negative stereotyping.

Foster stated that educators use their conscious or unconscious racist or ethnocentric stereotypical beliefs to interpret African-American students' language and behavior. This language and behavior often includes playin' the dozens (exchanging verbal insults about each other's mother or other family members—usually in a playful manner), ribbin (teasing or taunting), signifyin' (telling tales—many times to provoke someone to anger against another person) and woofin' (a vicious verbal attack). Such behavior may be manifested in school by African-American students, especially African-American males, through the use of verbal aggressive behavior toward peers, profiling (standing in a manner to display coolness or to intimidate), walking in an unacceptable manner (e.g., pants sagging below the belt line), or making verbal claims that they have no intention of fulfilling. Many African-American students see this type of behavior as an expression of pride and coolness, not as negative or disruptive. Morgan (1991) stated that while this behavior is good for coping and surviving in the streets, it is detrimental in the classroom.

Often the language and behaviors of the black student are misinterpreted and misunderstood by educators. This begins the process of African-American students being stereotyped as discipline problems in school. Because schools are rooted in what are considered middle class norms and values, the cultural expressions of black students are seen as unacceptable. Consequently, African-American students are removed from class and school when this type of behavior is displayed.

#### Teacher Subjectivity

The manner in which a teacher implements discipline is largely a factor of the teacher value system, philosophical orientation, and tolerance level (Panko-Stilmock, 1996). The determination of what constitutes a discipline problem, especially one that requires an "office referral" is very subjective and can be arbitrarily determined. Behaviors such as disobedience, insubordination, disrespect, and violations of dress code are subjective discipline offenses. Teachers refer black students to the office more hastily, and they are more often unfairly disciplined for these subjective offenses (Carpenter, 1995). Consequently, African-American students are suspended more for subjective rather than objective offenses more than other ethnic groups (McIntyre, 1984; Wu, Pink, Crain, & Mole, 1982).

Irvine (1990) held that a teacher's reaction to disruption is based on the behavior and the identification of the student who violates the rule. If a black student is identified as the misbehaved, the transgression is evaluated on the basis of that child's race, sex, and class-group membership. For many black students this is disastrous. Teachers who react in this manner are more likely to react negatively to the child who is black and poor (Montgomery, 1977). Subjective and unfair discipline strategies based on race and gender damage the child's belief in a sound education and create hostility within the child. Such uneven dispensations of student punishment by educators within schools cause more misbehavior in African-American students. Children who perceive they are being treated unfairly may display alienation, hostility, aggression, and other forms of resistance to the school environment (Irvine). Effective discipline must be based on reasonable and flexible rules that are fairly and consistently applied. Punishment must escalate according to the nature or repetition of offenses committed (Montgomery).

#### Tracking

Irvine (1990) discussed the resistance behavior of black youth as a response to racism devaluation and uneven disciplinary procedures resulting from being victims of tracking in public schools. She stated that the disproportionately high number of black students in lower tracks, where instruction is inferior, causes psychological and emotional stress for many black students. Lower-income, black, and underachieving students who comprise the lower tracks of instruction experience far greater rates of both disciplinary conflict and punishment than students in the higher ability tracks. Many teachers modify their instructional strategies and expectations as they move from the higher to lower-tracked students. They reduce their behavioral standards, tolerating more misbehavior from and issuing harsher punishments to the lower-track students. According to Sagar & Schofield (as cited in Uchetelle, Bartz, & Hillman, 1989), this approach to instruction reinforces the stereotypes among adults and children that black students are inferior. Maladaptive behavior by black students becomes a byproduct of tracking programs.

#### Learning Styles

Researchers believe that many of the behavior problems experienced by African-American students are due to an incompatibility between the delivery of instruction and the learning style of the student (Hale-Benson, 1982). According to Thompson (as cited

in Bass-Coleman, 1997), public schools favor students who process information in logical, sequential, linear, or judgmental fashions. However, many African-American students learn in a non-sequential manner. Hale-Benson stated that as a result of black culture, black children may have distinctive learning and expressive styles that can be observed in their play behavior. Black children use a people oriented, relational style of learning. When they are unable to adapt this style to the linear modality of instruction taught in school, many African-American children may experience low academic achievement, which many times leads to poor behavior.

Other theories related to learning styles have been proposed to explain why African-American students may not experience success in school. According to Smith (1986) public schools are historically and operationally left-brained-oriented institutions, whereas black students (regardless of socioeconomic status) are predominately right-brained. Smith stated that right-brain functions are not valued in school; thus many black children have little opportunity to succeed. Nichols (as cited in James-Brown, 1995).stated that African-American students view the world from a distinctly different epistemological framework than white students. African-American students first see the whole; then, if necessary, the parts. Teachers, however, generally teach using the European model that focuses on the parts rather than the whole. The transition from one epistemological framework to another to accommodate and negotiate the U.S. schooling process is difficult for many black students. Nichols contended that African-American students become frustrated because of the difficulty of making the transition, so they become restless, discontented with school, and act out in the classroom

Five institutional variables emerged from the literature review. These include teacher expectations, stereotyping, teacher subjectivity, tracking, and learning styles. The researcher used these institutional variables to search for studies to include in the synthesis.

#### Summary and Pre-Study Conceptual Model

The purpose of this pre-study review of the literature was to examine the personal variables, environmental variables, and institutional variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools. The review of the literature showed that these personal, environmental,

and institutional variables work in combination to influence the disciplinary actions received by African-American students in public schools. A summary of each category of variables is provided below. A pre-study conceptual model on the variables associated with the disciplining of African-American students was developed from the review of the literature (see Figure 1).

Personal variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools were socioeconomic status, race, gender, self-esteem, academic achievement, and feelings of alienation. Students who are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are the greatest recipients of punishment in public school. African-American students represent a large number of the students from low socioeconomic homes in public schools (Montgomery, 1977; National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1988). Discrimination based on race has also been associated with the punishments received by African-American students in public schools (Larkin 1982; Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982). Males and students with low academic achievement are the recipients of more disciplinary actions in school than females and students average or high achievement. African-American students who have poor behavior in school often have low self-esteem and feelings of alienation. Studies have shown that as African-American students progress in school self-esteem becomes lower and feelings of alienation increase (Ogbu, 1978, Kunjufu, 1985).

The environmental variables associated with the disciplining of African-American students were a set of cultural differences, cultural frame of reference (oppositional, more oppositional), level of family support, and involvement of community institutions. Cultural differences affect academic performance and behavior in school. The experiences of African-American students at home and in the community are different from those in school. African-American students must become biculturally competent to be successful in school (Bleachman, 1991). If they are not, they will lack the social skills necessary to be successful in school. Many African-American students display an oppositional cultural frame of reference in school. Success in school equates to “acting white,” which in the students’ eyes is not acceptable to their peers. Consequently, they regard the expected forms of school behavior as characteristic of white Americans, at the same time they emphasize other forms of behavior, events, symbols, and meanings as

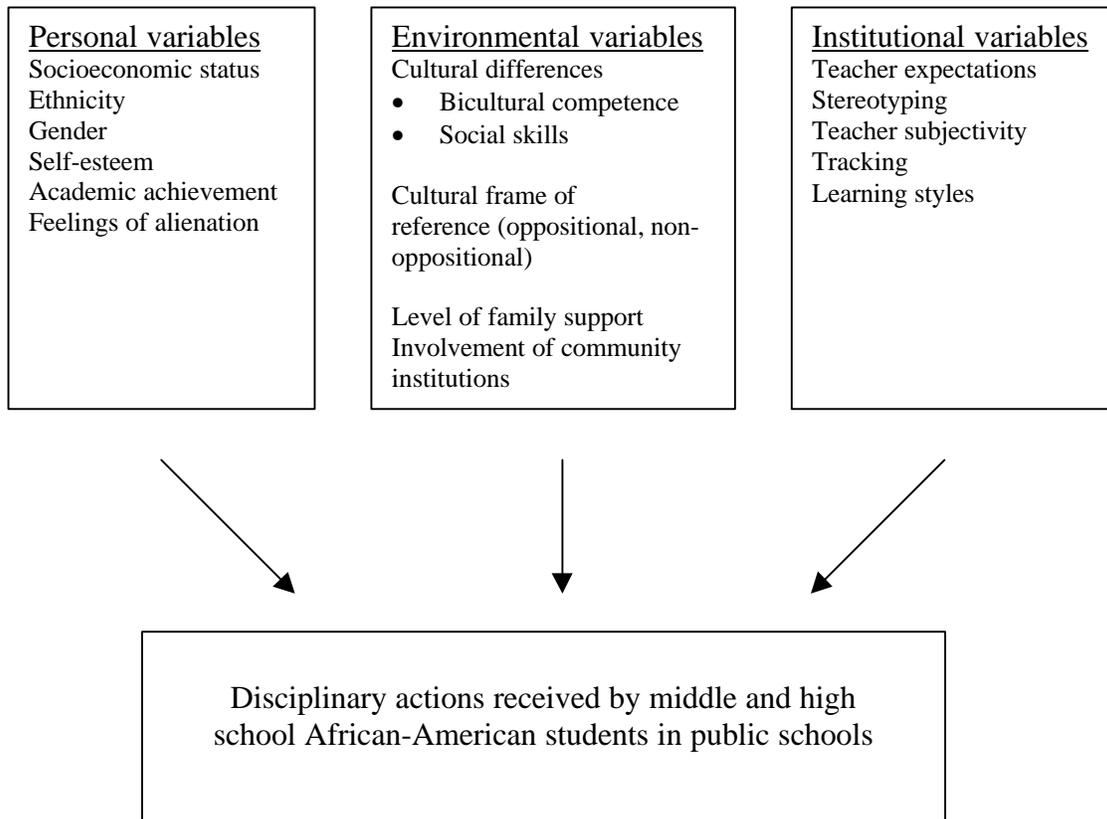


Figure 1. Pre-study conceptual model of the variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools.

more appropriate for them because these are not a part of the white culture (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). The students' families and community institutions have a major effect on the performance of the African-American child in school. Both the student's family and the community have the responsibility of ensuring that a child is successful in school. When the student's family promotes academic performance in school, and community institutions reinforce this notion, a child is successful behaviorally and academically in school.

The institutional variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high African-American students in public schools were teacher expectations, stereotyping, teacher subjectivity, tracking, and learning styles. What a teacher determines to be a discipline problem is the result of his or her value system, philosophical orientation, and tolerance level (Panko-Stilmock, 1996). Low teacher expectations for and the stereotyping of African-American students, coupled with the fact that what a teacher considers to be a discipline problem is often very subjective, have caused black students to be referred for disciplinary action more hastily by teachers for subjective offenses than white students (Carpenter, 1995; Foster, 1995; Irvine, 1990). The tracking of African-American students and an incompatibility between the delivery of instruction and the learning style of many African-American students cause them to become frustrated, restless, and discontented with school (Hale-Benson, 1982, Irvine). As a result, they may act out in the classroom and experience behavior problems in school.

Six personal variables, five environmental variables, and five variables emerged from the review of the literature. These variables are associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools. The search for studies in the synthesis was directed based on the variables found in the review.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The findings in this synthesis consist of the results of 13 studies on the disciplining of middle and high school African-American students in public schools. Three guiding questions were used to conduct the synthesis. They include:

What are the variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools?

How do personal, environmental, and institutional variables contribute to the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools?

How can educators more effectively manage the personal, environmental, and institutional variables associated with the disciplining of middle and high school African-American students in public schools so that the need to discipline them is reduced?

Chapter 3 includes the search sources for studies, criteria for selection of studies in the synthesis, and a list of studies included in the synthesis. Methods used in synthesizing the findings of the studies and a description of the community of scholars who have done research on the topic are included.

#### Search Sources

A description of how the researcher searched the literature for studies to include in the synthesis and what was found in each search source is in this section (see Table 5).

In an effort to ascertain studies related to the guiding questions, descriptors such as discipline, black students, disproportionate, African-American students, and suspensions were used to conduct a search of ERIC and PyscINFO. Searches in ERIC produced no studies. One study was found in PyscINFO. Seven research journals were searched for studies. One study was found in the Journal of Negro Education. Dissertation Abstracts International was also used to search for studies for the synthesis. Four of the studies in the synthesis came from this source. The search for studies also included a Boolean

Table 5

Search Sources of Studies in the Synthesis

Search source	Descriptors	Number of results	Studies selected for the synthesis
<b>ERIC</b>	Discipline and black students	320	0
	Disproportionate, discipline, and black students	21	0
	Suspension and African-American Students	108	0
	Suspension and black students	63	0
<b>PsycINFO</b>	Discipline and black students	4	1
	Suspensions and black students	3	0
<b><u>Dissertation Abstracts International</u></b>	Discipline and black students	104	2
	Suspensions and black students	24	1
	Black studies	126	1
<b>Journals</b>			
<u>Educational Researcher</u>	Reviewed the table of contents of volumes 9-28 (Jan. 1980-Nov. 1999)	0	0

(table continues)

Table 5 (continued)

Search source	Descriptors	Number of results	Studies selected for the synthesis
<u>Journal of Educational Psychology</u>	Reviewed the table of contents of volumes 72-90 (Feb. 1980-Dec. 1999)	0	0
<u>Journal of Negro Education</u>	Reviewed the table of contents of volumes 1-68 (1932-1999)	6	1
<u>Journal of Negro History</u>	Reviewed the table of contents of volumes 55-82 (Winter 1970-Fall 1997)	0	0
<u>Review of Educational Research</u>	Reviewed the table of contents of volumes 50-70 (Spring 1980-Summer 2000)	0	0
<u>The Urban Review</u>	Reviewed the table of contents of volumes 11-31 (Spring 1979-December 1999)	2	0
<u>Urban Education</u>	Reviewed the table of contents of volumes 14-35 (April 1979-December 2000)	4	0
<b>Cross-referencing<sup>a</sup></b>		17	7

(table continues)

Table 5 (continued)

Search source	Descriptors	Number of results	Studies selected for the synthesis
<b>Special Search</b>			
Boolean Search (Virginia Tech Library System)	Discipline and African-Americans	3	0
	Discipline and black Students	1	0
Total number of studies selected for the synthesis			13

<sup>a</sup>Cross-referencing involved the examining of references in studies for leads to other studies .

search. A Boolean search involves a pair of descriptors and a connector word (e.g., African American students and suspensions). No studies were secured from the Boolean search. Cross-referencing or the examining of references in studies for leads to other studies was conducted. The majority of the studies in the synthesis (seven studies) were found using cross-referencing.

A total of 48 studies on the disciplining of African-American students at the middle and high school level were obtained from the review of the literature. From the 48 studies, 13 were selected as a part of the synthesis.

#### Criteria for Inclusion of Studies

Studies meeting the following criteria were selected for this synthesis:

1. Studies of the disciplining of African-American students at the middle or high school level were included in the synthesis.
2. Both qualitative and quantitative studies of the variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools were examined for inclusion in the synthesis.
3. Studies in which the dependent variable was disciplinary actions (e.g., suspension, detention, corporal punishment) were used for the synthesis.

#### List of Studies in the Synthesis

The following studies were used in this synthesis. Studies were included according to the criteria set in the Criteria for the Inclusion of Studies section above.

1. Anderson, D.R. (1973). The effects of first year desegregation on the year-end grade average, absentee-dropout rate, and discipline problems of a group of eleventh grade black pupils (Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, 1973). Dissertation Abstracts International, 34, 6245.

“The study will investigate the changes which occur in selected areas of school behavior of eleventh grade black pupils during their first year of school desegregation, compared to a segregated control group. The three selected areas of school behavior were: grade point average, absentee and dropout rate, and discipline problems” (p. 4).

2. Ray, A. A. (1994). Disciplinary problems as a function of satisfaction: A study of black male high school students (Doctoral dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1994). Dissertation Abstracts International, 55, 3468.

“This research proposes to identify and measure perceptions and the degree of satisfaction of black male students with the high school environment” (p. 1)...Since black males are suspended more than any other group of students, its seems feasible that educators should give significant attention to what black males see and feel within the school environment” (p. 4).

3. Johnson, M. D. (1989). Organizational climate, discipline infractions, and student academic achievement (Doctoral dissertation, Georgia State University, 1989). Dissertation Abstracts International, 51, 0038.

“The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of organizational climate of middle schools and discipline infraction [number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions] and student achievement.” (Abstract).

4. Scurry, A. (1976). The interrelationships among disruptive student behavior and student perceptions of alienation, and internal-external control in black high school seniors (Doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, 1976). Dissertation Abstracts International, 37, 3541.

“The present study investigated a relationship between disruptive student behavior and the perceptions of alienation and internal-external control among black high school students” (p. 12).

5. Hudgens, J. H. (1977). The development of a model to assess administrative bias in student suspensions with regard to the students’ race, sex, family income level, and parental marital status (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1977). Dissertation Abstracts International, 38, 7153.

“The purpose of this study was to develop and test a model to determine whether bias with regard to the students’ race, sex, family status, income level, and parental martial status exists in the suspension of students from school” (p. 9).

6. McIntyre, L. H. (1984). A comparison of the infractions and punishments of black and white male and female high school students (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida, 1984). Dissertation Abstracts International, 46, 0206.

“The purpose of this study was to examine the discipline referrals of students in the four high schools of Manatee County...to determine if differences existed in the way punishments were administered by the deans to black and white, male and female high school students” (Abstract).

7. Panko-Stilmock, J. L. (1996). Teacher gender and discipline referral rates for middle level boys and girls (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1996). Dissertation Abstracts International, 57, 5007.

“The purpose of this study was to examine middle level discipline referrals and assess the relationship between teacher gender and frequency of discipline referral...[These] data included information regarding other variables including grade level and ethnicity” (Abstract).

8. Thornthorn, C. H., & Trent, W. T. (1988). School desegregation and suspension in East Baton Rouge Parish: A preliminary report. Journal of Negro Education, 57 (4), 482-500.

“This present research reflects a continuing concern with school desegregation and suspensions. Its principle objectives are to determine the incidence and some of the patterns of suspensions among secondary schools in East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. Particular attention was focused on racial disproportionality in suspension rates and how this is associated with select social structural features of the schools’ environments” (p.484).

9. Moyer, T. R. (1981). An investigation of alienation, academic achievement, and behavioral adjustment among black and non-black adolescents (Doctoral dissertation, Hofstra University, 1981). Dissertation Abstracts International, 42, 4585.

“The purpose of this investigation is to evaluate the relationship among black students between a sense of alienation and school adjustment as measured by academic performance and behavioral adjustment. A second purpose of this investigation is to

examine similarities and differences between groups of black students and non-black students in terms of the relationship between alienation and school adjustment” (p. 4).

10. Jackson, B. G. (1997). Leader behaviors, school climate, school size, and out of school suspensions in selected public senior high schools. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi, 1997) Dissertation Abstracts International, 58, 2928.

“The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between the perceived leader behaviors, the perceived school climate, school size, and out-of-school suspensions in selected public senior high schools. This study further looked at the racial mix of suspensions to determine if perceived leader behavior, the perceived school climate, and school size, separately or combined, influenced the number of out-of school suspensions by ethnic group” (p. 61).

11. McCarthy, J. D., & Hoge, D. R. (1987). The social construction of school punishment: Racial disadvantage out of universalistic process. Social Forces, 65 (4), 1100-1120.

“Black adolescents are much more likely to run afoul of the juvenile justice system than are similar white adolescents, even though the two groups self-report similar rates of offending. Within public schools we find the same differential pattern. Using three waves of longitudinal data collected in schools we evaluate several explanations for the disparity” (p. 1101).

12. Charles, L. E. (1981). Attitudinal characteristics of suspended students. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1981) Dissertation Abstracts International, 42, 1053.

“The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitude toward school related experiences and feelings of alienation of in-school suspended and non-suspended students” (p. 3).

13. Rich, S. T. (1975). Socioeconomic class, race, sex, and over--age-for-grade relationship as possible variables of disruptive and non-disruptive students (Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, 1975). Dissertation Abstracts International, 36, 2511.

“The concern of this study is...to determine if the variables of socioeconomic class, race, sex, and over-age-for-grade relationships are independently or collectively predictors of disruptive and/or non-disruptive students in a north-Central Florida county’s middle school setting” (Abstract).

#### Methods Used for Synthesizing the Findings of the Studies

Findings from the 13 studies included in the synthesis are presented in Chapter 4. Two types of studies emerged while analyzing potential studies for the synthesis. The first four studies presented in chapter four examined differences in the number of disciplinary actions received by African-American students. The authors of these four studies used African-American students only as their subjects. The last 9 studies in chapter four examined the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by African-American students in public schools when compared to other ethnic groups. For each study in the synthesis, a citation and summary is given. The summaries include research question(s), the independent and dependent variables, methodology, findings, and a discussion. Three post-study models are used to summarize the findings of the synthesis.

In Chapter 5, a summary of the personal variables, environmental variables, and institutional variables associated with the disciplining of African-American students found in this synthesis are reviewed. Conclusions derived from the findings, analysis of how several variables have contributed to the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools, and recommendations for educators regarding how the variables can be managed so that the need to discipline African-American students is reduced are included.

#### Community of Scholars

The researcher was interested in compiling information on whom was studying the disciplining of African-American students and determining the areas of the United

States in which the topic was being examined. The 13 studies in this synthesis were done by fifteen authors. Eleven of the authors were doctoral students. Four of the authors were professors who published their studies in journals. Six of the 15 authors were African-Americans. Seven of the authors were white. The ethnicity of two of the authors could not be ascertained. Thirteen of the scholars were male and two were female. Most of the research being conducted on the topic was done in the eastern or southeastern areas of the United States. The greatest number of studies (four studies) was conducted in the state of Florida. Seven of the studies were conducted in high schools, four were conducted in middle schools, and two were conducted in a combination of both middle and high schools.

## CHAPTER 4

### SUMMARIES AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE STUDIES

The purpose of this study was to identify the variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools. The variables were identified through the synthesis of 13 quantitative studies. No qualitative studies meeting the criteria for inclusion of studies in the synthesis were found. A summary consisting of the citation, research questions, dependent and independent variables, methodology, findings, and a discussion is in this chapter for each study in the synthesis. Three post-study models on the variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools are used to summarize the findings of the synthesis.

The findings were integrated using a less formal approach than meta-analysis. A synthesis of studies is different from a meta-analysis in that findings are not integrated by calculating effect size. Effect size is used when all the studies in the review have uniformity in sample size, use the same statistical procedure to test the same hypotheses, and have the same independent and dependent variables (Glass, 1978). A synthesis or the cumulating of results from many studies without calculation of effect size is appropriate in this case because of differences in the independent variables and the way that they were measured. Light & Pillemer (1984) stated that a well-done review of studies could identify general trends that may not emerge in a single study.

#### Summaries of Studies

This section has the following information for each of the 13 quantitative studies: citation, research questions, dependent and independent variables, methodology, findings, and a discussion. The authors of the first four studies examined differences in the number of disciplinary actions received among African-American students. African-American students were the only subjects in these studies. The significant findings from these four studies were compiled in Table 6. The authors of the last nine studies (studies five through thirteen) examined the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by African-American students in public schools when compared to other ethnic groups. The significant findings from these nine studies were compiled in Table 7.

Table 6

Significant Results from Studies Examining the Number of Disciplinary Actions Received by African-American

Students

Study #	Population or sample size	Independent variables or comparisons	Dependent variables	Results	Statistical analysis
1 Anderson (1973)	302 (11 <sup>th</sup> grade AA <sup>a</sup> students)	Gender SES <sup>b</sup> Segregated or desegregated school	<u>Frequency of discipline actions<sup>c</sup></u>	<u>Difference in percentage points</u>	Davies' t-test for proportions
	151 DSS <sup>d</sup> 151 SSS <sup>e</sup>	SSS <sup>e</sup> minus DSS <sup>d</sup>	Detention Suspension	-11.90 <sup>***</sup> 6.70 <sup>***</sup>	
	43 HSESDSS <sup>f</sup> 61 HSESSSS <sup>g</sup>	HSESSSS <sup>g</sup> minus HSESDSS <sup>f</sup>	Detention Office cases	-26.30 <sup>*</sup> -15.20 <sup>***</sup>	
	108 LSESDSS <sup>h</sup> 90 LSESSSS <sup>i</sup>	LSESSSS <sup>i</sup> minus LSESDSS <sup>h</sup>	Suspension	8.70 <sup>***</sup>	
	20 HSESDSF <sup>j</sup> 27 HSESSSF <sup>k</sup>	HSESSSF <sup>k</sup> minus HSESDSF <sup>j</sup>	Detention	-33.90 <sup>*</sup>	

(table continues)

<sup>a</sup>AA=African-American. <sup>b</sup>SES=Socioeconomic status. <sup>c</sup>Frequency of disciplinary actions was expressed as a percentage. <sup>d</sup>DSS=Desegregated school students. <sup>e</sup>SSS=Segregated school students. <sup>f</sup>HSESDSS=High socioeconomic status desegregated school students. <sup>g</sup>HSESSSS=High socioeconomic status segregated school students. <sup>h</sup>LSESDSS=Low socioeconomic status desegregated school students. <sup>i</sup>LSESSSS=Low socioeconomic status segregated school students. <sup>j</sup>HSESDSF=High socioeconomic status desegregated school females. <sup>k</sup>HSESSSF=High socioeconomic status segregated school females.  
\* p<.05. \*\*\* p<.10.

Table 6 (continued)

Study #	Population or sample size	Independent variables or comparisons	Dependent variables	Results	Statistical analysis
2 Ray (1994)	100 (9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> grade AA <sup>a</sup> males	<u>Group</u> Rebellious and non-rebellious students	<u>Level of satisfaction</u> <u>with:</u>	<u>Difference between</u> <u>mean scores</u>	t-test
	25 RAAM <sup>l</sup> 25 NRAAM <sup>m</sup> .	(Rebellious 9 <sup>th</sup> graders minus non-rebellious 9 <sup>th</sup> graders)	Student activities Decision-making opportunities Communication	-4.40** -4.64** -3.56*	
	50 RAAM <sup>l</sup> 50 NRAAM <sup>m</sup>	(Rebellious 9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> graders minus non-rebellious 9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> graders)	School work Student activities Decision-making opportunities Communication	-1.76* -2.70** -3.68** -2.60*	
3 Johnson (1989)	14 (middle schools)	<u>Type of organization climate</u> Most open, least open	<u>Number of disciplinary actions</u> (suspensions--in-school and out)	$\chi^2$	Chi-square test of independence
	7 most open climate schools 7 least open climate schools			8.56**	

(table continues)

<sup>a</sup>AA=African-American. <sup>l</sup>RAAM=Rebellious African-American males.. <sup>m</sup>NRAAM=Non-rebellious African-American males.

\* p<.05. \*\* p<.01.

Table 6 (continued)

Study #	Population or sample size	Independent variables or comparisons	Dependent variables	Results	Statistical analysis
4 Scurry (1976)	160 (AA <sup>a</sup> (seniors)	<u>Group</u> Disruptive and non-disruptive students	<u>Feelings of alienation</u>	<u>t-value</u>	t-test
	80 DS <sup>n</sup> 80 NDS <sup>o</sup>	NDS <sup>o</sup> minus DS <sup>n</sup>	Total score on the Dean Alienation Scale	2.10 <sup>*</sup>	
	80 DS <sup>n</sup> 80 NDS <sup>o</sup>	NDS <sup>o</sup> minus DS <sup>n</sup>	<u>Feelings of alienation</u> (by dimension of the Dean Alienation Scale)	<u>DMS</u> <sup>p</sup>	Hotelling T <sup>2</sup> -test
			Powerlessness	2.41 <sup>*</sup>	
			Normlessness	2.04 <sup>*</sup>	
				Hotelling T <sup>2</sup> =9.41 <sup>*</sup>	

<sup>a</sup>AA=African-American. <sup>n</sup>DS=Disruptive students. <sup>o</sup>NDS=Non-disruptive students. <sup>p</sup>DMS=Difference in mean scores.  
<sup>\*</sup>p<.05.

Table 7

Significant Results from Studies Examining the Disproportionate Number of Disciplinary Actions Received by African-American Students When Compared to Other Ethnic Groups

Study #	Population or sample	Independent variables or comparisons	Dependent variables	Results	Statistical analysis
5 Hudgens (1977)	843 (high school students)	Socioeconomic status Ethnicity (African-American and white)	<u>Number of suspensions</u>	$\chi^2$	Chi-square test of independence
	246 AAS <sup>a</sup> 597 WS <sup>b</sup>	AAS <sup>a</sup> , WS <sup>b</sup>	suspended, not suspended	7.30*	
	589 (natural family students only)				Chi-square test of independence
	165 AAS <sup>a</sup> 424 WS <sup>b</sup>	AAS <sup>a</sup> , WS <sup>b</sup>	suspended, not suspended	7.10*	
	242  127 EDAAS <sup>c</sup> 115 NEDS <sup>d</sup>	EDAAS <sup>c</sup> , NEDS <sup>d</sup>	suspended, not suspended	4.10*	Chi-square test of independence

(table continues)

<sup>a</sup>AAS=African-American students. <sup>b</sup>WS=White students. <sup>c</sup>EDAAS=Economically deprived African-American students. <sup>d</sup>NEDS=Non-economically deprived students.

\*p<.05.

Table 7 (continued)

Study #	Population or sample size	Independent variables or comparisons	Dependent variables	Results	Statistical analysis
6 McIntyre (1984)	2,649 (high school students)	<u>Ethnicity</u> African-American students White students	<u>Five types of punishment for:</u>	$\chi^2$	Chi-square test of independence
		AAS <sup>a</sup> , WS <sup>b</sup>	Category 4 infractions <sup>e</sup>	141.41*	
		AAS <sup>a</sup> , WS <sup>b</sup>	Category 5 infractions <sup>f</sup>	16.26*	
7 Panko- Stilmock (1996)	5,982 (middle school students)	<u>Ethnicity</u> African-American students White students	<u>Number of discipline referrals</u>	$\chi^2$	Chi-square test of goodness of fit
		688 AAS <sup>a</sup> 5,294 WS <sup>b</sup>		807.30**	

(table continues)

<sup>a</sup>AAS=African-American students. <sup>b</sup>WS=White students. <sup>c</sup>Category 4 infractions were disruptions (classroom and non-classroom activities). <sup>f</sup>Category 5 infractions were truancy and walk out participation.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 7 (continued)

Study #	Population or sample size	Independent variables or comparisons	Dependent variables	Results	Statistical analysis
8 Thornton & Trent (1988)	33 (middle and high schools)	<u>Change in African-American students enrolled</u>	<u>Suspension rate</u>	<u>r value</u>	Correlation
			AA <sup>g</sup> suspension rate (82-83)	.49 <sup>**</sup>	
			School suspension rate (82-83)	.35 <sup>*</sup>	
			AA <sup>g</sup> disproportionality suspension rate (82-83)	.52 <sup>**</sup>	
		<u>School socioeconomic status</u>	<u>Suspension Rate</u>	<u>r value</u>	Correlation
			AA <sup>g</sup> suspension rate (82-83)	.58 <sup>**</sup>	
			School suspension rate (82-83)	.38 <sup>*</sup>	
			AA <sup>g</sup> disproportionality suspension rate (82-83)	.61 <sup>**</sup>	
9 Moyer (1981)	Varied <sup>h</sup> (10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> AA <sup>g</sup> students)	<u>Feelings of alienation</u>	<u>Number of suspensions</u>	<u>r value</u>	Pearson product moment correlation
				.32 <sup>*</sup>	
		<u>Level of social involvement Participation in school activities</u>	<u>Number of suspensions</u>	<u>r value</u>	Pearson product moment correlation
				-.28 <sup>*</sup>	

(table continues)

<sup>g</sup>AA=African-American. <sup>h</sup>The number of cases involved in each correlation coefficient varied due to missing data. The minimum number of cases is 34 and the maximum is 103.

\* p<.05. \*\* p<.01.

Table 7 (continued)

Study #	Population or sample size	Independent variables or comparisons	Dependent variables	Results	Statistical analysis
9 (continued)	Varied <sup>h</sup> (10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> AA <sup>g</sup> students)	<u>Level of social involvement</u>	<u>Number of suspensions</u>	<u>r value</u>	Pearson product moment correlation
		Number of positions of responsibility		-.23*	
		Frequency of association with African-American people		-.38*	
		Frequency of association with adults		-.35*	
		<u>Level of social involvement</u> Number of positions of responsibility	<u>Number of detentions</u>	<u>r value</u> -.26*	Pearson product moment correlation

(table continues)

<sup>g</sup>AA=African-American. <sup>h</sup>The number of cases involved in each correlation coefficient varied due to missing data. The minimum number of cases is 34 and the maximum is 103.

\*p<.05.

Table 7 (continued)

Study #	Population or sample size	Independent variables or comparisons	Dependent variables	Results	Statistical analysis
9 (continued)	38 (AA <sup>g</sup> students)  22 LAS <sup>i</sup> 16 HAS <sup>j</sup>	<u>Group</u> High-alienated students Low-alienated students  -	<u>Number of suspensions</u>	<u>F</u>  5.58*	ANOVA
10 Jackson (1997)	93 (principals and teachers)	Perceived leader behavior, perceived school climate, and school size <sup>k</sup>	<u>Out-of-school suspensions</u>  AA <sup>g</sup> males AA <sup>g</sup> females	<u>R<sup>2</sup></u>  .40* .40*	Multiple regression
11 McCarthy & Hoge (1987)	945 (9 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> grade students)	Student demeanor rating <sup>l</sup>	<u>Suspensions</u>	<u>Betas</u> .16* (year 1) <sup>m</sup> .13* (year 2) <sup>m</sup> .15* (year 3) <sup>m</sup> .11* (year 2) <sup>n</sup>	Multiple regression

(table continues)

<sup>g</sup>AA=African-American. <sup>i</sup>LAS=Low alienated students. <sup>j</sup>HAS=High alienated students. <sup>k</sup>Variables acting in combination. <sup>l</sup>Student demeanor rating was determined by a teacher the student's choice. Teachers ranked students on a scale ranging from not well-behaved to well-behaved. <sup>m</sup>Multiple regression did not include disciplinary sanctions from previous years. <sup>n</sup>Multiple regression included disciplinary sanctions from the previous year.  
\*p<.05.

Table 7 (continued)

Study #	Population or sample size	Independent variables or comparisons	Dependent variables	Results	Statistical analysis
11 (continued)	945 (9 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> grade students)	Student demeanor rating <sup>1</sup>	<u>School sanctions</u> <sup>o</sup>	<u>Betas</u> .22* (year 1) <sup>m</sup> .15* (year 2) <sup>m</sup> .19* (year 3) <sup>m</sup> .12* (year 2) <sup>n</sup> .11 <sup>t*</sup> (year 3) <sup>p</sup>	Multiple regression
		<u>Grades in the previous semester</u> <sup>q</sup>	<u>Suspensions</u>	-.13 <sup>t*</sup> (year 1) <sup>m</sup> -.18* (year 2) <sup>m</sup> -.10* (year 3) <sup>m</sup> -.13* (year 2) <sup>n</sup>	Multiple regression
		<u>Grades in the previous semester</u> <sup>q</sup>	<u>School sanctions</u> <sup>o</sup>	-.11* (year 1) <sup>m</sup> -.19* (year 2) <sup>m</sup> -.13* (year 3) <sup>m</sup> -.12* (year 2) <sup>n</sup>	Multiple regression

(table continues)

<sup>1</sup>Student demeanor rating was determined by a teacher of student's choice. Teachers ranked students on a scale ranging from not well-behaved to well-behaved.

<sup>m</sup>Multiple regression did not include disciplinary sanctions from previous years. <sup>n</sup>Multiple regression included disciplinary sanctions from the previous year.

<sup>o</sup>School sanctions consisted of having to bring parents to school, being sent to the principal's office, or being suspended. <sup>p</sup>Multiple regression included disciplinary sanctions from year 2. <sup>q</sup>Grades in the previous semester was the student's grade point average. Students were classified as having a low or high grade point average.

\*p<.05.

Table 7 (continued)

Study #	Population or sample size	Independent variables or comparisons	Dependent variables	Results	Statistical analysis
11 (continued)	945 (9th-11 <sup>th</sup> grade students)	<u>Past discipline record</u> (including school sanctions from year 1)	<u>Suspensions year 2</u>	<u>Betas</u> .24*	Multiple regression
		<u>Past discipline record</u> (including school sanctions from year 1)	<u>Suspensions year 3</u>	.11*	
		<u>Past discipline record</u> (including school sanctions from year 2)	<u>Suspensions year 3</u>	.31*	
	945 (9th-11 <sup>th</sup> grade students)	<u>Past discipline record</u> (including school sanctions from year 1)	<u>School sanctions<sup>o</sup> year 2</u>	.29*	Multiple regression
		<u>Past discipline record</u> (including school sanctions from year 1)	<u>School sanctions<sup>o</sup> year 3</u>	.16*	
		<u>Past discipline record</u> (including school sanctions from year 2)	<u>School sanctions<sup>o</sup> year 3</u>	.27*	

(table continues)

<sup>o</sup>School sanctions consisted of having to bring parents to school, being sent to the principal's office, or being suspended.

\*p<.05.

Table 7 (continued)

Study #	Population or sample size	Independent variables or comparisons	Dependent variables	Results	Statistical analysis
12 Charles (1981)	176 (7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , and 9 <sup>th</sup> grade students)	Ethnicity (black, white)	<u>Feelings of alienation</u> (by dimension)	<u>F</u>	ANOVA
		Gender			
	88 NSS <sup>r</sup> 88 SS <sup>s</sup>	Suspension status (suspended, non- suspended)			
		Suspension status x ethnicity	Personal Incapacity	8.82 <sup>*</sup>	
	Suspension status x ethnicity	Guidelessness	5.36 <sup>*</sup>		
	88 NSS <sup>r</sup> 88 SS <sup>s</sup>	Suspension status x ethnicity	<u>Attitudes toward school</u> Attitude toward peers	<u>F</u> 3.62 <sup>*</sup>	ANOVA

(table continues)

<sup>r</sup>NSS=Non-suspended students. <sup>s</sup>=Suspended students.

<sup>\*</sup>p<.05.

Table 7 (continued)

Study #	Population or sample size	Independent variables or comparisons	Dependent variables	Results	Statistical analysis
13 Rich (1975)	390 (middle school students)	Socioeconomic status Ethnicity	<u>Proportion of disruptive students</u>	<u>z-statistic</u>	<u>z-scores</u>
	146 AAS <sup>a</sup> 244 WS <sup>b</sup>	AAS <sup>a</sup> v. WS <sup>b</sup>		8.03 <sup>**</sup>	
	82 AAM <sup>t</sup> 141 WM <sup>u</sup>	AAM <sup>t</sup> v. WM <sup>u</sup>		5.00 <sup>**</sup>	
	64 AAF <sup>v</sup> 103 WF <sup>w</sup>	AAF <sup>v</sup> v. WF <sup>w</sup>		7.36 <sup>**</sup>	
	57 LSESAAF <sup>x</sup> 40 LSESWF <sup>y</sup>	LSESAAF <sup>x</sup> v. LSESWF <sup>y</sup>		4.97 <sup>**</sup>	

(table continues)

<sup>a</sup> AAS=African-American students. <sup>b</sup> WS=White students. <sup>t</sup> AAM=African-American males. <sup>u</sup> WM=white males. <sup>v</sup> AAF=African-American females. <sup>w</sup> WF=White females. <sup>x</sup> LSESAAF=Low socioeconomic status African-American females. <sup>y</sup> LSESWF=Low socioeconomic status white females.

<sup>\*\*</sup>  $p \leq .01$ .

Table 7 (continued)

Study #	Population or sample size	Independent variables or comparisons	Dependent variables	Results	Statistical analysis
13 (continued)	390 (middle school students)	Socioeconomic status Ethnicity	<u>Proportion of disruptive students</u>	<u>z-statistic</u>	<u>z-scores</u>
	71 LSESWM <sup>z</sup> 152 NLSSESWM <sup>aa</sup>	LSESWM <sup>z</sup> v. NLSSESWM <sup>aa</sup>		6.50 <sup>**</sup>	
	40 LSESWF <sup>y</sup> 70 NLSSESWF <sup>bb</sup>	LSESWF <sup>y</sup> v. NLSSESWF <sup>bb</sup>		2.69 <sup>**</sup>	
	57 LSESAAF <sup>x</sup> 70 NLSSEF <sup>cc</sup>	LSESAAF <sup>x</sup> v. NLSSEF <sup>cc</sup>		8.15 <sup>**</sup>	
	134 LSESAAS <sup>dd</sup> 12 NLSSESAAS <sup>ee</sup>	LSESAAS <sup>dd</sup> v. NLSSESAAS <sup>ee</sup>		5.98 <sup>**</sup>	

<sup>x</sup>LSESAAF=Low socioeconomic status African-American females. <sup>y</sup>LSESWF=Low socioeconomic status white females. <sup>z</sup>LSESWM=Low socioeconomic status white males. <sup>aa</sup>NLSSESWM=Non-low socioeconomic status white males. <sup>bb</sup>NLSSESWF=Non-low socioeconomic status white females. <sup>cc</sup>NLSSEF=Non-low socioeconomic status females <sup>dd</sup>LSESAAS=Low socioeconomic status African-American students. <sup>ee</sup>NLSSESAAS=Non-low socioeconomic status African-American students

<sup>\*\*</sup>p<.01.

## Studies of the Number of Disciplinary Actions

### Received by African-American Students

#### Study #1

Anderson, D. R. (1973). The effects of first year desegregation on the year-end grade average, absentee-dropout rate, and discipline problems of a group of eleventh grade black pupils (Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, 1973). Dissertation Abstracts International, 34, 6245.

Research Question. "Compared to a matched group of segregated pupils, is there any change in the percentage of discipline problems among the total group of eleventh grade black pupils during their first year of desegregation?" This study contained three research questions. In keeping with the criteria established for this synthesis, only the research question fitting the criteria was examined.

Variables. The dependent variable was the number of disciplinary actions expressed as a percentage. Disciplinary actions were categorized as office cases, detentions, and suspensions. The independent variables were type of school (segregated school and desegregated), gender, and socioeconomic status.

Methodology. The populations were students from a segregated high school and a desegregated high school in Daytona Beach, Florida. The study contained two samples. The first sample was 151 African-American students enrolled in the eleventh grade in a segregated African-American high school in the city at the beginning of the 1968-69 school year. The second sample was 152 African-American students in the eleventh grade who had been in a segregated school and then reassigned to a desegregated high school in the city at the beginning of the 1969-1970 school year, the school system's first year of desegregation.

Two sets of subgroups were created from the segregated and desegregated samples. The subgroups were based on gender and socioeconomic status. Students were first classified as high socioeconomic background or low socioeconomic background students. Socioeconomic status was defined in terms of the occupation of the head of household. The occupation of the head of household was obtained for each student from a questionnaire given to all students by guidance counselors at the beginning of the school year. The information given by the students was checked for accuracy by

comparing it to the occupational data reported in the permanent records of the students. The second subgroup was created by further dividing the higher and lower socioeconomic background students by gender.

Discipline records were obtained from the assistant principal of the desegregated school and the principal of the segregated school. All of the discipline cases occurring within the segregated group or desegregated group were assigned to one of three categories (office cases, detentions, and suspensions). The proportion of each type of discipline case was computed for the segregated and desegregated groups and expressed as a percentage. The difference in percentages was tested for significance using the Davies' t-test for differences in proportions. Alpha levels of .10 and .05 were used in the analysis.

Findings. The desegregated and segregated groups differed in the percentage of disciplinary actions received during the first year of desegregation. Differences in the percentage of disciplinary actions received were related to the seriousness of the problem. The difference between the segregated and desegregated group for suspensions was 6.70 percentage points ( $p \leq .10$ , see Table 8). A positive percentage difference indicated fewer suspensions experienced by the desegregated group. The difference between the segregated and desegregated group for detentions received was -11.90 percentage points. The desegregated group received more detentions than the segregated group. There was no difference between the two groups in the percentage of office cases received.

Socioeconomic background was related to the disciplinary actions received by African-American students during the first year of desegregation. Differences in the percentage of disciplinary actions received were found between the two groups of higher socioeconomic background students. Students in the desegregated school received a higher percentage of office cases and detentions when compared to students in the segregated school. The difference between the segregated and desegregated group of higher socioeconomic background students for office cases was -15.20 percentage points ( $p \leq .10$ , see Table 9). The difference between the segregated and desegregated group of higher socioeconomic background students for detentions was -26.30 percentage points ( $p \leq .05$ , see Table 9).

Table 8

Percentage of Disciplinary Actions Received by African-American Students in

Segregated and Desegregated Schools (Anderson, 1973), Study # 1

School type	N	Percentage of disciplinary cases <sup>a</sup>		
		Office cases	Detentions	Suspensions
Segregated	151	27.10	34.40	17.20
Desegregated	151	29.80	46.30	10.50
Percentage difference <sup>b</sup>		-2.70	-11.90 <sup>***</sup>	6.70 <sup>***</sup>

Note. Adapted from Anderson, D. R. (1973). The effects of first year desegregation on the year-end grade average, absentee-dropout rate, and discipline problems of a group of eleventh grade black pupils (Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, 1973).

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<sup>a</sup>Percentage of disciplinary cases is equal to the number of each type of disciplinary action divided by the number of students in the sample. <sup>b</sup>Percentage difference is equal to segregated group minus desegregated group for each disciplinary action.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>p<.10.

Table 9

Percentage of Disciplinary Actions Received by African-American Students in Segregated and Desegregated Schools Disaggregated by Socioeconomic Background (Anderson, 1973), Study # 1

Socioeconomic background	N	Percentage of disciplinary cases <sup>a</sup>		
		Office cases	Detentions	Suspensions
<u>HSESS<sup>b</sup></u>				
Segregated students	61	19.60	29.50	14.70
Desegregated students	43	34.80	55.80	11.60
Percentage difference <sup>c</sup>		-15.20 <sup>***</sup>	-26.30 <sup>*</sup>	3.10
<u>LSESS<sup>d</sup></u>				
Segregated students	90	32.20	37.70	18.80
Desegregated students	108	27.70	42.50	10.10
Percentage difference <sup>c</sup>		4.30 <sup>e</sup>	-4.80	8.70 <sup>*</sup>

Note. Adapted from Anderson, D. R. (1973). The effects of first year desegregation on the year-end grade average, absentee-dropout rate, and discipline problems of a group of eleventh grade black pupils (Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, 1973).

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<sup>a</sup>Percentage of disciplinary cases is equal to the number of each type of disciplinary action divided by the number of students in the sample. <sup>b</sup>HSESS=High socioeconomic status students. <sup>c</sup>Percentage difference is equal to segregated group minus desegregated group for each disciplinary action. <sup>d</sup>LSESS=Low socioeconomic status students. <sup>e</sup> Error in original table.

\*  $p \leq .05$ . \*\*\*  $p \leq .10$ .

There was no difference between the two groups in the percentage of suspensions received.

A difference in the percentage of suspensions received was found between the two groups of low socioeconomic background students. Students in the desegregated school received a lower percentage of suspensions when compared to students in the segregated school. The difference between the segregated and desegregated group of lower socioeconomic background students for suspensions was 8.70 percentage points ( $p \leq .05$ , see Table 9). No differences were found between the two groups for the percentage of office cases and detentions received.

There was an interaction effect of gender and socioeconomic background on disciplinary actions during the first year of desegregation. Higher socioeconomic background desegregated females experienced more detentions than the higher socioeconomic background segregated females (see Table 10). There was no interaction effect of gender and socioeconomic background on office cases and suspensions during the first year of desegregation.

Discussion. The number for the sample ( $N=303$ ) reported in the methodology section of this study did not match the number used in the tables ( $N=302$ ) throughout the study. One student was unaccounted for. What happened to that one student?

This study could have been improved in two ways. The author compared subgroups of the same socioeconomic background or gender. Analysis of the data comparing students of different socioeconomic backgrounds and gender would have been beneficial for examining relationships between the variables and the disciplining of African-American students. Second, the number of disciplinary actions for each category of disciplinary action was expressed as a percentage of the total group of segregated or desegregated students. The author noted he did not take into account students who may have been referred numerous times for a particular disciplinary action. Consequently, only an approximation of the actual proportion of pupils who received disciplinary actions could be determined for each group. Data for the actual number of students who were referred for disciplinary action would have been helpful for comparative purposes.

The results of this study were kept for the synthesis because they support the relationship between desegregation, socioeconomic status, and gender and the

Table 10

Percentage of Disciplinary Actions Received by African-American Students in Segregated and Desegregated Schools Disaggregated by Socioeconomic Background and Gender (Anderson, 1973), Study # 1

Socioeconomic background and gender	N	Percentage of discipline cases <sup>a</sup>		
		Office cases	Detentions	Suspensions
<u>HSESM<sup>b</sup></u>				
Segregated males	34	29.40	44.10	26.40
Desegregated males	23	47.80	65.20	17.30
Percentage difference <sup>c</sup>		-18.40	-21.10	9.10
<u>HSESF<sup>d</sup></u>				
Segregated females	27	7.40	11.10	0.00
Desegregated females	20	20.00	45.50	5.00
Percentage difference <sup>c</sup>		-12.60	-33.90 <sup>*g</sup>	-5.00
<u>LSESM<sup>e</sup></u>				
Segregated males	50	44.00	50.00	28.00
Desegregated males	58	31.00	48.20	15.50
Percentage difference <sup>c</sup>		13.00	1.80	12.50
<u>LSESF<sup>f</sup></u>				
Segregated females	40	17.50	22.50	7.50
Desegregated females	50	24.00	36.00	4.00
Percentage difference <sup>c</sup>		-6.50	-13.50	3.50

Note. Adapted from Anderson, D. R. (1973). The effects of first year desegregation on the year-end grade average, absentee-dropout rate, and discipline problems of a group of eleventh grade black pupils (Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, 1973).

Dissertation Abstracts International, 34, 6245. Adapted with permission of the author.

<sup>a</sup>Percentage of discipline cases is equal to the number of each type of disciplinary action divided by the number of students in the sample.. <sup>b</sup>HSESM=High socioeconomic status males. <sup>c</sup>Percentage difference is equal to segregated group minus desegregated group for each disciplinary action. <sup>d</sup>HSESF=High socioeconomic status females. <sup>e</sup>LSESM=Low socioeconomic status males <sup>f</sup>LSESF=low socioeconomic status females. <sup>g</sup> Error in original table. \*  $p < .05$ .

disciplinary actions received by African-American students in public schools.

### Study #2

Ray, A. A. (1994). Disciplinary problems as a function of satisfaction: A study of black male high school students. (Doctoral dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1994). Dissertation Abstracts International, 55, 3468.

Research Questions. 1. “What are the perceptions [of the school environment] of rebellious black male high school students [compared] to those of ...non-rebellious black male high school students” (p. 5)?

2. “What is the degree of satisfaction of rebellious black male high school students with their school climate [compared] to that of ...non-rebellious black male high school students” (p. 5)?

3. “What is the school environment in which black male students exercise a rebellious adaptation” (p. 5)?

Variables. The dependent variable was level of satisfaction with the school environment and was measured with the Student Satisfaction Survey (Ray, 1994). The independent variable was group (rebellious African-American males and non-rebellious African-American males). Rebellious African-American males were males with two or more referrals requiring disciplinary action involving removal from class or school within one semester. Non-rebellious African-American males were males with no referrals requiring disciplinary action involving removal from class or school within one semester. Disciplinary actions used to remove students from class or school included in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension (1 to 10 days), and long-term suspension (more than 10 days).

Methodology. The author of this study used four populations of African-American males from an urban public comprehensive high school in Rochester, New York, during the spring semester of 1993. A random sample was selected from each population. These samples were 25 ninth grade rebellious African-American males, 25 tenth grade rebellious African-American males, 25 ninth grade non-rebellious African-American

males, and 25 tenth grade non-rebellious African-American males.

Instrumentation. The subjects' level of satisfaction with the school environment was measured using the Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS) developed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (Ray, 1994). The SSS measures students' satisfaction with the school environment using eight subscales: school buildings, supplies and upkeep; teachers, fellow students; schoolwork; student activities; student discipline; decision-making opportunities; and communication. Measurement was on a scale with a range from 1 to 6 (1 is very unhappy, 5 is very happy, and 6 is don't know). The researcher reported the subscales of the SSS to have average internal consistency reliabilities ranging from .76 to .83.

Subscale score analysis of the SSS was conducted to determine differences in satisfaction with the school environment of non-rebellious and rebellious African-American males. Differences were assessed with t-tests, and alpha was set at .05.

Ten students from each of the four groups were randomly selected and interviewed. The researcher created eight interview questions from students' responses to the SSS obtain in-depth information on differences in satisfaction with the school environment between the non-rebellious and rebellious groups. Content analysis of the interview data was conducted to identify emerging themes in relation to the research questions.

Findings. Ninth grade rebellious African-American males were compared to ninth grade non-rebellious African-American males on the eight subscales of the SSS. Differences were found on the subscales of student activities, decision-making opportunities, and communication (see Table 11). No differences were found between tenth grade rebellious and non-rebellious African-American males on the SSS.

Ninth grade non-rebellious males were more satisfied than ninth grade rebellious males on these three subscales. Ninth and tenth grade rebellious African-American males' were compared to ninth and tenth grade non-rebellious males' on the subscales of the SSS as well. Differences were found on the subscales of school work, student activities, decision-making opportunities, and communication (see Table 12). Ninth and tenth grade

Table 11

Level of Satisfaction With the School Environment for Rebellious and Non-RebelliousAfrican-American Males by Grade Level (Ray, 1994, N=100), Study # 2

Subscale	Ninth grade			Tenth grade		
	Rebellious (n=25)	Non-rebellious (n=25)	Diff. <sup>a</sup>	Rebellious (n=25)	Non-rebellious (n=25)	Diff. <sup>a</sup>
Teachers						
<u>M</u>	21.72	22.68	-.96	22.28	25.64	-3.36
<u>SD</u>	5.81	4.08		6.35	6.14	
Fellow students						
<u>M</u>	17.80	17.88	-.08	18.20	17.60	.60
<u>SD</u>	4.06	3.47		3.94	3.59	
School work						
<u>M</u>	18.64	20.44	-1.80	18.68	20.40	-1.72
<u>SD</u>	3.82	3.83		4.21	4.87	
Student activities						
<u>M</u>	15.56	19.96	-4.40*	18.76	19.76	1.00
<u>SD</u>	4.64	5.05		4.61	3.94	
School discipline						
<u>M</u>	17.48	18.20	-.72	18.48	17.16	1.32
<u>SD</u>	5.23	5.92		5.27	5.50	
Decision-making opportunities						
<u>M</u>	14.60	19.24	-4.64*	14.88	17.60	-2.72
<u>SD</u>	3.88	5.36		5.62	4.54	
School building, supplies, etc.						
<u>M</u>	19.68	21.16	-1.48	19.36	21.64	-2.28
<u>SD</u>	4.77	4.19		5.04	5.28	
Communication						
<u>M</u>	17.32	20.88	-3.56*	19.64	21.28	-1.64
<u>SD</u>	5.55	5.33		5.14	4.80	

Note. Adapted from Ray, A. A. (1994). Disciplinary problems as a function of satisfaction: A study of black male high school students (Doctoral dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1994). Dissertation Abstracts International, 55, 3468. Adapted with permission of the author.

<sup>a</sup>Diff=Difference between group means; rebellious minus non-rebellious.

\*p<.05.

Table 12

Level of Satisfaction With the School Environment for Rebellious and Non-RebelliousNinth (N=50) and Tenth (N=50) Graders Combined (Ray, 1994), Study # 2

Subscale	Rebellious	Non-rebellious	Diff. <sup>a</sup>
Teachers			
<u>M</u>	22.00	24.16	-2.16
<u>SD</u>	6.03	5.37	
Fellow students			
<u>M</u>	18.00	17.74	.26
<u>SD</u>	3.97	3.50	
School work			
<u>M</u>	18.66	20.42	-1.76*
<u>SD</u>	3.98	4.33	
Student activities			
<u>M</u>	17.16	19.87	-2.71*
<u>SD</u>	4.85	4.48	
School discipline			
<u>M</u>	17.98	17.68	.30
<u>SD</u>	5.22	5.68	
Decision-making opportunities			
<u>M</u>	14.74	18.42	-3.68*
<u>SD</u>	4.78	4.99	
School building, supplies, etc.			
<u>M</u>	19.52	21.40	-1.88
<u>SD</u>	4.86	4.72	
Communication			
<u>M</u>	18.48	21.08	-2.60*
<u>SD</u>	5.42	5.03	

Note. Adapted from Ray, A. A. (1994). Disciplinary problems as a function of satisfaction: A study of black male high school students (Doctoral dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1994). Dissertation Abstracts International, 55, 3468. Adapted with the permission of the author.

<sup>a</sup>Diff=Difference between group means; rebellious minus non-rebellious.

\*p<.05.

non-rebellious males were more satisfied than ninth and tenth grade rebellious males on these four subscales.

Content analysis of the interview data revealed seven variables were associated with the level of satisfaction African-American males had with the school environment. These variables were: parental involvement, teachers (fondness of), sports activities, enforcement of school rules, peer pressure, student activities, and school violence. Teachers (fondness of) seemed to have the biggest effect on African-American males' satisfaction with school environment. Rebellious students tended to make negative comments about their teachers, while non-rebellious students made positive comments about their teachers. Non-rebellious males indicated that they enjoyed having their parents involved in their school experiences. They noted that because their parents were involved in their school life, they were less likely to misbehave. Sports and other school activities were things that both groups of students greatly appreciated as a part of the school environment. Both groups believed that these two areas had a positive influence on their behavior because it kept them involved in supervised, fun activities. Both groups of males were not satisfied with the amount of peer pressure and school violence they experienced in school. Rebellious males indicated that these two variables had a negative influence on their behavior. Finally, both groups of African-American males were not satisfied with the manner in which school rules were being enforced. Rebellious males stated that their behavior would improve if school officials enforced school rules consistently.

Discussion. Several things in the methodology section of this study left the reader confused. This study had four populations and four samples. The term "population sample" was used to refer to the 100 African-American males who participated in the study. An explanation of this term is not given so the reader was left to interpret what this term meant. The author noted that the 100 African-American males composing the four samples were randomly selected. This seems unlikely in that an equal number was selected from each group. It is more probable that stratified random sampling was used in the study. Finally, the author gave no explanation of how an answer of "don't know" on the SSS was handled when treating the data.

This study is unique in that the researcher examined what African-American males see and feel within the school environment from the perspective of the African-American males themselves. African-American males indicated that the variables of peer pressure, school violence, sports, school activities, and parental involvement are associated with their level of satisfaction with the school environment.

The results of this study are beneficial for those involved with the disciplining of African-American males. Non-rebellious African-American males were more satisfied with the school environment than rebellious African-American males. School officials should work to ensure that they create a school environment where African-American males are satisfied in the areas discussed in this study. If they do, the need to discipline African-American males may be reduced.

The dependent variable in the study was level of satisfaction with the school environment. The study deviated from the criteria for inclusion of studies in this synthesis in that it did not use disciplinary actions as the dependent variable. The study was kept in the synthesis because it contains variables that may help to explain the differences in the number of disciplinary actions received by African-American males in public schools.

### Study # 3

Johnson, M. D. (1989). Organizational climate, discipline infractions, and student academic achievement (Doctoral dissertation, Georgia State University, 1989). Dissertation Abstracts International, 51, 0038.

Research Question. This study had two research questions. In keeping with the purposes of this study, only one research question was examined:

“Do middle schools with a more open organizational climate have fewer major discipline referrals involving African-American students than middle schools with a less open organizational climate?”

Variables. The dependent variables were academic achievement and major discipline referrals. In keeping with the interest of this synthesis, only the variable of major discipline referrals was examined. Major discipline referrals were defined as those referrals that resulted in a student receiving in-school or out-of-school suspension for misbehavior. The independent variable was type of organizational climate (open organizational climate or closed organizational climate).

Methodology. The population was teachers from 14 middle schools in a suburban school district in Atlanta, Georgia. The sample was 801 teachers from fourteen middle schools in the district. They were administered the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire—Rutgers Secondary (OCDQ-RS). Major discipline referrals including the number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions for African-American students were taken from the school system's annual discipline summary report. The data were analyzed with the chi-square test of independence. The alpha level was set at .01.

Instrumentation. Halpin and Croft developed the OCDQ in the early 1960s. J. A. Mulhern of Rutgers University prepared a revised version (OCDQ-RS) in 1985. An open climate organization (school) is characterized by harmonious relationships among faculty members, and the teachers are committed to the goals of the organization. In an open climate organization, the principal exhibits care for the organization and leads by example. Closed climate schools have a high level of apathy and low morale. In a closed climate organization, goals of the organization are not met, the social needs of faculty members are not fulfilled, and the principal does not lead by example (Johnson, 1989). The reliability coefficients for the five dimensions of the OCDQ-RS ranged from .73 to .97.

For comparison purposes, schools were classified as most open organizational climate schools and least open organizational climate schools. Schools scoring below the mean score on the OCDQ-RS were classified as least open organizational climate schools. Schools with scores above the mean score on the OCDQ-RS were classified as most open organizational climate schools.

Findings. The results of this study showed that the climate of a school is related to the behavior of African-American students. Chi-square analysis of the data showed that African-American students in the most open climate schools received fewer out-of-school

suspensions and more in-school suspensions than they were expected to receive during a school year (see Table 13). African-American students in the least open climate schools received more out-of-school suspensions and fewer in-school suspensions than they were expected to receive during the school year.

Discussion. The findings of this study suggest that African-American students are more likely to receive the harsher of the two types of suspension in closed climate schools. The data may suggest that schools with a more open organizational climate are more resourceful in resolving the misbehavior of African-American students so the need for out-of-school suspension was reduced. More research on the topic is needed.

#### Study # 4

Scurry, A. (1976). The interrelationships among disruptive student behavior and student perceptions of alienation, and internal-external control in black high school seniors (Doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, 1976). Dissertation Abstracts International, 37, 3541.

Research Questions. 1. "Do students who participated in disruptive activities obtain scores on the Gurin Multidimensional Internal-External Control Scale that are significantly different from those students who were not participants" (p. 53)?

2. "Do students who participated in disruptive activities obtain scores on the Dean Alienation Scale that are significantly different from those students who were not participants" (p. 53)?

Variables. The dependent variables were feelings of alienation as measured by two scales, the Dean Alienation Scale and the Gurin Multidimensional Internal-External Control Scale. The independent variable was group (disruptive or non-disruptive students).

Methodology. The population was African-American seniors at one high school in Jacksonville, Florida. The sample was 160 African-American seniors from the high school, 80 disruptive students and 80 non-disruptive students. Disruptive students were

Table 13

Chi-square Analysis of African-American Students Suspended in Middle Schools by Type of Organizational Climate (Johnson, 1989), Study # 3

Climate <sup>a</sup>	In-school suspension		Out-of-school suspension		
	Observed	Expected	Observed	Expected	Total observed
Most open organizational climate schools	127	110 <sup>b</sup>	51	68 <sup>b</sup>	178
Least open organizational climate schools	741	758 <sup>b</sup>	485	468 <sup>b</sup>	1226
Total	868	868	536	536 <sup>b</sup>	1404

$\chi^2=8.56^{**}$

Note. Adapted from Johnson, M. D. (1989). Organizational climate, discipline infractions, and student academic achievement (Doctoral dissertation, Georgia State University, 1989). Dissertation Abstracts International, 51, 0038. Adapted with permission of the author.

<sup>a</sup>Schools scoring below the mean on the OCDQ-RS were classified as least open organizational climate schools. Schools scoring above the mean on the OCDQ-RS were classified as most open organizational climate schools. <sup>b</sup>An error in calculations from the original table has been corrected.

\*\* p<.01.

students who had damaged school property, caused bodily injury, or been suspended. Non-disruptive students were defined as students who had not damaged school property, caused bodily injury, or been suspended according to school records.

The sample was administered two measures: the Dean Alienation Scale (DAS) and the Gurin Multidimensional Internal-External Control Scale (GMIECS). The DAS measures students' feelings of alienation. The DAS contains three subscales: powerlessness, normlessness, and social isolation. Powerlessness is the expectancy held by an individual that his behavior cannot determine the outcomes he seeks. Normlessness is the degree to which social norms regulating individual conduct have broken down and are no longer effective as rules of behavior. Social isolation is the individual's feeling of isolation from the group and its standards (Scurry, 1976). The author reported the DAS to have a reliability of .78. The Gurin Multidimensional Internal-External Control Scale measures the degree a person feels that he or she is in control of his or her own fate. The author reported that the GMIECS had adequate reliability and validity for the study.

Total mean scores on both measures were calculated. Mean scores on each of the subscales on the DAS were calculated as well. The data in the study were analyzed using the Hotelling  $T^2$ , t-tests and the F-test. The alpha level was .05.

Findings. A difference was found between disruptive and non-disruptive students on the mean total scores ( $t=2.10$ , see Table 14) of the DAS. Disruptive students had higher feelings of alienation than non-disruptive students. Differences in powerlessness, normlessness, and social isolation between the disruptive and non-disruptive groups were significant when these three variables were tested together (Hotelling  $T^2=9.41$ ,  $p<.05$ , see Table 15). When univariate t-tests were applied, differences were found for powerlessness and normlessness between the disruptive and non-disruptive groups. Disruptive students had greater feelings of powerlessness and normlessness than non-disruptive students. No difference was found between the two groups on social isolation. Analysis of the mean scores on the Gurin Multidimensional Internal-External Control Scale showed no differences between disruptive and non-disruptive students.

Discussion. Feelings of alienation may be a variable associated with the disciplining of African-American students. Disruptive students had greater feelings of alienation than non-disruptive students. The results of the study seem to indicate that the

Table 14

Results of t-Test for Differences Between Disruptive and Non-Disruptive Students on the Dean Alienation Scale (Scurry, 1976), Study # 4

<u>Group</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>t</u>
Non-disruptive students	80	63.05	11.64		.
Disruptive students	80	67.00	12.06		
				158	2.10*

Note. Adapted from Scurry, A. (1976). The interrelationships among disruptive student behavior and student perceptions of alienation, and internal-external control in black high school seniors (Doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, 1976). Dissertation Abstracts International, 37, 3541. Adapted with the permission of the author.  
\*p<.05.

Table 15

Differences in Mean Scores of Disruptive and Non-Disruptive Students on the Subscales of the Dean Alienation Scale (Scurry, 1976), Study # 4

Subscale	Group		Difference
	DS <sup>a</sup>	NDS <sup>b</sup>	
Powerlessness	21.93	24.34	2.41*
Normlessness	14.96	17.00	2.04*
Social isolation	26.16	25.65	-.51

Hotelling  $T^2=9.41$  \*

Note. Adapted from Scurry, A. (1976). The interrelationships among disruptive student behavior and student perceptions of alienation, and internal-external control in black high school seniors (Doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, 1976). Dissertation Abstracts International, 37, 3541. Adapted with permission of the author. High values on the Dean Alienation Scale indicate less alienation.

<sup>a</sup>DS=Disruptive students. <sup>b</sup>NDS=Non-disruptive students.

\* $p < .05$ .

behavior of some disruptive African-American students in school could be changed if educators would address their feelings of alienation.

The dependent variables in this study were feelings of alienation. The study deviated from the criteria for inclusion of studies in this synthesis in that it did not use disciplinary actions as the dependent variable. The study was kept in the synthesis because it contains variables that may help to explain the differences in the number of disciplinary actions received by African-American males in public schools.

### Studies of the Disproportionate Number of Disciplinary Actions Received by African-American Students

#### Study # 5

Hudgens, J.H. (1977). The development of a model to assess administrative bias in student suspensions with regard to the students' race, sex, family income level, and parental marital status (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1977). Dissertation Abstracts International, 38, 7153.

Research Question. "Is the differential number of suspensions the result of racial bias or is it the manifestation of other factors such as family income level and parental marital status" (p.10)?

Variables. The dependent variable was number of suspensions. The independent variables were gender, race (black or white), socioeconomic status, and family status. Students were classified as economically deprived or non-economically deprived for the variable socioeconomic status. Economically deprived students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Non-economically deprived students were not eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Family status consisted of two groups of students: natural family students and surrogate family students. Natural family students were students who resided with both biological parents. Surrogate family students were students who resided with a person or persons other than both biological parents. Data for gender were not disaggregated by ethnicity. Consequently, gender was not examined as a part of this synthesis.

Methodology. The setting for this study was Spring Valley High School in Richland County School District II, Columbia, South Carolina. The administrative team

at Spring Valley High School and members of a dissertation seminar class at the University of South Carolina developed an instrument to test for administrative bias in student suspension. Two thousand seven hundred eighty-six students completed the survey instrument. The information gathered on the survey for each student was gender, race, family income level, family marital status, number of discipline conferences held with an administrator, and number of suspensions. The information on the instrument was verified by the researcher against current school data.

Data analysis began with classifying the 843 surveys of the students who received suspensions by race, socioeconomic status, and family status. The number of suspensions was counted for each category of independent variable. The chi-square test of independence was used to analyze the data. Alpha was set at .05.

Findings. There was a difference in the proportion of African-American students suspended when compared to white students suspended ( $\chi^2=7.30$ ,  $p \leq .05$ , see Table 16). Analysis for racial differences in suspensions of natural family students only were also statistically significant ( $\chi^2= 7.10$ ,  $p \leq .05$ , see Table 17). African-American students were disproportionately suspended. The differences found were for all students interviewed and suspended without regard to the number of times a student may have been interviewed or suspended by an administrator. Analysis for racial differences in suspensions comparing only economically deprived students, only non-economically deprived students, and only surrogate family students showed no differences. There was a difference found for suspensions when examining only African-American students classified by socioeconomic status ( $\chi^2= 4.10$ ,  $p \leq .05$ , see Table 18). From a total of 115 non-economically deprived African-American students, 38 or 33% were suspended, compared to 58 or 46% of the 127 economically deprived African- American students. No differences in suspensions were found for the variable family status for African-American students only.

Discussion. When analyzing data for African-American students only, socioeconomic status was associated with the number of suspensions received by students. Students who were economically deprived were disproportionately suspended. Race was associated with the number of suspensions received by students. A disproportionate number of African-American students was suspended when compared to

Table 16

Chi-square Analysis for Differences in Suspensions by Race (Hudgens, 1977), Study

# 5

Group	Race of student		Total
	African-American	White	
<u>Suspended</u> Frequency	98	180	278
$\chi^2$	3.50	1.40	
<u>Non-suspended</u> Frequency	148	417	565
$\chi^2$	1.70	.70	
<u>Total</u> Frequency	246	597	843
$\chi^2$	5.20	2.10	7.30*

Note. Adapted from Hudgens, J. H. (1977). The development of a model to assess administrative bias in student suspensions with regard to the students' race, sex, family income level, and parental marital status (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1977). Dissertation Abstracts International, 38, 7153.

\*  $p \leq .05$ .

Table 17

Chi-square Analysis for Racial Differences in Suspensions for Natural Family Students

(Hudgens, 1977), Study # 5

Group	Family status		Total
	Natural family AA <sup>a</sup> students	Natural family white students	
<u>Suspended</u>			
Frequency	65	119	184
$\chi^2$	3.50	1.40	
<u>Non-suspended</u>			
Frequency	100	305	405
$\chi^2$	1.60	.60	
<u>Total</u>			
Frequency	165	424	589
$\chi^2$	5.10	2.00	7.10*

Note. Adapted from Hudgens, J. H. (1977). The development of a model to assess administrative bias in student suspensions with regard to the students' race, sex, family income level, and parental marital status (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1977.) Dissertation Abstracts International, 38, 7153.

<sup>a</sup>AA=African-American.

\* p<.05.

Table 18

Chi-square Analysis of Suspensions for African-American Students by SocioeconomicStatus (Hudgens, 1977), Study #5

<u>Group</u>	<u>Socioeconomic status</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>Economically deprived</u>	<u>Non-economically deprived</u>	
<u>Suspended</u>			
Frequency	58	69	127
$\chi^2$	1.20	.80	
<u>Non suspended</u>			
Frequency	38	77	115
$\chi^2$	1.30	.80	
<u>Total</u>			
Frequency	96	46	242
$\chi^2$	2.50	1.60	4.10 <sup>*a</sup>

Note. Adapted from Hudgens, J. H. (1977). The development of a model to assess administrative bias in student suspensions with regard to the students' race, sex, family income level, and parental marital status (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1977.) Dissertation Abstracts International, 38, 7153.

<sup>a</sup>Error in original table corrected here.

\* $p < .05$ .

white students.

An important variable associated with the disciplining of African-American students was left out of this study. The researcher indicated in the methodology section that he choose not to analyze differences in the number of suspensions using academic achievement as an independent variable. The rationale was that suspension decisions were not made on the basis of student grades. According to the literature, this may not be true (Addo, 1997; MacLeod, 1987; Moyer & Motta 1982; Winfield, 1991). The variable of academic achievement should have been tested.

### Study # 6

McIntyre, L. H. (1984). A comparison of the infractions and punishments of black and white male and female high school students. (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida, 1984). Dissertation Abstracts International, 46, 0206.

Research Question. This study had thirteen research questions. In keeping with the purposes of this study, only one research question was examined:

“Do black students in Manatee County receive different types of punishment than white students for the same types of infractions” (p. 9)?

Variables. The dependent variable was number of punishments received. Punishments received by students were divided into five categories: Type 1 punishments—counseling sessions with dean, counselor, or dean and parents; Type 2 punishments—detention; Type 3 punishments—time out or probation; Type 4 punishments—corporal punishment; and Type 5 punishments—suspension (in-school, out-of-school, or alternative placement).

The independent variables were ethnicity and gender. Punishments were not disaggregated by gender categories within race; therefore, gender differences were not examined as a part of this synthesis.

Methodology. The setting for this study was Manatee County School District Manatee County, Florida). The researcher studied all of the high school students (N=2,649) in the district who received disciplinary actions during the first semester of the

1982-1983 school year. The infractions committed by the students were divided into six categories. The categories were: Category 1—parking, dress code, and miscellaneous violations; Category 2—tardiness, failure to attend detention, and skipping class; Category 3—smoking or chewing tobacco, profanity or vulgarity, loitering or trespassing, and false identity; Category 4—disruption of class or non-classroom activities; Category 5—truancy or walk out participation; Category 6—larceny, forgery, fighting, possession of alcohol or weapons, assault or threats against staff or students, and theft.

Descriptive statistics were used to report the number of infractions committed by race. The chi-square test of independence with an alpha level of .05 was used to analyze the data for differences by ethnic group in the number and types of punishments received for the different categories of infractions.

Findings. African-American students constituted 16% of the county's high school population, and white students were 84% of the county's high school population. Sixty-eight percent of the African-American students and 43% of the white students received disciplinary actions during the 1982-1983 school year. Chi-square analysis of the data showed that there was a difference in the type of punishments received by African-American students and white students for Category 4 infractions ( $\chi^2=141.41$ ) and Category 5 infractions ( $\chi^2=16.26$ ). White students received more Type 1 punishments (the least severe type of punishment) than expected for Category 4 infractions, while African-American students received more Type 2, 3, and 5 punishments for Category 4 infractions than expected (see Table 19). African-American students received more Type 2 and Type 3 punishments for Category 5 infractions than expected when compared to white students

Discussion. A relationship between ethnicity and disproportionate punishment was found in this study. African-American students were not only given more punishments, but also harsher punishments for the same types of infractions committed by white students.

#### Study # 7

Panko-Stilmock, J. L. (1996). Teacher gender and discipline referral rates for middle level boys and girls (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1996). Dissertation Abstracts International, 57, 5007.

Table 19

Chi-square Analysis of Punishments Received by African-American and White Students by Category of Infraction (McIntyre, 1984), Study # 6

Category of infraction	Type of punishment <sup>a</sup>					Total
	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5	
<u>Category 1<sup>b</sup></u>						
<u>AA<sup>c</sup> students</u>						
Frequency	56	14	5	6	14	95
$\chi^2$	.001	.46	.40	.59	1.24	
<u>White students</u>						
Frequency	128	23	16	20	19	206
$\chi^2$	.03	.21	.19	.28	.57	
Total $\chi^2$ value						3.97
<u>Category 2<sup>d</sup></u>						
<u>AA<sup>c</sup> students</u>						
Frequency	32	340	114	114	93	693
$\chi^2$	.05	1.31	.09	.19	3.05	
<u>White students</u>						
Frequency	98	1,072	319	313	201	2003
$\chi^2$	.02	.45	.03	.07	1.05	
Total $\chi^2$ value						6.30

(table continues)

Table 19 (continued)

Category of infraction	Type of punishment <sup>a</sup>					Total
	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5	
Category 3 <sup>e</sup>						
<u>AA<sup>c</sup> students</u>						
Frequency	9	9	10	12	46	86
$\chi^2$	.51	.32	1.87	.59	2.52	
<u>White students</u>						
Frequency	43	25	60	58	120	306
$\chi^2$	.14	.09	.53	.21	.71	
Total $\chi^2$ value						7.48
Category 4 <sup>f</sup>						
<u>AA<sup>c</sup> students</u>						
Frequency	159	63	112	37	169	540
$\chi^2$	3.01	9.85	12.11	8.03	15.67	
<u>White students</u>						
Frequency	363	204	119	131	188	1005
$\chi^2$	68.17	5.32	6.50	4.32	8.42	
Total $\chi^2$ value						141.41 <sup>*</sup>

(table continues)

Table 19 (continued)

Category of infraction	Type of punishment <sup>a</sup>					Total
	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5	
<u>Category 5<sup>g</sup></u>						
<u>AA<sup>c</sup> students</u>						
Frequency	25	19	9	4	23	80
$\chi^2$	.06	5.16	7.33	.003	.69	
<u>White students</u>						
Frequency	103	42	107	17	81	350
$\chi^2$	.01	1.18	1.68	.001	.16	
Total $\chi^2$ value						16.26*
<u>Category 6<sup>h</sup></u>						
<u>AA<sup>c</sup> students</u>						
Frequency	9	2	4	5	44	64
$\chi^2$	.008	.66	1.53	.008	.63	
<u>White students</u>						
Frequency	28	9	19	10	78	144
$\chi^2$	.004	.31	.72	.004	.30	
Total $\chi^2$ value						4.17

Note. Adapted from McIntyre, L. H. (1984). A comparison of the infractions and punishments of black and white male and female high school students (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida, 1984). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 46, 0206. Adapted with permission of author.

<sup>a</sup>Type 1 punishments—counseling sessions with dean, counselor, or dean and parents; Type 2 punishments—detention; Type 3 punishments—time out or probation; Type 4 punishments—corporal punishment; and Type 5 punishments—suspension (in-school, out-of-school, or alternative placement). <sup>b</sup>Infractions include parking, dress code, and miscellaneous violations. <sup>c</sup>AA=African-American. <sup>d</sup>Infractions include tardiness, failure to attend school, and skipping class. <sup>e</sup>Infractions include false identity, smoking or chewing tobacco, profanity or vulgarity, and trespassing. <sup>f</sup>Infractions include disruption of class or non-classroom activities. <sup>g</sup>Infractions include truancy or walk-out participation. <sup>h</sup>Infractions include larceny, forgery, theft, fighting, possession of alcohol or weapons, and assault of a staff member or student.

\*  $p < .05$ .

Research Question. This study had six research questions. In keeping with the interest of this study, the following research question was examined:

“Do ethnicity and grade level impact the frequency of disciplinary referral for students” (p. 6)?

Variables. The dependent variable was number of discipline referrals. Discipline referrals were referrals given to a building administrator for formal discipline intervention. Disciplinary actions taken by administrators were parent contacts, teacher conferences, administrative conferences, detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and referral to student services. The independent variable of interest was ethnicity (white students and students of color). The other independent variable, grade level, was not examined as a part of this synthesis because discipline referrals were not disaggregated by both grade level and ethnicity.

Methodology. The setting for this study was a mid-western school district during the 1994-1995 school year. The author collected data on the 5,982 middle school students referred for misbehavior from eight of the district’s middle schools. Five thousand two hundred ninety-four of the students were white; 688 were students of color. Discipline referral data from the 1994-1995 school year were acquired from the school district and analyzed using the chi-square test for goodness of fit. The alpha level was .01.

Findings. Ethnicity was associated with the disciplinary actions received by students ( $\chi^2=807.30, p \leq .01$ ). White students and students of color represented 88% and 12% of the student population respectively. Data indicated that white students were under-referred for disciplinary actions by 13.20%, while students of color were over-referred for disciplinary actions by 201.90% (see Table 20).

Discussion. The analysis and explanation in this study were very clear. The study was well written and presented. It appears ethnicity is associated with disciplinary actions received by students. The races of the students composing the students of color group were not specified. However, the author noted that African-American students composed the majority of the students classified as students of color. The study was kept in the synthesis because it showed that ethnicity is a variable associated with disciplining of

Table 20

Chi-square Analysis for Frequency of Disciplinary Referrals by Ethnicity (Panko-Stilmock, 1996), Study #7

Frequency of referral	Ethnicity		Total
	White	SOC <sup>a</sup>	
<u>Expected frequency</u>	5,294	688	5,982
Row %	88.50	11.50	
<u>Observed frequency</u>	4,593	1,389	5,982
Row %	76.80	23.20	
Observed % of expected	86.80	201.90	

$\chi^2=807.30^{**}$

Note. Adapted from Panko-Stilmock, J. L. (1996). Teacher gender and discipline referral rates for middle level boys and girls (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1996). Dissertation Abstracts International, 57, 5007. Adapted with permission of the author.

<sup>a</sup>SOC=Students of color.

<sup>\*\*</sup>p<.01.

students. Students of color were over-referred for disciplinary actions, while white students were under-referred for disciplinary actions.

### Study # 8

Thornton, C. H., & Trent, W. T. (1988). School desegregation and suspension in East Baton Rouge Parish: A preliminary report. Journal of Negro Education, 57 (4), 482-500.

Research Question. “Does the mere presence of black students correlate with....suspension phenomena” (p. 493)?

Variables. The dependent variables were schools’ suspension rates, African-American students’ suspension rates, and disproportionality scores for suspensions by ethnic group. The independent variables were type of school and school socioeconomic status. Schools were divided into three groups (schools with a stable or declining African-American enrollment, schools with an African-American enrollment increase of 1 to 20 percent, and schools with an African-American enrollment increase of 20 to 45 percent) based on change in African-American enrollment during the year of desegregation. One analysis of the data used two broader groups—schools with no increase in African-American enrollment and schools with an increase in African-American enrollment. The authors used the neighborhood socioeconomic status (the 1980 median family income of the census blocks surrounding each school) as a proxy for school socioeconomic status (Thornton & Trent, 1988).

Methodology. The populations were middle and high schools in East Baton Rouge Parish (EBRP), Louisiana. The sample consisted of 33 schools (18 middle schools and 15 high schools). The EBRP was issued a court order to desegregate its schools in 1981. The court order was placed in effect during the 1982-1983 school year.

The EBRP school board’s staff provided demographic data and the suspension counts for each school before and after the court order. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the data for suspension disproportionality by ethnicity. Correlational analysis was used to examine the association between the percentage of African-American

students in each school and the overall suspension rate of the schools, the African-American students' suspension rate in the schools, and the African-American suspension disproportionality scores. Correlational analysis was used to examine relationships between school socioeconomic status and the three dependent variables.

Findings. During the pre-desegregation school year (1981-1982), 59% of the middle and high school populations were white; 41% of the populations were African-American. The suspension rates were 33% and 67% respectively. White students had a suspension disproportionality rate of -26 (33 minus 59), and African-American students had a suspension disproportionality rate of +26 (67-41). The proportion of suspensions given to African-American students exceeded their enrollment by 26 percentage points (see Table 21). During the desegregation year (1982-1983), the racial disproportionality in suspension rates widened slightly. White students' suspension disproportionality rate was two percentage points lower (-28), while African-American students' suspension disproportionality rate was two percentage points higher (+28, see Table 21).

Correlation analysis for the 1982-1983 school year indicated that all suspension variables ( $X_3$ =African-American suspension rate,  $X_5$ =School suspension rate, and  $X_8$ =African-American suspension disproportionality (1982-1983)) were positively associated with increases in African-American enrollment (see Table 22). Findings showed that an increase in African-American enrollment was positively associated with the school suspension rate in 1982-1983 ( $r=.35$ ), the African-American students' suspension rate in 1982-1983 ( $r=.49$ ), and the African-American suspension disproportionality rate in 1982-1983 ( $r=.52$ ).

School SES was associated with the dependent variables. Positive correlations were found between school socioeconomic status and the school suspension rate in 1982-1983 ( $r=.38$ ), the African-American students' suspension rate in 1982-1983 ( $r=.58$ ), and the African-American suspension disproportionality rate in 1982-1983 ( $r=.61$ ).

Further analysis was done by classifying schools into three groups by percentage increase of African-American students enrolled (see Variables section). The ratio of African-American students suspended to white students suspended was calculated to determine the mean African-American student to white student suspension ratio for each

Table 21

Enrollments and Suspensions in the East Baton Rouge Parish During the 1981-1982 and 1982-1983 School Years (Thornton & Trent, 1988), Study # 8

School year	Enrollment				Suspensions				Suspension disproportionality <sup>c</sup>	
	AAS <sup>a</sup>	%	WS <sup>b</sup>	%	AAS <sup>a</sup>	%	WS <sup>b</sup>	%	AAS <sup>a</sup>	WS <sup>b</sup>
<u>1981-1982</u>										
Middle school	5,526	41	7,888	59	3,957	71	1,606	29	+30	-30
High school	7,786	41	11,010	59	5,206	63	2,993	36	+22	-23
Total	13,312	41	18,898	59	9,163	67	4,599	33	+26	-26
<u>1982-1983</u>										
Middle school	6,261	48	6,803	52	5,597	79	1,499	21	+31	-31
High school	7,360	43	9,850	57	4,752	67	2,286	32	+24	-25
Total	13,621	45	16,653	55	10,349	73	3,785	27	+28	-28

Note. Data taken from Thornton, C. H., & Trent, W. T. (1988). School desegregation and suspension in East Baton Rouge Parish: A preliminary report. Journal of Negro Education, 57 (4), 482-500. Permission of the publisher received.

<sup>a</sup>AAS=African-American students. <sup>b</sup>WS=White students. <sup>c</sup>Suspension disproportionality is equal to the percentage of suspensions for an ethnic group minus the percentage of enrollment for that ethnic group.

Table 22

Inter-Variable Correlations (Thornton & Trent, 1988), Study # 8

	Change <sup>a</sup> X <sub>1</sub>	AASUS81 X <sub>2</sub>	AASUS82 X <sub>3</sub>	SUSRA81 X <sub>4</sub>	SUSRA82 X <sub>5</sub>	%AA81 X <sub>6</sub>	%AA82 X <sub>7</sub>	DISP82 X <sub>8</sub>	SSES X <sub>9</sub>
X <sub>1</sub>	1.00								
X <sub>2</sub>	.13	1.00							
X <sub>3</sub>	.49*	.11	1.00						
X <sub>4</sub>	-.25	.58*	-.02	1.00					
X <sub>5</sub>	.35*	.10	.91*	.12	1.00				
X <sub>6</sub>	-.78*	-.05	-.41*	.40*	-.17	1.00			
X <sub>7</sub>	-.32	-.20	-.05	.07	.20	.65*	1.00		
X <sub>8</sub>	.52*	.25	.48*	-.07	.18	-.50*	-.36*	1.00	
X <sub>9</sub>	.66*	.03	.58*	-.23	.38*	-.78*	-.37*	.61*	1.00

Note. Adapted from Thornton, C. H., & Trent, W. T. (1988). School desegregation and suspension in East Baton Rouge Parish: A preliminary report. Journal of Negro Education, 57 (4), 482-500. Adapted with permission of the publisher.

<sup>a</sup>X<sub>1</sub>=change in African-American enrollment (from the 1981-1982 school year to the 1982-1983 school year—the first year of desegregation). X<sub>2</sub>=African-American suspension rate (1981-1982). X<sub>3</sub>=African-American suspension rate (1982-1983). X<sub>4</sub>=school suspension rate (1981-1982). X<sub>5</sub>=school suspension rate (1982-1983). X<sub>6</sub>=African-American percentage of student enrollment (1981-1982). X<sub>7</sub>=African-American percentage of student enrollment (1982-1983). X<sub>8</sub>=African-American suspension disproportionality (1982-1983). X<sub>9</sub>=School socioeconomic status.

\* p<.05.

of the three groups of schools. The findings showed that the mean African-American student to white student suspension ratio and average African-American suspension disproportionality increased as the percentage of African-American students enrolled increased (see Table 23).

Discussion. Findings from this study indicate that African-American students were suspended at higher rates than white students. Desegregation was associated with the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by African-American students. More specifically, the schools with the greatest percentage increase of African-American students during the desegregation process showed the greatest disproportionality in suspensions of African-American students.

School socioeconomic status was related to the African-American suspension rate and the African-American suspension disproportionality rate. As school socioeconomic status increased, the number of suspensions received by African-American students increased.

This study contained two areas of concern to the researcher of this synthesis. First, it is not clear whether the author did not use mutually exclusive groups. When dividing the schools into three groups based on the percentage of African-American students enrolled, two of the groups (increase of 1 to 20% enrollment of African American students and increase of 20 to 45% enrollment of African-American students) may have overlapped. Although this may not have affected the findings of the study, it is good scientific practice to specify mutually exclusive groups. Second, the correlation matrix used in the study seemed to have a mistake. The value for the African-American percentage of enrollment is given twice ( $X_6$  and  $X_7$ ) for the 1981-1982 school year. It is believed that the  $X_7$  value was incorrectly labeled and was the value for the 1982-1983 school year, not the 1981-1982 school year. This change has been made in Table 23.

This study is a part of this synthesis because it showed school socioeconomic status and an influx of African-American students (desegregation) were variables associated with increases in the disproportional suspension of African-American students in middle and high schools.

Table 23

Average Suspension Ratios and Average African-American Suspension Disproportionality Scores During the 1982-1983 School Year Based on Change in African-American Student Enrollment (Thornton & Trent, 1988), Study # 8

Change in AA <sup>a</sup> enrollment	N	Mean AA/white suspension ratios <sup>b</sup>	Average AASDS <sup>c</sup>
Schools with no change or a decline in AAS <sup>a</sup> enrollment	12	3.01/1.00	+17
Schools with a 1% to 20% increase in AAS <sup>a</sup> enrollment	11	3.26/1.00	+24
Schools with a 20% to 45% increase in AAS <sup>a</sup> enrollment <sup>d</sup>	10	4.28/1.00	+29

Note. Data taken from Thornton, C. H., & Trent, W. T. (1988). School desegregation and suspension in East Baton Rouge Parish: A preliminary report. *Journal of Negro Education*, 57 (4), 482-500.

<sup>a</sup>AA=African-American. <sup>b</sup>For each school, the ratio of African-American students suspended to white students suspended was calculated and used to determine the mean African-American student to white student suspension ratio for each of the three groups of schools. <sup>c</sup>AASDS=African-American suspension disproportionality score. The value given represents the average of the African-American disproportionality scores for all of the schools in the category of enrollment. <sup>d</sup>The author did not indicate whether his categories for change in African-American student enrollment were mutually exclusive.

### Study # 9

Moyer, T. R. (1981). An investigation of alienation, academic achievement, and behavioral adjustment among black and non-black adolescents (Doctoral dissertation, Hofstra University, 1981). Dissertation Abstracts International, 42, 4585.

Research Question. Is alienation associated with measures of behavioral maladjustment?

Variables. The dependent variables were academic achievement (grade point average) and measures of behavioral maladjustment. Behavioral maladjustment was defined as the number of suspensions, detentions, class cuts, and instances of absenteeism for each student. In keeping with the interest of this synthesis, the variable of behavioral maladjustment (specifically suspensions and detentions) was examined. The independent variables were feelings of alienation as measured by two alienation questionnaires (see Methodology section).

Methodology. The setting for this study was a school district in New York. The author studied 218 students who volunteered to participate in the study from two high schools (Hempstead and Central Islip) in the district. The subjects were 103 African-American students, 83 white students, and 32 students of other ethnicities (Hispanic or non-identified background).

Each student was administered The Adolescent Alienation Index (AAI) and the Public Opinion Questionnaire (POQ). The AAI is a measure of students' feelings of alienation using five different dimensions. The author reported the AAI to have a Kuder-Richardson reliability coefficient of .78 and construct validity of .61. The POQ (also known as Dean's Alienation Scale) is a measure of an individual's global sense of alienation determined from a combined score from three subscales: powerlessness, normlessness, and social isolation. The author reported the Spearman-Brown reliability coefficients for the three subscales to range from .73 to .78.

Students were given a self-report questionnaire designed by the author to assess their social involvement in the school and community. The questionnaire had six areas: participation in school activities, participation in non-school activities, number of positions of responsibility for both in school and out of school activities, frequency of association with African-American people, frequency of association with white people,

and frequency of association with adults. A total social involvement score was obtained by combining the subjects' responses to seven questions on the social involvement questionnaire. The author divided the subjects by ethnicity and used Pearson product moment correlations to test for relationships between the two measures of alienation (AAI and POQ) and behavioral maladjustment. The relationship between these two variables was only examined for students in Central Islip High School because Hempstead High School did not use suspension and detention as regular disciplinary measures. The author also tested for relationships between social involvement and behavioral maladjustment by ethnic group.

Students were also divided into high-alienated and low-alienated students by ethnicity. High-alienated and low-alienated students within each ethnic group were compared to each other for differences in the number of suspensions received using ANOVA. Alpha was set at .05 and .01 for all hypotheses.

Findings. Analysis of the data using only African-American students showed a correlation between feelings of alienation as measured by the AAI and suspension ( $r=.32$ ,  $p \leq .01$  see Table 24). No relationship between feelings of alienation as measured by the POQ and suspensions was found for African-American students. Four dimensions of social involvement had a negative correlation with number of suspensions received by African-American students. The dimensions were participation in school activities ( $r=-.28$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ), number of positions of responsibility ( $r=-.23$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ), frequency of association with African-American people ( $r=-.38$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ), and frequency of association with adults ( $r=-.35$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ). One dimension of social involvement, number of positions of responsibility ( $r=-.26$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ), was negatively correlated with the number of detentions received by African-American students

Analysis of the data using ANOVA was also done by classifying students from each ethnic group as high-alienated students or low-alienated students. High-alienated students were students who scored higher than one standard deviation above the sample mean on the AAI. Low-alienated students were students who scored lower than one standard deviation below the sample mean on the AAI. For African-American students, differences were found between the high-alienated and low-alienated students in the

Table 24

## Pearson Product Moment Correlations for African-American Students (Moyer, 1981), Study # 9

Variable	Gender <sup>a</sup> X <sub>1</sub>	Age X <sub>2</sub>	Grade X <sub>3</sub>	SES <sup>b</sup> X <sub>4</sub>	IQ X <sub>5</sub>	AAI X <sub>6</sub>	POQ X <sub>7</sub>	TI X <sub>8</sub>	PSA X <sub>9</sub>	PNSA X <sub>10</sub>	NPR X <sub>11</sub>	FAWP X <sub>12</sub>	FABP X <sub>13</sub>	FAA X <sub>14</sub>	GPA X <sub>15</sub>	NS X <sub>16</sub>	ND X <sub>17</sub>	NCC X <sub>18</sub>	
X <sub>1</sub>																			
X <sub>2</sub>	.16																		
X <sub>3</sub>	.09	.75**																	
X <sub>4</sub>	.09	.09	.08																
X <sub>5</sub>	-.11	-.41**	-.11	.29															
X <sub>6</sub>	-.07	-.08	-.06	-.11	.00														
X <sub>7</sub>	.02	-.03	-.13	-.12	-.11	.49**													
X <sub>8</sub>	-.07	.01	.03	.11	.07	-.38**	-.11												
X <sub>9</sub>	-.12	-.12	.10	.02	.27*	-.27**	.00	.50**											
X <sub>10</sub>	-.05	-.05	-.02	.09	-.02	-.33**	-.14	.95**	.23*										
X <sub>11</sub>	-.09	.20*	.18*	.23*	-.04	-.26**	.02	.55**	.49**	.36**									
X <sub>12</sub>	.14	.18*	.19*	.15	-.05	-.19*	-.25**	.23	.04	.23*	.16								
X <sub>13</sub>	.04	.10	.07	-.08	-.02	-.15	-.15	.04	-.03	.04	.01	.35**							
X <sub>14</sub>	.10	.23*	.26**	-.02	-.09	-.19*	-.22*	.28**	.05	.27**	.20*	.76**	.69**						
X <sub>15</sub>	-.13	.02	.14	-.01	.23*	-.24**	-.07	-.05	.12	-.07	-.05	-.15	.00	-.10					
X <sub>16</sub>	.07	.001	-.04	.20	-.25 <sup>d</sup>	.32*	-.03	-.23	-.28*	-.16	-.23*	-.22	-.38**	.35**	-.23				
X <sub>17</sub>	.24	.19	.14	.05	-.27 <sup>d</sup>	.11	-.06	-.20	-.20	.16	-.26*	-.01 <sup>°c</sup>	-.07	-.02	-.17	.74*			
X <sub>18</sub>	.01	.04	-.03	.25*	-.03	.10	-.17	-.01	-.19	.04	-.05	.21	.21	.27*	-.46**	----- <sup>c</sup>	----- <sup>c</sup>		
X <sub>19</sub>	-.01	.11	.11	.03	-.03	.16*	-.02	.05	-.04	.03	.19*	.12 <sup>°c</sup>	-.04	.17	-.60**	.35**	.33*	.52**	

Note. Adapted from Moyer, T. R. (1981). An investigation of alienation, academic achievement, and behavioral adjustment among black and non-black adolescents (Doctoral dissertation, Hofstra University, 1981). Dissertation Abstracts International, 40, 3681. The number of cases involved in each correlation coefficient varies due to missing data. The minimum number is 34 and the maximum is 103.

<sup>a</sup>Male coded 1, female coded two. <sup>b</sup>X<sub>4</sub>=Socioeconomic status. X<sub>5</sub>=Intelligence quotient. X<sub>6</sub>=Adolescent Alienation Index. X<sub>7</sub>=Public Opinion Questionnaire. X<sub>8</sub>=Total involvement. X<sub>9</sub>=Participation in school activities. X<sub>10</sub>=Participation in non-school activities. X<sub>11</sub>=Number of positions of responsibility. X<sub>12</sub>=Frequency of association with white people. X<sub>13</sub>=Frequency of association with black people. X<sub>14</sub>=Frequency of association with adults. X<sub>15</sub>=Grade point average. X<sub>16</sub>=Number of suspensions. X<sub>17</sub>=Number of detentions. X<sub>18</sub>=Number of class cuts. X<sub>19</sub>=Average number of absences per class. <sup>c</sup>No explanation given for dash. <sup>d</sup>Not marked as significant in the original table. <sup>°</sup>Error in original.

\*p<.05. \*\*p<.01.

number of suspensions received ( $F=5.58$ ,  $p \leq .05$ , see Table 25). High-alienated students received more suspensions than low-alienated students. No differences were found between low-alienated and high-alienated African-American students for number of detentions received.

Discussion. Feelings of alienation were related to the number of suspensions received by African-American students. African-American students who had high feelings of alienation received more suspensions in school than African-American students with low feelings of alienation. The findings of this study indicate that if educators can keep African-American students involved in the activities of the school and provide them with positive relationships with adults in the school, their feelings of alienation will be reduced. Consequently, the number of suspensions received by them may be reduced.

The correlation table in this study may contain several errors. There are correlation coefficients in the table that appear to be statistically significant that are not marked as significant and correlation coefficients that appear to be insignificant that are marked as significant. The results should be observed with caution.

#### Study # 10

Jackson, B. G. (1997). Leader behaviors, school climate, school size, and out of school suspensions in selected public senior high schools (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi, 1997). Dissertation Abstracts International, 58, 2928.

Research question. “What is the relationship between the variables of perceived leader behavior, perceived school climate, and school size, and out-of-school suspensions given in an academic year in selected public senior high schools” (p. 6)?

Variables. The dependent variable was out-of-school suspensions. The independent variables were (1) perceived leader behavior, (2) perceived school climate, and school size. School size was classified from 1A to 5A. One A represented the smallest school size, and 5A represented the largest school size.

Methodology. This study was conducted during the second semester of the 1996-1997 school year in ten randomly selected public senior high schools in the state of Mississippi. The sample was 93 randomly selected full-time, certified, teachers and the

Table 25

ANOVA Table for Suspensions Received by High-Alienated and Low-Alienated Students by Ethnic Group (Moyer, 1981), Study # 9

Variable and group	LAG <sup>a</sup>			HAG <sup>b</sup>			df	F
	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>		
<u>African-American</u> Suspension	22	.09	.43	16	.69	1.08	1, 36	5.58*
<u>White</u> Suspension	15	.27	.46	12	.08	.29	1, 25	1.46

Note. Adapted from Moyer, T. R. (1981). An investigation of alienation, academic achievement, and behavioral adjustment among black and non-black adolescents (Doctoral dissertation, Hofstra University, 1981). Dissertation Abstracts International, 40, 3681.

<sup>a</sup>LAG=Low-alienated group. <sup>b</sup>HAG=High-alienated group.

\*p<.05.

principals at each of the ten schools. The number of out-of-school suspensions during the 1995-1996 school year for each school was obtained from the principal of the schools. The number of out-of school suspensions were disaggregated by race, gender, and grade level. Two schools from each classification of school size were used in the study.

Teachers' perceptions of the leader behaviors of the principal and the organizational climate of their schools were examined through the use of the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire—Form XII and the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire—Form IV. The Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBQD)—Form XII was developed by Ralph Stogdill. It measures two primary dimensions of leader behavior: Initiating Structure and Consideration. Initiating Structure refers to the leader's behavior in delineating relationships between himself and the members of the work group in an attempt to have a well-run organization. According to Jackson (1997), "Consideration refers to behavior indicative of friendship, mutual trust, and warmth in the relationship between the leader and members of the organization" (p. 12). According to the author, the instrument was considered to have adequate validity and reliability for use in the study.

The Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire —Form IV was developed by Halpin and Croft in 1963. The survey instrument is used in determining the climate of schools and requires teachers to answer questions on a scale from rarely occurs to very frequently occurs.

Analysis of the data included testing for relationships between the independent variables (in isolation and in combination) and suspensions using Pearson product moment correlations. Multiple linear regression was used to determine if relationships existed between the three variables of perceived leader behaviors, perceived school climate, and school size and out-of-school suspensions by ethnic group. An alpha level of .05 was used to test all hypotheses.

Findings. A significant correlation was not found for the relationship between school size (in isolation) and out-of-school suspensions for African-American students ( $r = -.04$  for African-American males,  $r = -.06$  for African-American females). A significant correlation was found for the relationship between school size (in isolation) and out-of-school suspensions for white students ( $r = .88$  for white males,  $r = .81$  for white

females). The regression of out-of-school suspensions on perceived leader behavior, perceived school climate, and school size indicated that the three independent variables in combination accounted for 40% of the variance in suspensions of African-American males and females (see Table 26). The three variables accounted for 84% of the variance in suspensions for white males and 76% of the variance in suspensions for white females.

Discussion. The findings of this study indicate that the variables of perceived leader behavior, perceived school climate, and school size in combination are associated with the out-of-school suspensions received by African-American students. The percentage of the variance in suspensions of African-American students accounted for by each of the three independent variables was not reported by the author. These three variables have less influence on the number of suspensions received by African-American students when compared to white students.

#### Study # 11

McCarthy, J. D., & Hoge, D. R. (1987). The social construction of school punishment: Racial disadvantage out of universalistic process. Social Forces, 65(4), 1100-1120.

Research Questions. 1. “Do black students engage in more school misconduct than whites” (p. 1102)?  
2. “If black students are disproportionately sanctioned for similar levels of school misconduct, why is this the case” (p. 1103)?

Variables. The criterion variable was number of school sanctions received for misbehavior (see Methodology section). The predictor variables were: (1) misconduct, (2) ethnicity, (3) grades in the previous semester (GPA), (4) student demeanor rating, (5) age, (6) gender, (7) socioeconomic status, (8) family intactness, and (9) family economic stability

Methodology. The researchers attempted to examine and explain why school self-report measures show small racial differences in misconduct but large differences in the amount of punishment. The population was 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students from six public schools in a mid-Atlantic city. The sample was 945 students in the 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades from the six schools. The sample included 302 white students and 643

Table 26

Regression of School Suspensions on Perceived Leadership Behaviors, Perceived School Climate, and School Size by Ethnicity and Gender (Jackson, 1997), Study # 10

Ethnicity and gender	<u>R</u> <sup>2</sup>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
African-American males	.40	2.21	.007
African-American females	.40	2.20	.007
White males	.84	17.84	.001
White females	.76	10.42	.001
Entire sample	.40	2.20	.008

Note. Adapted from Jackson, B. G. (1997). Leader behaviors, school climate, school size, and out of school suspensions in selected public senior high schools (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi, 1997). Dissertation Abstracts International, 40, 3681. Adapted with permission of the author.

African-American students. There were 444 males and 501 females in the sample. During the 1976-1977 school year, these students were administered a questionnaire in which they were to self-report misbehavior and school sanctions received for the misbehavior during the past year. The questionnaire had 31 items. Six of the items (skipping class, damaging school property, attacking a teacher, carving on desks, cheating on exams, fighting) were related to school misbehavior, and three of the items (told to bring parent to school, sent to principal's office, and suspension) were related to school sanctions (disciplinary actions) received for misbehavior.

The nine items were analyzed separately and in combination using mean item difference scores between ethnic groups. A school misconduct scale composed of the six misbehavior items was created to analyze school misbehaviors in combination. A school sanctioning scale composed of the three school sanction items was created to analyze school sanctions in combination. Responses to all items on the questionnaire ranged from zero (never engaged in the misbehavior or never received the sanction) to five (engaged in the misbehavior or received the sanction for the misbehavior once a month or more). The data were collected on the students for three consecutive school years. Year-three data did not include the original eleventh grade students who had graduated.

Four sets of multiple regressions were conducted. The first set had the regression of the school sanctions scale on the nine predictor variables. The second set of regressions had the regression of suspensions (one of the three school sanctions) on the nine predictor variables. Both sets of regressions included three regressions, one for each year of data collection.

The third set of regressions had the regression of the school sanctions scale on the student's past discipline record (in addition to the nine original predictor variables). Set three contained two regressions. In the first, year-two data were regressed with the original nine predictor variables and the school sanctions scale from year-one (as an indicator of student's past discipline record). In the second regression, year-three data were regressed with the original nine predictor variables and the school sanction scale from year two (as an indicator of student's past discipline record McCarthy & Hoge, 1987).

The fourth set of regressions had the regression of suspensions on the student's past discipline record (in addition to the nine original predictor variables). Set four contained two regressions. In the first, year-two data were regressed with the original nine predictor variables and the school sanctions scale from year-one (as an indicator of student's past discipline record). In the second regression, year-three data were regressed with the original nine predictor variables and the school sanction scale from year two (as an indicator of student's past discipline record McCarthy & Hoge, 1987).

Findings. Comparisons of self-reported misconduct between African-American students and white students showed that African-American students did not consistently report more misconduct. African-American students reported more attacks on teachers in the second year of data collection than white students. White students reported more carving of desks and damaging of school property than African-American students during the second year of data collection. White students reported more skipping of school than African-American students during both years of data collection. Comparisons of the two ethnic groups on the school misconduct scale indicated that white students reported more misbehavior than African-American students during the second year of data collection (see Table 27).

Comparisons between white and African-American students of school sanctions received for misbehavior showed differences in both years of data collection. African-American students received more of all three types of school sanctions for misbehavior than white students (see Table 27).

A number of findings emerged from the two sets of multiple regressions conducted on the school sanctions scale and suspensions (see Tables 28 and 29). The first set of multiple regressions (in which data was collected for each year of the study and did not include past sanctions received by students for misbehavior) showed that when misconduct was controlled, demeanor rating was the best predictor of suspensions and scores on the school sanction scale (see first three columns of Tables 28 and 29). A student's demeanor rating was determined by a teacher of the student's choice. The teacher was asked to rate the student on a seven-point scale ranging from well-behaved to not well-behaved. Students perceived as well-behaved were given lighter sanctions for the same amount of misconduct. Grades in the previous semester was the next strongest

Table 27

Mean Item and Scale Scores for African-American and White Students on Self-Reported School Misconduct and Sanctions, Year One and Year Two of the Study (McCarthy & Hoge, 1987), Study # 11

Item or scale <sup>a</sup>	Year 1			Year 2		
	AAS <sup>b</sup>	WS <sup>c</sup>	p	AAS <sup>b</sup>	WS <sup>c</sup>	p
<u>School misconduct items</u>						
Skipped class	.87	1.24	.001	1.13	1.69	.001
Damaged school property	.48	.64	ns <sup>d</sup>	.55	.72	.05
Attacked a teacher	.24	.18	ns <sup>d</sup>	.28	.13	.01
Carved desks	1.50	1.75	.05	1.55	1.84	.01
Caught cheating on exams	.55	.59	ns <sup>d</sup>	.57	.52	ns <sup>d</sup>
Gotten into a physical fight	.78	.64	ns <sup>d</sup>	.81	.67	ns <sup>d</sup>
<u>School misconduct scale<sup>e</sup></u>	.74	.85	ns <sup>d</sup>	.81	.93	.05
<u>Sanction items</u>						
Told to bring parents to school	1.18	.69	.001	1.13	.85	.01
Sent to the principal's office for bad behavior	1.36	1.01	.001	1.33	.98	.001
Suspended	.94	.48	.001	.92	.54	.001
<u>School sanction scale<sup>f</sup></u>	1.17	.74	.001	1.13	.79	.001
<u>N</u>	697-708	327-339		679-688	326-330	

Note. Adapted from McCarthy, J. D., & Hoge, D. R. (1987). The social construction of school punishment: Racial disadvantage out of universalistic process. *Social Forces*, 65 (4), 1100-1120. Scale scores are means of item scores. Adapted with the permission of the publisher.

<sup>a</sup>All items are scored from 0 to 5, never=0 and once a month or more=5. <sup>b</sup>AAS=African-American students. <sup>c</sup>WS=White students. <sup>d</sup>ns=Not significant at p<sub>≤</sub>.05 level. <sup>e</sup>Composed of all six misconduct items. <sup>f</sup>Composed of all the school sanction items.

Table 28

Multiple Regressions (Betas) Predicting School Sanction Scale Scores (McCarthy &Hoge, 1987), Study # 11

Variable or scale <sup>a</sup>	Regression not including sanctions in past years			Regression including sanctions in past years	
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 2	Year 3
Misconduct	.51*	.47*	.54*	.41*	.43*
Race (AA=0, white=1)	-.11*	-.05	-.09*	-.02	-.05
Grades in the previous semester	-.11*	-.19*	-.11*	-.12*	-.05
Demeanor rating (high=not well-behaved)	.22*	.15*	.19*	.12*	.11*
Age	.03	-.06	-.02	-.06*	-.02
Gender (male=0, female=1)	-.03	-.02	-.03	.03	.00
Socioeconomic status	.01	-.02	-.05	-.01	-.05
Family intactness (both parents present=2, one parent present=1, none present=0)	-.06*	-.05	-.04	-.02	-.02
Father working (full time=1, part time or not working=0)	.00	-.04	-.03	-.04	-.03
School sanction scale--Year 1				.29*	.16*
School sanction scale—Year 2					.27*
<u>R<sup>2</sup></u>	.48	.42	.45	.49	.55
<u>N</u>	1,086	1,048	819	1,048	819

Note. Adapted from McCarthy, J. D., & Hoge, D. R. (1987). The social construction of school punishment: Racial disadvantage out of universalistic process. Social Forces, 65 (4), 1100-1120. Adapted with the permission of the publisher.

<sup>a</sup>All items are scored from 0 to 5, never=0 and once a month or more=5.

\*p < .05.

Table 29

Multiple Regressions (Betas) Predicting Suspensions (McCarthy & Hoge, 1987), Study #11

Variable or scale <sup>a</sup>	Regression not including sanctions in past years			Regression including sanctions in past years	
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 2	Year 3
Misconduct	.48*	.42*	.48*	.37*	.38*
Ethnicity (AA=0, white=1)	-.12*	-.06	-.09*	-.04	-.05
Grades in the previous semester	-.13*	-.18*	-.10*	-.13*	-.05
Demeanor rating (high=not well-behaved)	.16*	.13*	.15*	.11*	.07
Age	.07*	-.02	.03	-.02	.03
Gender (male=0, female=1)	-.01	-.01	.00	.02	.03
Socioeconomic status	.04	-.01	-.07	.00	-.07*
Family intactness (both parents present=2, one parent present=1, none present=0)	-.07*	-.08*	-.04	-.06	-.02
Father working (full time=1, part time or not working=0)	.00	-.02	-.04	-.02	-.04
School sanction scale--Year 1				.24*	.11*
School sanction scale—Year 2					.31*
<u>R<sup>2</sup></u>	.39	.34	.35	.38	.46
<u>N</u>	1,067	1,033	807	1,033	807

Note. Adapted from McCarthy, J. D., & Hoge, D. R. (1987). The social construction of school punishment: Racial disadvantage out of universalistic process. *Social Forces*, 65 (4), 1100-1120. Adapted with permission of publisher.

<sup>a</sup>All items are scored from 0 to 5, never=0 and once a month or more=5

\*p < .05.

predictor of suspensions and scores school sanction scale. Students with higher grades in the previous semester were given lighter school sanctions. Race was the third strongest predictor of the school sanction scale and suspensions. Race was significant in years one and three only. White students received lighter sanctions than African-American students for misbehavior during these years. Age, gender, family intactness (whether the student was living with both, one, or no parent), and socioeconomic status were weak predictors of the school sanction scale and suspensions.

Results from the second set of multiple regressions included sanctions received by students in past years. Next to misconduct, the student's past discipline record (school sanctions scale--year one and school sanction scale—year two, see last two columns of Tables 28 and 29) had the strongest influence on suspensions and school sanctions for data collected in both year two and year three. The next strongest indicators were the student's demeanor rating and the student's grades in the previous semester.

Discussion. The researcher of this synthesis had one concern about this study. Two sample sizes were reported by the authors. The first was 945 students. The second was 24% of the population (1,125) of students. Twenty-four percent of the population would be 270 students. A sample size of 945 students was used for reporting purposes in this synthesis.

The author reported that African-American students in the sample were the recipients of lower grades for all six semesters examined. In two of the three years studied, African-American students were rated as less well-behaved than white students by their teachers. For these two reasons, African-American students may have been disproportionately disciplined in the past (previous years of schooling).

African-American students did not self-report engaging in school misbehavior more than white students. However, African-American students are punished more than whites for misbehavior in school. Grades in the previous semester, student's demeanor rating, and student's past discipline record were the best predictors of the school sanctions and suspensions. All three variables contribute to the disproportionately disciplining of African-American students for misbehavior in school when compared to white students.

## Study # 12

Charles, L. E. (1981). Attitudinal characteristics of suspended students (Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1981). Dissertation Abstracts International, 42, 1053.

Research questions. The study contained eight research questions. Only those aligned with the criteria for inclusion of studies in this report were examined as a part of the synthesis. These two research questions were:

1. “Is there any interaction [effect] of status and race on the criterion variables” (p. 6)?
2. “Is there any interaction [effect] of status, race, and sex on the criterion variables (p. 6)?

Variables. The dependent variables in the study were attitude toward school-related experiences and feelings of alienation. The independent variables were status (suspended students and non-suspended students), ethnicity (African-American and white students), and gender.

Methodology. The population was of 912 students from one junior high school in district number 625, St. Paul, Minnesota. The sample was 176 randomly selected students from the junior high school with an equal representation of students by ethnicity and suspension status (see Table 30). Suspended students were students who had been assigned in-school suspension two or more times. Non-suspended students were students who had never been in in-school suspension or had experienced in-school suspension only once. The author explained that the two suspension status groups could not have been created for comparison purposes without including students who had been in in-school suspension once as a part of the non-suspended group because the percentage of African-American students who had not been in-school suspension was too low.

The Minnesota School Affect Assessment (MSAA) was used to measure the school-related attitudes of students. The MSAA was developed by Ahlgren, Schristensein, and Lun at the Center for Educational Research, University of Minnesota (Charles, 1981). Eight clusters of attitude are measured by the instrument. These are: peers, general security, acceptance, cooperation, need for direction, non-communication, marking irrelevance, and extrinsic motivation.

Table 30

Number of Students in the Sample Classified by Suspension Status, Gender, andEthnicity (Charles, 1981), Study # 12

Status	Ethnicity and gender				Total
	AAM <sup>a</sup>	AAF <sup>b</sup>	WM <sup>c</sup>	WF <sup>d</sup>	
Non-suspended	22	22	22	22	88
Suspended	22	22	22	22	88
Total	44	44	44	44	176

Note. Data taken from Charles, L. E. (1981). Attitudinal characteristics of suspended students (Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1981). Dissertation Abstracts International, 42, 1053.

<sup>a</sup>AAM=African-American males. <sup>b</sup>AAF=African-American females. <sup>c</sup>WM=White males.

<sup>d</sup>WF=White females.

The Adolescent Alienation Scale (AAS), developed by James Mackey, was used to measure students' feelings of alienation. The items on the AAS are divided into three groups: personal incapacity (the feeling of not having the skills to succeed, guidelessness (the rejection of socially acceptable means of achieving goals), and cultural estrangement (the rejection of the predominant criteria for success). ANOVA was used to analyze the interactions among status, ethnicity, and gender. The alpha level was set at .05.

Findings. Findings from the analysis of the AAS data showed an interaction effect of status and ethnicity on personal incapacity ( $F=8.82$ ,  $p=.003$ , see Table 31). For the non-suspended group of students, the mean for African-American students was higher than the mean for white students.

A significant interaction effect was found for suspension status by ethnicity on guidelessness ( $F=5.36$ ,  $p=.02$ , see Table 32). Comparisons of non-suspended students only by ethnicity indicated that African-American students had greater feelings of guidelessness. For the dimension of cultural estrangement on the Adolescent Alienation Scale, no significant interaction effects were found.

Findings using data from the Minnesota School Affect Assessment yielded one interaction effect for suspension status by ethnicity on attitude toward peers ( $F=3.62$ ,  $p=.06$ , see Table 33). African-American suspended students had a higher mean value for this dimension than the non-suspended African-American students.

Discussion. It appears as though African-American students have greater feelings of personal incapacity and guidelessness than white students. The fact that non-suspended African-American students have greater feelings of personal incapacity when compared to non-suspended white students may indicate a greater inability to deal with the rigors they confront everyday of school life. This no doubt could put them in greater jeopardy of receiving disciplinary actions, especially when considering the sample of non-suspended students contained students who had been suspended at least once.

The greater feelings of guidelessness among African-American students may indicate that they believe that there are limits to their opportunity to fulfill the American dream. The findings in this study seem to validate the views expressed by Fordham & Ogbu (1986) as to why African-American students have an oppositional cultural frame of reference.

Table 31

ANOVA Table for the Dimension of Personal Incapacity (Charles, 1981), Study # 12

Source	<u>SS</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Suspension status	.72	1	.72	4.58	.03
Ethnicity	3.36	1	3.36	2.30	.13
Gender	.00	1	.00	.00	.96
Suspension status by ethnicity	1.39	1	1.39	8.82	.003
Ethnicity by gender	.01	1	.01	.06	.81
Suspension status by ethnicity by gender	.00	1	.00	.03	.87
Error	26.44	168	.16		
<u>Simple main effects</u>					
Suspension status within AAS <sup>a</sup>		1		.35	.56
Suspension status within WS <sup>b</sup>		1		13.07	.00
Ethnicity within suspended		1		1.06	.31
Ethnicity within non-suspended		1		10.05	.00

Note. Adapted from Charles, L. E. (1981). Attitudinal characteristics of suspended students (Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1981). Dissertation Abstracts International, 42, 1053.

<sup>a</sup>AAS=African-American students. <sup>b</sup>WS=White students.

Table 32

ANOVA Table for the Dimension of Guidelessness (Charles, 1981), Study # 12

Source	<u>SS</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Suspension status	2.25	1	2.25	12.66	.00
Ethnicity	1.00	1	1.00	6.00	.02
Gender	.57	1	.57	5.36	.08
Suspension status by ethnicity	1.00	1	1.00	5.36	.02
Ethnicity by gender	.16	1	.16	1.00	.34
Suspension status by ethnicity by gender	.09	1	.09	.50	.48
Error	29.71	167	.18		
<u>Simple main effects</u>					
Suspension status within AAS <sup>a</sup>		1		1.06	.31
Suspension status within WS <sup>b</sup>		1		16.59	.00
Ethnicity within suspended		1		.12	.73
Ethnicity within non-suspended		1		10.09	.00

Note. Adapted from Charles, L. E. (1981). Attitudinal characteristics of suspended students (Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1981). Dissertation Abstracts International, 42, 1053.

<sup>a</sup>AAS=African-American students. <sup>b</sup>WS=White students.

Table 33

ANOVA Table for the Dimension of Peers (Charles, 1981), Study # 12

Source	<u>SS</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Suspension status	1.74	1	1.74	1.46	.23
Ethnicity	.89	1	.89	.75	.39
Gender	3.14	1	3.14	2.64	.11
Suspension status by ethnicity	4.30	1	4.30	3.62	.059 <sup>a</sup>
Ethnicity by gender	1.55	1	1.55	1.31	.26
Suspension status by ethnicity by gender	.24	1	.24	.20	.65
Error	199.63	168	1.19		

Note. Adapted from Charles, L. E. (1981). Attitudinal characteristics of suspended students (Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1981). Dissertation Abstracts International, 42, 1053.

<sup>a</sup>Considered significant at the .05 level.

African-American students' disciplinary actions were related to their attitudes toward peers. Peer relationships are extremely important to African-American students. Suspended African-American students had more favorable views of their peers than non-suspended African-American students.

This study deviated from the criteria in that the dependent variables were not disciplinary actions. However, the relationships of the variables to the disciplining of African-American students cannot be denied. Therefore, the study was included in the synthesis.

### Study # 13

Rich, S. T. (1975). Socioeconomic class, race, sex, and over-age-for-grade relationship as possible variables of disruptive and non-disruptive students (Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, 1975). Dissertation Abstracts International, 36, 2511.

Research Question. "Are socio-economic class, race, sex, and age-grade relationship when used as independent variables, either collectively or independently, predictors of disruptive middle school behavior" (p. 38)?

Variables. The dependent variable was frequency of punishment. Students were placed in two groups (disruptive and non-disruptive) based on the number of times they had been punished. Disruptive students were students that had been removed by a teacher from the learning environment due to misbehavior two or more times during the first six months of the 1973-1974 school year. The independent variables were socioeconomic status, ethnicity (African-American and white), gender, and over-the-age-for-grade relationship. Socioeconomic status was determined using the Hollingshead Two-Factor Index of Social Position (1957). Students were divided into four social classes (upper class, lower-upper class, middle class, and lower class) based on their scores on the instrument. In keeping with the criteria for the selection of studies in this report, over-age-for-grade relationship was not examined because the data were not disaggregated by ethnicity and gender.

Methodology. The populations were disruptive and non-disruptive students from four middle schools in a north-central Florida county school system. A sample was drawn from each population. One hundred ninety-four were disruptive students, 196 were non-

disruptive students. Ethnicity (black and white), gender, and number of disruptive behaviors were collected from official school records. The sample of disruptive students was compared to the sample of non-disruptive students on the three independent variables using z equations to test for differences between proportions (z-scores). The alpha level was .01

Findings. Differences between black and white students were found. A greater proportion of black students were classified as disruptive than white students ( $z=8.04$ , see Table 34). Low socioeconomic status black females were classified as more disruptive than low socioeconomic status white females ( $z=5.00$ ). Black males were more disruptive than white males ( $z=5.00$ ), and black females more disruptive than white females ( $z=7.36$ ). White males were classified in greater proportions as disruptive students than white females ( $z=5.56$ ), and no difference was found between black males and females.

Findings from the study showed a relationship between socioeconomic status and frequency of punishment. A greater proportion of low socioeconomic black students were classified as disruptive ( $z=5.98$ ) than black students who were not of low socioeconomic status. Low socioeconomic status black females were found to be more disruptive than all females who were not of low socioeconomic status ( $z=8.15$ ).

Discussion. Tables on each variable were not presented in this study. This made understanding the analysis for each variable confusing. In addition, non-disruptive students were not clearly identified. It was assumed that non-disruptive students were students who had not been removed from the learning environment by the teacher for misbehavior. The author examined the relationship between socioeconomic status and frequency of punishment for race and gender group except African-American males. Data on this group would have been helpful for comparative purposes to other groups.

Findings in this study indicate that the variables of socioeconomic status and ethnicity are associated with the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by African-American students.

#### Summary of Findings and Post-Study Conceptual Models

Three post-study models were created to summarize the findings of this synthesis. Figure 2 is a post-conceptual model developed to summarize all of the variables that emerged

Table 34

z-Score Comparisons for Disruptive and Non-Disruptive Students on Selected Variables(Rich, 1975), Study # 13

Variable and comparison	<u>z</u> value
<u>Socioeconomic status</u>	
LSESWM <sup>a</sup> and NLSESWM <sup>b</sup>	6.50 <sup>**</sup>
LSESWF <sup>c</sup> and NLSESWF <sup>d</sup>	2.70 <sup>**</sup>
LSESBF <sup>e</sup> and NLSESF <sup>d</sup>	8.15 <sup>**</sup>
LSESBS <sup>f</sup> and NLSESBS <sup>g</sup>	5.98 <sup>**</sup>
<u>Ethnicity</u>	
Black and white students	8.04 <sup>**</sup>
Black and white males	5.00 <sup>**</sup>
Black and white females	7.36 <sup>**</sup>
LSESBF <sup>e</sup> and LSESWF <sup>c</sup>	5.00 <sup>**</sup>
<u>Gender</u>	
DWM <sup>h</sup> and DWF <sup>i</sup>	5.56 <sup>**</sup>
DBM <sup>j</sup> and DBF <sup>k</sup>	1.62

Note. Rich, S. T. (1975). Socio-economic class, race, sex, and over-age-for-grade relationship as possible variables of disruptive and nondisruptive middle school students (Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, 1975). Dissertation Abstracts International, 36, 2511. Reported with permission of the author. Table created from information in the narrative.

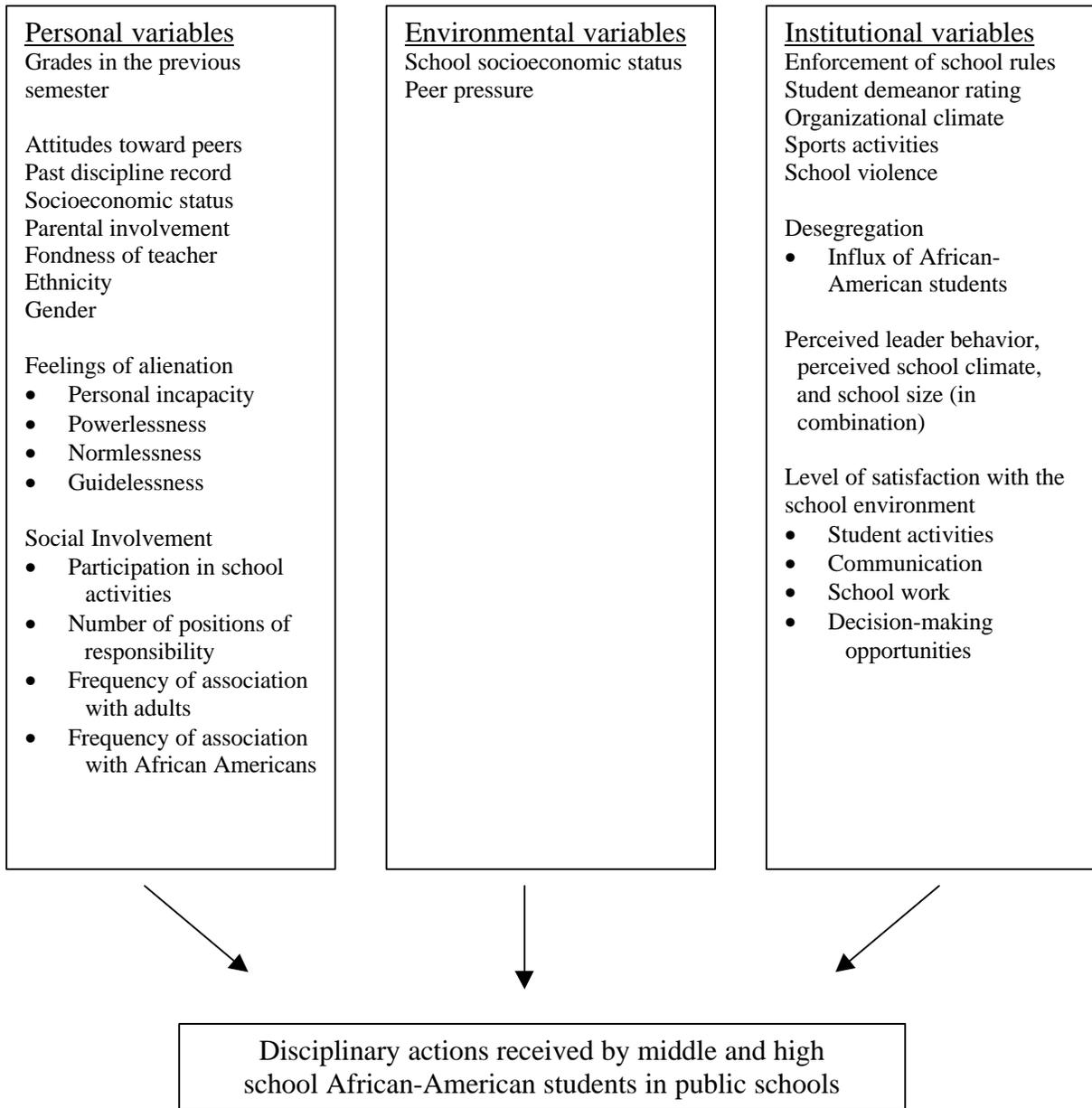
<sup>a</sup>LSESWM=Low socioeconomic status white males. <sup>b</sup>NLSESWM= Not low socioeconomic status white males. <sup>c</sup>LSESWF= Low socioeconomic status white females.

<sup>d</sup>NLSESWF= Not low socioeconomic status females. <sup>e</sup>LSESBF=Low socioeconomic status black females. <sup>f</sup>LSESBS= Low socioeconomic status black students.

<sup>g</sup>NLSESBS=Not low socioeconomic status black students <sup>h</sup>DWM=Disruptive white males. <sup>i</sup>DWF=Disruptive white females. <sup>j</sup>DBM=Disruptive black males.

<sup>k</sup>DBF=Disruptive black females.

<sup>\*\*</sup>p<.01.

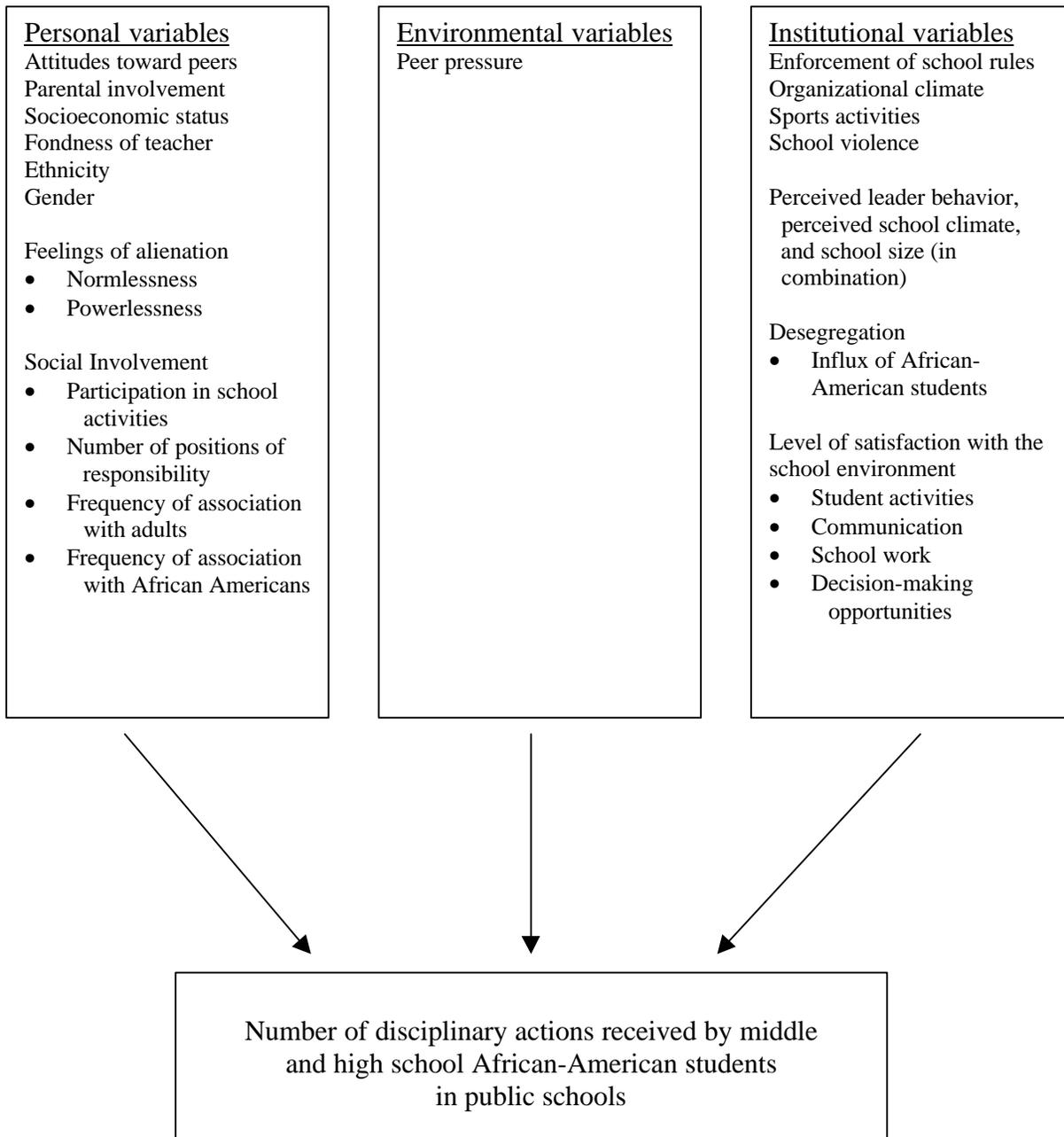


**Figure 2.** Post-study conceptual model of the variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools (13 studies).

from the synthesis. The post-study conceptual model includes 16 personal variables, two environmental variables, and 11 institutional variables. These 29 variables are associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools.

Figure 3 shows the 23 variables found through the synthesis that are related to differences in the number of disciplinary actions received among middle and high school African-American students in public schools. The post-study model was created by examining the findings in the synthesis that compared African-American students to other African-American students on selected variables. Figure 3 includes 12 personal variables, one environmental variable, and 10 institutional variables.

Figure 4 shows the 10 variables that contribute to the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools. The post-study model was created by examining findings in the synthesis that compared African-American students to other ethnic groups on selected variables. Figure 4 includes seven personal variables, one environmental variable, and two institutional variables. Five variables--ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, feelings of alienation, and desegregation--were common to Figures 3 and 4. A summary of the findings for each category of variables is found in the next chapter.



**Figure 3.** Post-study conceptual model of the variables associated with the number of disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools (4 studies).

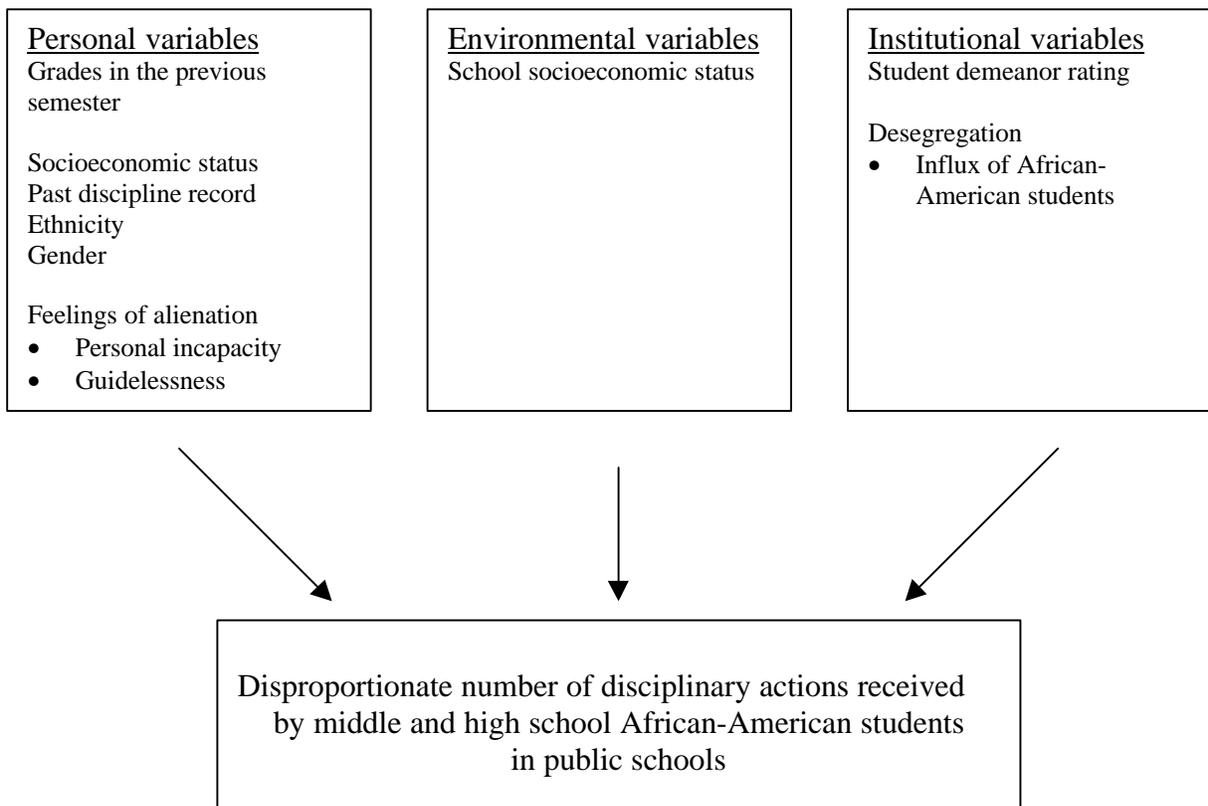


Figure 4. Post-study conceptual model of the variables associated with the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools (9 studies).

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY; CONCLUSIONS, ANALYSIS OF VARIABLES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATORS; DISCUSSION; AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This chapter includes (1) a summary of the findings for each category of variable; (2) conclusions, analysis of variables, and recommendations for educators; (3) discussion of challenges and rewards encountered by the author while conducting the study; and (4) recommendations for further research.

The purpose of this study was to identify the variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools. The study was necessary because there was (1) no synthesis of studies on the variables associated with the disciplining of African-American students; (2) a need to examine how personal, environmental, and institutional variables contribute to the disproportionate amount of disciplinary actions received by African-American students when compared to other ethnic groups; and (3) a need to discuss how the variables associated with the disciplining of African-American students could be managed so that the need to discipline them is reduced. The purpose was met by (1) organizing and integrating the findings of 13 studies and (2) interpreting the meaning of the synthesized studies.

The review of the literature was completed using a two-step process. First, the researcher conducted a literature review on the disciplining of middle and high school African-American students in public schools. This literature included research-based articles, journal articles, and dissertations. Three categories of variables related to the disciplinary actions received by African-American students were identified from the review. These categories were personal variables, environmental variables, and institutional variables. The three categories provided the direction for identifying studies for inclusion in the synthesis.

The second step of the literature review involved the identification, selection, and in-depth examination of studies on the disciplining of middle and high school African-American students. Thirteen studies meeting the criteria for selection were found. These studies provided the database for the synthesis.

## Summary

Three guiding questions were examined in this study. The three guiding questions were:

1. What are the personal, environmental, and institutional variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools?
2. How do the personal, environmental, and institutional variables contribute to the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools?
3. How can educators more effectively manage the personal, environmental, and institutional variables associated with the disciplining of middle and high school African-American students in public schools so that the need to discipline them is reduced?

Twenty-nine variables were found to be associated with the disciplining of African-American students. The variables were categorized into 16 personal variables, two environmental variables, and 11 institutional variables. The variables found in each category are listed below.

### Personal Variables

Grades in the previous semester, past discipline record, socioeconomic status, parental involvement, fondness of teacher, ethnicity, gender, feelings of alienation (personal incapacity, powerlessness, normlessness, and guidelessness), attitude toward peers and social involvement (participation in school activities, number of positions of responsibility, frequency of association with adults, and frequency of association with African-Americans).

### Environmental Variables

School socioeconomic status and peer pressure.

### Institutional Variables

Enforcement of school rules, student's demeanor rating, organizational climate, sports activities, school violence, desegregation (influx of black students), level of satisfaction with the school environment (student activities, communication, school work, and decision-making opportunities), and, in combination--perceived leader behavior, perceived school climate, and school size.

These twenty nine variables associated with the disciplining of African-American students were divided into two post-study conceptual models. Figure 3 showed the variables associated with number of disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools. Figure 4 showed the variables associated with the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools when compared to other ethnic groups.

#### Conclusions, Analysis of Variables, and Recommendations for Educators

A number of conclusions and recommendations for educators emerged from this synthesis. In addition, some of the authors of the studies provided analysis of how several of the personal, environmental, and institutional variables contribute to the disproportionate disciplining of African-American students when compared to other ethnic groups. The conclusions, analysis of several variables, and recommendations for educators for reducing the need to discipline African-American students are given for each category of variable below.

### Personal Variables

#### Conclusion 1

Students of low socioeconomic status received a greater number of disciplinary actions in public schools when compared to students who were not of low socioeconomic status (Study 5).

Socioeconomic status and the disproportionate disciplining of African-American students. Students of low socioeconomic status are disproportionately disciplined in school because they often come to school unprepared to function effectively in

the middle class setting of schools. Students of low socioeconomic status often come to school not knowing the rules of middle class culture. As a result, they are at risk for failure, both academically and behaviorally, in public schools. African-American students as a group are disproportionately burdened with poverty. Consequently, the likelihood of African-American students receiving disciplinary actions in school is greater (Brown et al., 1990; Hudgens, 1977; Irvine, 1990; Rich, 1975; Ratcliff, 1980; Wu, Pink, Crane, & Mole, 1982).

Recommendation for educators. Educators must institute initiatives to deal with the issue of poverty and its impact on the academic performance and behavior of African-American students in public schools. The inability of many African-American students to adjust to the middle class rules of school puts them in jeopardy of being disciplined for misbehavior. Educators must help African-American students become biculturally competent by teaching them the rules and values of the middle class. The work of Ruby Payne (1989) provides practical strategies for dealing with adults and children of poverty which can be implemented immediately.

## Conclusion 2

African-American students receive a disproportionate number of disciplinary actions when compared to white students (studies five, six, seven, eight, 11, and 13). African-American males were the greatest recipients of disciplinary actions when compared to females and males of any ethnic group.

Ethnicity and the disproportionate disciplining of African-American students. The findings of this synthesis provided little insight into why African-American students are disproportionately disciplined when compared to white students. Most of the authors of studies in the synthesis acknowledged the problem, but provided no analysis of why the problem existed. However, the literature review provided some explanations for this problem. Many researchers attributed the problem to blatant racism among educators (Kunjufu, 1986; Larkin, 1982; National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1998; Wu, Pink, Crain & Moles, 1982). There was evidence that teachers had lower expectations academically and behaviorally for African-American students. Several researchers suggested that African-American students are simply fulfilling the expectations for behavior held by teachers for them (Garibaldi 1991;

Hopkins 1997; Morgan, 1991; Opatow, 1990). There was research that found that the negative stereotyping of African-American students leads to them being disproportionately disciplined (Foster, 1995; Goldsmith 1979; Gottlieb 1964; Morgan 1991; Woolridge & Richman 1985). Irvine (1990) attributed the problem to the practice of tracking students. Irvine felt that when African-American students are tracked, they often experience a classroom setting with low expectations for students and an environment conducive to misbehavior. Finally, some researchers believe that an incompatibility between African-American learners and their learning styles contributes to them receiving more disciplinary actions in school (1986; Nichols, 1991; Thompson 1992).

Recommendations for educators. Educators must accept the reality that racism is a factor in the disproportionate number of disciplinary actions received by African-American students in public schools. Whether the disproportionality in disciplinary actions received by African-American students is due to blatant racism or the inability of educators to understand the cultural differences of African-American students is irrelevant. In either case, it is unacceptable. Educators have seen the statistics that show disparities in the number of disciplinary actions received among ethnic groups for decades. Yet, few viable plans to eliminate the problem have been implemented by school systems. Diversity workshops should be implemented by school districts to help educators more effectively relate to African-American students. These workshops focus on learning styles, language differences, and any other cultural differences of African-American students that affect their experiences in the school setting.

Teachers must exercise self-reflection and acknowledge any prejudices they may have about African-American students. Teachers must regard African-American students as individuals, not a collective group, so that stereotypes about their academic performance and behavior can be eliminated (Carpenter, 1995). They must work to ensure that any prejudices they may have which may negatively affect African-American students in the classroom are eliminated.

Like achievement data, discipline data should be examined as a measure of school improvement plans. Educators should analyze school discipline reports for trends in the types of misbehavior committed by African-American students and the number of

disciplinary actions received by them in comparison to other ethnic groups. The data can be used to formulate a plan to decrease the number of disciplinary actions received by African-American students. Administrators should meet with teachers who constantly refer African-American students. The goal of these meetings should not be to chastise the teacher, but to formulate solutions toward reducing the need to refer African-American students for misbehavior.

School systems must implement initiatives to reduce the number of African-American males receiving disciplinary actions. African-American males in many states and school districts are receiving over 50% of all of the disciplinary actions given to students (Office of Civil Rights, 1998). Many school systems have no plan to eliminate this problem. Instead of examining the variables of the institution, many school educators lay the blame for misbehavior solely on the student. The researcher of this study can only question if white males received the most disciplinary actions in public schools if the level of apathy toward finding solutions to the problem would continue to exist. Schools can make a difference in the lives of African-American males by implementing mentoring programs similar to First and Ten (Newport News, VA.), The Children of the Sun (Miami, FL), and The Male Youth Project, (Washington, DC).

Finally, African-American students must be held accountable for their behavior. None of these interventions mentioned in the previous paragraphs will work if African-American students are unwilling to abide by the rules. African-American parents and African-American students must come to school with the attitude that they are there to learn and not misbehave. They should accept the disciplinary actions given by administrators to African-American students for misbehavior when it is fair and consistent for all students. Parents and educators should talk often with African-American students about the necessity of good behavior in school and the consequences that misbehavior will bring. Educators, parents, and others involved in the disciplining of African-American students must constantly work to provide them with the skills they need to be self-disciplined.

### Conclusion 3

African-American students with poor academic performance are more likely to

receive disciplinary actions in school than students without academic problems. This conclusion was supported in Study # 11.

Academic performance and the disproportionate disciplining of African-American students. The findings of this synthesis provided little insight into why students with low academic performance receive more disciplinary actions in school. However, the literature review provided an explanation for the problem. According to Addo (1997), African-American students as a group are usually on the lower rungs of achievement in most school systems. Addo believed that the cumulative effect of underachieving causes many African-American students to have no investment in school. Because they have no investment in school, African-American students tend to feel alienated from school and misbehave. Consequently, the likelihood of them receiving disciplinary actions is greater (Larkin, 1982).

Recommendations for educators. Because poor academic performance and misbehavior are usually related, teachers should examine the academic success of African-American students who misbehave to be sure that their misbehavior is not an attempt to compensate for inadequacy in the classroom. If academic performance is an explanation for the misbehavior, the teacher must formulate a viable plan to improve the student's academic performance so that the tendency to misbehave is reduced. These plans should go beyond conventional interventions and include the input of administrators, support staff, parents, and the student.

#### Conclusion 4

Students with high feelings of alienation receive greater numbers of disciplinary actions in public schools than students with low feelings of alienation. This conclusion was supported in studies four, nine, and 12.

Feelings of alienation and the disproportionate disciplining of African-American students. The findings of this synthesis provide some insight into how feelings of alienation contribute to African-American students receiving a greater number of disciplinary actions when compared to other ethnic groups. Disruptive African-American students had higher feelings of normlessness and powerlessness than non-disruptive African-American students. The disruptive African-American students did not feel that they possessed the necessary skills to be successful in school (Charles, 1981). Social

rules that directed individual conduct had broken down and were no longer effective for controlling their behavior. Disruptive African-American students believed that their behavior could not determine the outcomes for the daily scenarios of school life (Moyer, 1981). The disruptive African-American students also felt that the school, teacher, and society were in control of their fate and what they did while in school would not ensure future success. Consequently, many disruptive African-American students became frustrated with school and felt that they could not meet the expectations of educators (Charles, 1981). These feelings caused many of the disruptive African-American students to reject the academic and behavioral values of the school and replace them with values from their own culture that promote social self-esteem (Fordham & Ogbu, 1990).

Recommendations for educators. Many African-American students simply don't believe in the American dream. They don't feel the time and effort devoted to school will yield the benefits that they want. Because they don't believe in the American dream, many of them see no reason to conform to the expectations of the school and often disconnect themselves from the school experience. Educators must renew the dream for African-American students by showing them that achievement and good behavior will pay off for them in the future. Educators must create meaningful ways for African-American students to be involved in school and provide African-American students with the opportunity to have meaningful relationships with successful African-American adults. These African-American role models should be of environments and backgrounds similar to the African-American students. When African-American students see people with similar backgrounds and experiences who have achieved success, they become motivated and more willing to invest in the American dream.

#### Conclusion 5

African-American males whose parents are involved in their educational experiences receive fewer disciplinary actions in school than African-American males whose parents are not involved in their educational experiences. In study two, non-rebellious African-American males reported that having their parents involved in their educational experiences made them less likely to misbehave.

Recommendations for educators. African-American parents must take ownership for the behavior of their children. When their children have discipline

problems, they must work with teachers and administrators to resolve the problems. However, the level of parental involvement of African-American parents should not be limited to coming in to see an administrator because their child has a discipline problem. When this happens, parents are turned off by the school system and become frustrated with the educational experience of their child. Educators must provide diverse opportunities for African-American parents to be involved in the educational experiences of their children. Parents should be a part of team activities, school clubs, school improvement teams, and the PTA. Educators must make a real effort to improve parental involvement by reaching out to the African-American community. Avenues for parental involvement in the African-American community include visiting students' homes, having school functions in their neighborhoods, and forming church-school partnerships. School functions should periodically be held in the community so that it is easier for parents and the community to be involved and to allow teachers a chance to see and learn about the environment of their students. Teachers must be familiar with the community of the students they teach. It should be a part of a school plan to have the faculty visit the neighborhoods of the students they teach.

#### Conclusion 6

African-American males who are fond of their teachers receive fewer disciplinary actions than African-American males who are not fond of their teachers (Study # 2).

Recommendation for educators. Teachers seemed to have the strongest effect on satisfaction with school environment for African-American males. Students with disciplinary problems tended to make negative comments about their teachers, while students without disciplinary problems made positive comments. Teachers should work to establish a positive, professional relationship with the African-American males they teach and hold the same expectations for them as they do for other students in their classrooms. If the teacher has a relationship with the student, misbehavior is less likely to occur.

Other things can be done to improve the educational experience of African-American males. Personnel directors and educators interviewing prospective teachers should search for teachers who have a genuine interest in the success of African-

American males. Personnel in universities can better prepare teachers by providing them with training that focuses on working with urban youth and African-American males in particular. Finally, school systems should have staff development initiatives that provide teachers with strategies for working with African-American students effectively.

### Environmental Variables

#### Conclusion

Peer pressure has a negative influence on the behavior of African-American students. The results of studies two and nine showed that peers are extremely important to African-American students, especially African-American males. In study two, peer pressure was a negative influence on the behavior of both rebellious and non-rebellious males. In study nine, suspended groups of students had a higher need for a positive attitude toward their peers.

Recommendations for educators. Educators must incorporate teaching strategies that give African-American students the opportunity to interact with their peers in a successful manner within the academic setting. It is important that they work with students who are of the same race as well as with students of other races. Having African-American students to work with students of other races allows them to see that they can achieve at the same level. The opportunity to work successfully with peers of the same race helps to deter the belief held by many African-American students that success in school is equivalent to “acting white.”

When African-American students misbehave, they should be isolated from their peers. Many students will display a false bravado to impress their friends. The educator stands a better chance at resolving the problem if the student is isolated because the need to impress peers is eliminated.

### Institutional Variables

#### Conclusion 1

School violence and the enforcement of school rules influence the behavior of African-American males. In study two, both rebellious and non-rebellious males indicated that attending school in an environment that included violence and the inconsistent enforcement of school rules affected their behavior in negative ways. The

rebellious African-American males stated that they would sometimes misbehave because they knew that some school rules would not be enforced consistently.

Recommendations for educators. African-American males were less likely to receive disciplinary actions for misbehavior in schools with a climate conducive to learning. School violence should not be a part of any school culture, and school rules should be strictly enforced. Educators can deter misbehavior of African-American males by ensuring that school violence is kept to a minimum and school rules for misbehavior are applied firmly, fairly, and consistently.

### Conclusion 2

School climate and leader behavior influence the number of suspensions received by African-American students. African-American students received fewer out-of-school-suspensions in open organizational climates. The findings of study three and ten indicated that in closed climate schools, where teachers perceived a lack of administrative support, tensions among the administration, cliques among teachers, and a high level of staff frustration and fatigue among teachers, misbehavior by African-American students was more likely to occur.

Recommendations for educators. Educators can't control the personal and environmental variables affecting the behavior of African-American students. However, they can make sure that African-American students come to a school that has a positive school climate. The principal as leader holds the ultimate responsibility for making this happen. The principal's ability to create an open, positive school climate is essential to both teachers and students functioning effectively in the organization on a daily basis. The leader must make sure that teachers buy into a vision and do what is necessary to make it happen for all students. The leader must make sure that administrators support teachers and ensure that teachers are willing to work with each other and the community. Teachers must know that students' success is the focus of the organization and anything that jeopardizes their success will be eliminated. Students should feel that school is a place where they are expected to come ready to learn and not misbehave. This type of atmosphere puts the focus of students on instruction and not misbehavior.

### Conclusion 3

Sports and other school activities are a positive influence on the behavior of

African-American males. In study two, both rebellious and non-rebellious African-American males felt that sports and other school activities kept them involved in school and deterred misbehavior.

Recommendation for educators. Schools must find ways to keep African-American students involved in the school environment. Sports and other school activities can be used as a way to keep African-American students motivated about school. Many times students are not allowed to participate in school sports or other school activities because they don't meet a minimum grade point average or have been excluded because of misbehavior in school. The expectations from the school for academic performance and good behavior should not be eliminated. African-American students should be held to the same standards as all other students. However, support systems (e.g., tutoring, mentoring, team study halls) that ensure African-American students are not kept from participating on sports teams and in other school activities because of misbehavior or bad grades should be in place by the school.

#### Conclusion 4

The process of desegregation has an effect on the disciplinary actions received by African-American students (Study # 1). Findings of this synthesis indicate that schools with an influx of African-American students had the greatest African-American suspension rates and level of African-American suspension disproportionality (Study # 8).

Recommendation for educators. Desegregation is supposed to be a vehicle for gaining equal educational opportunity. In some school systems it has not been that. Educators must re-examine the process of desegregation and make a real effort to fully implement the initiative. This may sound unreasonable in that it has been almost fifty years since the Brown v. Board of Education decision of 1954. Yet, although segregation has been legally outlawed, it is still a political reality. In 1991, almost 30 years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, there were over 400 school districts throughout the USA that were still under some court-ordered desegregation plan (Marable, 1992). Unless a true commitment to accommodate the needs of African-American students is given, academic success is not assured. The commitment to address the needs of African-American students as related to the process of desegregation will be even more vital in this

millennium as initiatives (e.g., charter schools) which could produce an influx of African-American students into predominately white schools are more likely.

At the federal level, the government should revive and expand funding (allowed by the Civil Rights Act of 1964) for programs designed to help schools desegregate successfully. In addition, school systems should have policies that require schools with disparities in suspensions and expulsions by ethnic groups to create plans to eliminate the problem.

#### Discussion of Trends and Challenges and Rewards in Doing the Study

The challenges and rewards of conducting this study are in this section. Trends in the data are also examined.

One challenge encountered while doing this synthesis was contacting the authors of the studies to pose questions and to compile information for the Community of Scholars section. Finding the authors of studies from the seventies and early eighties proved to be especially difficult. Email, letters, Internet searches, and phone calls were used to contact the authors of the studies. A majority of the authors were contacted.

Another challenge encountered while completing this study was dealing with mistakes found in many studies. Mistakes in terms used, methodology, and the reporting of findings were often found in the studies. In addition, references listed in the narrative were not always listed in the reference section. These errors caused the researcher unnecessary frustration, time, and work.

The researcher experienced challenges finding studies that went beyond identifying the variables associated with the disciplining of African-American students. Many authors identified variables, but how the variables contributed to the disproportionate disciplining of African-American students was not addressed. In addition, those authors who did analysis on the variables associated with the disproportionate disciplining of African-American students provided very few solutions for the problem.

Another challenge encountered while conducting this study was that as the in-depth analysis of the studies progressed it became obvious to the researcher that two types of studies were emerging—studies that showed differences in the number of disciplinary actions received by African-American students (African-American students

only were the subjects of the studies) and studies examining the disproportionate disciplining of African-American students when compared to other ethnic groups. This problem was further complicated in that a few of the studies included analysis that fit both type of studies. The researcher resolved this problem by dividing the studies into two groups. Studies that included both types of analysis were grouped with the studies examining the disproportionate disciplining of African-American students.

One reward experienced while conducting this study was the willingness of those authors who were contacted to discuss their work. Many of the authors were very surprised and delighted that someone was using their work. Many of the authors also validated the need for my study.

Another reward was that the researcher was able to analyze variables that are not associated with the disciplinary actions received by African-American students in public schools. This information will serve as a basis for future research. It is important to discover these variables because it became obvious to the researcher that some variables that educators believe were associated with the disciplining of African-American students may not be.

Two interesting trends were observed from examining the data compiled in this study. First, comparisons of the Children's Defense Fund report using Office of Civil Rights data from 1975 with the 1998 Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Compliance Report indicated the percentage of suspensions received by public school students in a majority of the states has increased. In addition, the data indicated that the problem of African-American students being disciplined disproportionately when compared to other ethnic groups has not been resolved, and in most states the disparity in percentage of disciplinary actions received by African-American students compared to other ethnic groups has increased.

Second, the data indicated that the need to effectively integrate schools still exists. Although, legally, segregation no longer exists, data from the study indicated that politically schools are still not integrated institutions. The feelings of alienation experienced by African-American students (which is associated with African-American students being disproportionately disciplined) may be the result of schools failing to accept and successfully integrate them into the middle class value systems of schools.

## Recommendations for Further Research

Further study on the disciplining of African-American students in public schools is needed. Recommendations for future research are listed below.

### Recommendation 1

Studies on the disciplining of African-American students have primarily focused on personal and institutional variables. Two environmental variables related to the guiding questions of the study were found. More studies that examine environmental variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by middle and high school African-American students in public schools should be conducted.

### Recommendation 2

An instrument using the personal, environmental and institutional variables found in this study should be developed to test perceptions of administrators, teachers, parents, and students of how these categories of variables are associated with the disciplining of African-American students. It would be beneficial for educators to see the differences and similarities of the perceptions held by the different groups.

### Recommendation 3

This study should be furthered by examining the variables associated with the disciplinary actions received by elementary African-American students in public schools. Identifying the variables and examining how they can be managed by educators at this level could reduce the need to discipline African-American students as they progress through middle and high school.

### Recommendation 4

Further research should include the investigation of school systems with no disproportionality in the number of disciplinary actions received among African-American students when compared to other ethnic groups is needed. These school systems could provide answers to how the need to discipline African-American students in public schools can be reduced.

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