

SUSPENSEES IN A SUBURBAN MIDDLE SCHOOL SETTING

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Scope

The child who is perceived as a discipline problem in the school setting has long been a source of concern for school personnel as well as parents. Individuals involved have pondered over such areas as (1) categories in which the problem pupil fails to adjust, (2) efforts geared to improving understanding of the maladjusted pupil, (3) variations in classroom norms as pupils are moved from one setting to another, and (4) determining if certain pupils' needs can be met through "in-house" strategies or if referrals to outside sources are in order.

In far too many cases, with the growing number of supposedly delinquent students, schools are not equipped with adequate facilities and personnel to meet the needs of acting out children. More importantly, a lack of understanding of the "total" pupil becomes a factor. However, the educational process must go on and the disruptive child is viewed as an impediment to the process. Out of sheer necessity, the disruptive child is too often suspended--removed from the learning milieu.

Sometimes, the problem child "disappears" from the student population (e.g., chronic truancy, detention facilities, withdrawal from school, etc.) or is referred to mental health professionals and labeled emotionally impaired or disturbed. The writer submits that a

clearer understanding of the disruptive child through various channels (e.g., teacher education courses and workshops in classroom management, more parent-teacher interaction, more comprehensive teacher referrals to the administrative office and frequent reviews of available literature on managing pupils with serious social and academic problems) is a means of maintaining the potentially "lost" or labeled child in the regular classroom.

The present study dealt with middle school children who, for any number of reasons, were suspended from school. Some were simply removed from classes and placed in "in-school suspension" rooms while others were suspended out of school and sent home for the duration of the suspension period. Although certain pupils were excluded from this study as a result of withdrawal from school or placement in special classes, the writer calls the reader's attention to the comments of Boyd (1978) regarding his experiences as a mental health consultant to the schools:

I found that schools often asked me to consult with them regarding discipline problems. In nearly every case, when a youngster was diagnosed as being emotionally disturbed, the student was also a discipline problem. In fact, I do not know which came first. I am not sure whether the youngster was a discipline problem, and because of that was emotionally disturbed, or whether, in fact, his disordered emotions caused him to be disturbed in the classroom. (p. 47)

The large suburban school system, such as the one examined in this study (Chesterfield County, Virginia Public Schools), is not without its share of delinquent pupils. The present investigation focused on middle school pupils in this suburban school setting. The examiner

sought to examine the relationship between frequency of suspension among these pupils and the way they are perceived by self and parents in terms of (1) school--achievement (academic) status, (2) home--parent (family) relations, (3) peer relations, and (4) general self-concept.

The present study represented an effort to (1) examine some characteristics of suspended pupils and (2) gain insight into how they are perceived by self and parents. The thesis that antisocial behavior in the school setting is a multivariate proposition was subjected to scrutiny. Perhaps, a clearer understanding of the dynamics of suspension as a punitive measure for school misbehavior could lead to fewer suspensions, more meaningful intervention strategies, and fewer hastily labeled, improperly placed pupils.

The concern of this investigation related to the one-time, or casual suspendee, and the pupil who is suspended three or more times during the school year--the chronic suspendee.

A review of existing literature about school related delinquency revealed frequent references to such variables as school achievement (Glasser, 1977; Armstrong, 1978; Neilson & Gerber, 1979; Osborne, 1977), home--parent (family) relations (Gouldner, 1978; Glueck & Glueck, 1972; Richman & Harper, 1979), peer relations (Empey & Rebow, 1961; Kaplan, 1978, Banks; 1968) and self-concept (Rubin, Dorle, & Sandidge, 1976; Bookover & Thomas, 1962; Curtis, 1975; Davidson & Lang, 1960; Okun & Sasfy, 1977). As the number of times suspended during the allotted period was converted to variable form--frequency of suspension--the

main hypothesis to be tested in this study was that there is a relationship between the factors above and frequency of suspension.

The writer submits that a collection of data on youngsters who present behavior problems at school results in the emergence of such related variables. The major concerns of the investigation were the nature of factors forming these patterns and the relation of these factors to behavior that leads to eventual exclusion from school--suspension or expulsion.

Rationale for the Study

When a pupil's behavior results in serious and/or chronic infractions of school rules, suspension from school is a common form of disciplinary action. Many youngsters are suspended, only to return and resume the same negative behavior patterns, causing themselves to be suspended again. During the 1979-80 school year, 46% of the pupils suspended from middle schools in Chesterfield County were repeaters. In fact, approximately 24% were suspended three or more times. In this investigation, youngsters suspended three or more times as of April 29 of the 1980-81 school year were defined as chronic suspendees while youngsters suspended only once during the same period of time were called casual suspendees. This study represented an effort toward findings that will aid in isolating, in a preliminary manner, factors which separate the two groups from each other as well as from pupils who had not been suspended, or nonsuspendees.

One possible means of dealing with the potential repeater is some form of intervention, which may entail identification and reduction

of factors which contribute to unacceptable school behavior. If the pupil's behavior is serious enough to warrant exclusion from the school setting, then intervention, based on a clear understanding of the problem pupil's dilemma, is in order. If potentially disruptive children are to be channeled away from situations that lead to frequent suspension, this must be accomplished through the application of carefully planned intervention strategies.

Based on available data on youngsters suspended from school during the 1980-81 school year, the writer sought to test the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between frequency of suspension (the number of times a pupil is suspended during the allotted period) and other factors that appeared frequently enough in pupil profiles and other sources of data to be considered problematic areas.

Statement of the Problem

In the present study, the investigator sought to gain a clearer understanding of the school suspendee, the casual as well as the chronic suspendee, by exploring specific areas of the offenders' lifestyles. The paucity of literature dealing with suspension group comparisons was indicative of the need for this type of study.

The primary question addressed in this study was, are there significant differences among suspension groups (chronic, casual, and nonsuspendees) as they are assessed in the areas of (1) school--achievement (academic) status, (2) home-parent (family) relations, (3) peer relations, and (4) general self-concept, as perceived by pupils and parents?

Significance of the Study

The present study represented an effort to determine what factors, if any, were significantly related to school behavior that leads to suspension. As variables emerged from a review of literature, demographic information and other available data, they were considered for use as a basis for this research effort.

Investigators of negative behavior in the school setting attempt to explain deviant behavior in the schools in terms of several theoretical references. Kaplan (1978) discusses school related misbehavior in terms of blocked goal attainment, further indicating that pupils respond to their low status in the school hierarchy by engaging in antisocial behavior. As youngsters are constantly reminded of the importance of educational success, failure or blocked goal attainment can be devastating. Unable to achieve or compete at school, they respond by "striking out" or acting out to gain attention. Demoralized, defeated, and dismayed by their plight, these youngsters often find themselves removed from the school milieu.

Traditionally, the major rewards in school result from academic achievement. Among problems faced by the typical school maladaptive boy, Ahlstrom and Havighurst (1971) pinpointed inadequate basic academic skills. Having reviewed early school records of many delinquent youngsters, this writer is of the opinion that educational failure, in most instances, begins early, then accumulates. Therefore, a secondary question addressed in the present study was, is there a significant relationship between academic achievement and behavior

that leads to eventual suspension or expulsion, especially in the middle school?

Another possible source of delinquent behavior in the school setting may be the grouping together of troublesome youngsters in the same classrooms, especially pupils of lower ability levels. Often cited by school personnel as a source of disruptive behavior, this practice is well known as "tracking" (Kaplan, 1978; Schafer & Olexa, 1971). If students are placed homogeneously, or on the basis of common ability levels, it may cause them to seek common grounds for rebellion. Thus, the practice of separating nonachievers and behavior problems from achievers and nonbehavior problems may contribute to the alienation factor and reinforce negative behavior.

Since certain variables attributable to delinquent behavior are shared by a small percentage of the student body, a natural phenomenon occurs; they are attracted to each other. Youngsters prone to delinquent behavior seek and get reinforcement from other such individuals. Kaplan relates to this connection between such youngsters and anti-institutional behavior as the result of shared inequalities, pointing out that collective interpretations are formed, defining the school as at fault.

A large number of delinquent youths are likely to spend their time with peers who engage in anti-institutional behavior. Peers, however, are not necessarily limited to immediate associates. Peers also include other classmates and schoolmates. The school delinquent is not usually the "most popular" among this particular group. Thus,

another secondary question posed for this research was, are problem youngsters likely to seek each other out, forming their own separate cliques or "associative packs?"

In dealing with a series of delinquency related variables, especially in the area of school suspensions, the writer would be remiss to overlook the issue of self, or self-concept. In this writing, the subject of self-concept was addressed in terms of the suspended pupil's view of himself/herself in the overall school, family, and peer setting. The general theory of self-concept, as presented by Brookover and Thomas (1962, p. 271), postulates that self-concept is developed "through interaction with significant others," which in turn influences the individual's behavior. Further, the term self-concept relates to the perceptions, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and values which the individual views as part of or characteristic of himself/herself. Logically, the good or bad self-concept may be responsible for children's resiliency or involvement in negative behavior. A good self-concept, in the school setting or elsewhere, may be somewhat of a shield against delinquency even when other controls are absent. Is there a significant relationship, then, between feelings about self and school behavior?

Parental involvement and support as well as other familial factors are salient issues for consideration when dealing with school-related delinquency. Lack of parental support or concern in these areas could well be a source of futility for school personnel as they attempt to relate to discipline problems in the school setting.

Armstrong (1978) contends that there is indeed a close parallel between the indifference of parents to school functioning and acts of delinquency committed by their children. In examining the quality of home or family life, the parent--child relationship has been consistently alluded to as a vital antecedent in the cultivation of antisocial qualities in adolescents. Would it be safe, then, to assume that delinquent children are perceived differently by their parents than nondelinquents?

Parents are among the most significant beings in the lives of youngsters. Children are quite dependent upon reinforcement from parents as they seek to survive in such a challenging atmosphere as the school setting. Therefore, negative perceptions of parents can be very upsetting to children in terms of their adequacy and worthiness as students. Delinquent children are more likely to be victims of indifference than hostility from parents, causing such children to view their parents as not caring. Perhaps, children's perceptions of their parents as interested in and controlling their lives engender more positive responses to life situations.

The family environment can have a significant impact on whether the child seeks a normal or delinquent lifestyle as well as how the child behaves in other social institutions (Janeksela, 1979). One could easily surmise that adolescents who show little respect for parents will also show little respect for other adult authority figures. Rebellion against parents could easily generalize to rebellion against society in general (Duncan, 1978).

Based on the discussion above, the need to study school suspension may be viewed as a problem not limited to the middle schools of Chesterfield County. Since suspension is a fairly common consequence for school misbehavior, close scrutiny of suspension patterns may be a viable means of identifying potentially serious behavior problems. The study focused on frequency of suspension as well as the behavior of suspendees, establishing a twofold need for the present examination: to shed further light on the relationship between school related delinquency and the variables listed earlier in this writing and to test the feasibility of using the frequency of suspension variable as a basis for ferreting out potentially serious school behavior problems. Although the variables (1) school--achievement (academic) status, (2) home--parent (family) relations, (3) peer relations, and (4) general self-concept are quite often studied univariately, the present study was significant in that it represented an effort to combine them into a single research effort, with the frequency of suspension variable contributing to the further significance of this present research effort.

Major Research Questions

The present research was based on the assumption that significant differences would be noted among the three suspension groups with respect to the variables mentioned above. It was also felt that this research undertaking might be profitable in addressing the following questions:

1. Are the three suspension groups (casual, chronic, and nonsuspendees) significantly different in terms of overall self-esteem?

2. Are there significant differences among suspension groups in terms of self-perceived school--achievement (academic) status?
3. Are there significant differences among suspension groups in terms of self-perceived home--parent (family) relations?
4. Are there significant differences among suspension groups in terms of self-perceived peer relations?
5. Are there significant differences among suspension groups in terms of general self-concept (self-esteem)?
6. Are the three suspension groups (casual, chronic, and nonsuspendees) significantly different in terms of overall parent perceptions of their children?
7. Are there significant differences among suspension groups in terms of parent perceived school--achievement (academic) status?
8. Are there significant differences among suspension groups in terms of parent perceived home--parent (family) relations?
9. Are there significant differences among suspension groups in terms of parent perceived peer relations?
10. Are there significant differences among suspension groups in terms of parent perceptions of their children's self-concepts?

Based on descriptive data gathered from the Discipline Information Questionnaire, the question was posed, do differences exist among the suspension groups in the areas of (1) sex, age, and family characteristics, (2) school--academic data, (3) school--discipline (history) data, and (4) family mobility?

Definition of Terms

Certain terms warrant clarification as used in the present study. Terms used most frequently are defined below as they are specifically

related to the inquiry.

1. School--achievement status is defined as academic status as gleaned from responses to items on instruments purported to measure the same and chosen for the study.
2. Home--parent relations is defined as family relations as gleaned from responses to items on instruments purported to measure the same and chosen for the study.
3. Peer relations is defined as a measure of the child's social self as gleaned from responses to items on instruments purported to measure the same and chosen for the study.
4. Self-concept is defined as general self-concept as gleaned from responses to items on instruments purported to measure the same and chosen for the study.
5. Casual suspendee is defined as the pupil suspended from school once during the period of time allotted for the study.
6. Chronic suspendee is defined as the pupil suspended from school three or more times during the period of time allotted for the study.
7. Nonsuspendee is defined as the pupil who is not suspended at all during the period of time allotted for the study.
8. Level H classes is defined as classes for students who have demonstrated superior ability and can accept responsibility.
9. Level Z classes is defined as classes for students who are meeting or exceeding grade level expectations.
10. Level Y classes is defined as classes for students who need reinforcement.
11. Level X classes is defined as classes for students who need extra instruction in basic skills.

Limitations

In order that the conclusions of this investigation be viewed

in the proper perspective, the following delimitations are identified:

1. The study was conducted in a suburban setting; therefore, generalizations to urban or rural school systems should be made with necessary caution.
2. Youngsters enrolled in special education classes for more than three periods per school day were excluded from the study as they have already been identified by disability and some form of intervention is already being offered.
3. Although studies from other institutional settings were incorporated into the literature review, the inquiry was conducted for the sole purpose of examining school related delinquency.
4. Due to expected negative attitudes toward the subjects of suspension and discipline as well as the sensitive nature of items addressed on the pupil and parent questionnaires, the low rate of return was anticipated. Follow-up and matching procedures were impeded by constraints imposed upon the investigator by local school officials and the Committee on the Conduct of Human Research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following review includes literature about school related delinquency in the areas of (1) school--achievement (academic) status in terms of scholastic, social, and behavioral aspects of the pupil's classroom and school demeanor, (2) home--parent (family) relations, including the pupil's relationship with his/her parents and other family members, (3) peer relations or status among peers, and (4) general self-concept, or feelings of self-worth. The final section focuses on the subject of suspension itself.

School Achievement

Various investigators, including Glasser (1969) and Armstrong (1978), allude to school related delinquency as a possible reaction to factors in the school setting itself, including failure. Maynard (1977) also discusses the school climate as a possible breeding place for much disruptive behavior on the part of pupils. Conversely, he relates to certain positives that may alleviate some negative aspects of the school milieu. These factors include reducing the threat of going to school as well as providing meaningful experiences in the classroom.

In a study of teacher--pupil relations, McLemore (1978) confronts

the "interaction between teachers and students who are discipline problems" issue by describing how teachers can determine if they are contributing to classroom discipline problems by assessing their own teacher--learner interactions, stating that "a number of factors can contribute to a learner's misbehavior." He asserts that "the teacher should ascertain whether he himself is contributing to the problem." (p. 460).

Glasser (1977), in his discussion of steps to "good discipline," set forth the premise that school must indeed be a "good" place to be, presenting substantive considerations for individuals involved in studies such as the present one. Although not data based, Glasser's points offer positive suggestions around certain aspects of dealing with pupil behavior.

For some children, especially low achievers, the school often presents an alien, hostile environment of rejection and defeat. Among problems faced by the typical school maladjusted boy, Ahlmstram and Havighurst (1971) listed inadequate academic skills, lack of family support, and neighborhood settings that exposed them to trouble, suggesting that lack of achievement and poor social adjustment are indeed major problem areas. It is probably safe to assume that schools may be responsible for children's selecting unacceptable solutions to their problems.

Children who are below average in intelligence are often targets of animosity in the school. This includes negative teacher reactions as well as the disfavor of more capable classmates (Jersild, 1963).

Jersild also notes that frustrations at school that lead to aggressive behavior often have a "snowballing" effect, causing the aggressive youngster to be punished and belittled. Such experiences only add to impulses to respond more negatively.

Neilson and Gerber (1979), via structured interviews of 33 truant adolescents, found that delinquent youngsters listed difficulty of schoolwork and personality conflicts with teachers as the most "disliked" aspects of school life. Truancy, only one of many school related problems, is dealt with in the study above in association with difficulties at home, at school, and with peers, three of the four major variables examined in the present study.

In reporting on studies of suspension as related to such variables as race, sex, and achievement, Osborne (1977) reported on the findings of a 1975 study of the junior high school population of Kalamazoo, Michigan. He pointed out that students who received suspensions could usually be identified as a group by their low levels of achievement, suggesting a possible relationship between suspension or delinquent behavior and low achievement. Though limited in scope, Osborne's study presents supportive data around the suspension/low achievement issue.

A number of pupils indicate that they are at school because they are made to go by their parents in response to compulsory attendance laws. Do such youngsters find school oppressive? Attitudes toward compulsory attendance guidelines have recently ranged from supportive reactions to legal backing of mandatory education to a somewhat

permissive outlook. Nawaz and Tanner (1975) present the point of view that compulsory education is "no longer exempt from searching examinations" (p. 278).

Family Relations

The child's reaction to factors in the school setting is often the result of relationships with other family members. Armstrong (1978), in a Saturday Evening Post article, contends that there is indeed a close parallel between the indifference of parents to school functioning and delinquent acts committed by their children. Although the child spends only six to eight hours per day in the school building itself, the school has come to be viewed as the major socializing agency. However, the school program is not designed to take over completely from the family. The first five years of life are crucial developmental years. Even after enrolling in school the child continues living with parents and family as they deeply influence behavior and attitudes (Banks, 1968). Therefore, the child's response to the school milieu is the result of shared efforts between home and school.

Results of a series of case studies by Gouldner (1978) indicate that there are significant correlations between the way children handle situations at school and their home lives. Gouldner reported that (1) pupils who were consistently low in frequency of interaction with their parents were also low in frequency of interaction with teachers and (2) children defined by their teachers as good students received positive reinforcement at home. Gouldner's studies were focused on children of kindergarten age in a ghetto (Black) school. These

youngsters were followed into their homes for the sake of comparing what happened to them at home with what happened at school. Gouldner's study represented a noteworthy effort towards determining what kinds of family settings produce delinquent or nondelinquent behavior in children.

Glueck and Glueck (1972) compared a large number of delinquent boys with as many nondelinquent boys, matching them by age, ethnic derivation, IQ, and by residence in underprivileged slum areas. In studying the significance of family relationships to late adolescent adjustment, they reported that, regardless of family structure, boys growing up in cohesive families have a better chance of developing positive, or socially adaptive lifestyles, supporting the position that environmental factors in the home may be contributors as well as deterrents to delinquent behavior.

Richman and Harper (1979), in a study of 54 male adolescents in a juvenile home, investigated the relationship between child rearing attitudes and frequency of acting out behavior. Although the study was conducted in a residential setting, the findings are pertinent to the present investigation. Results of the study show that adolescent males who exhibit a high level of acting out behavior perceive their parents differently than those who maintain self-control. As part of the New York City Youth Board's validation of a table to identify prospective delinquents in the schools, scoring of the diagnostic instrument on 301 subjects indicated a positive relationship between the type of discipline children receive at home and behavior at

school. Of the youngsters who had received lax or inconsistent discipline at home, 81.6% exhibited acting out behavior at school. Wolf and Brand (1977), in a study of 47 runaway adolescents and a matched pair of nonrunaways, reported that more punitive and less supportive parental attitudes were more prevalent among runaways and delinquent youngsters than among nondelinquents.

Peer Relations

One of the most important aspects of adolescent life is the influence of the peer group. In most cases, adolescents are forced to discard some adult values and adopt some of their own. These values are reinforced by a support system, usually found in peer relations. Jones (1980) discusses the frequency and intensity of peer interactions as a "highlighting" factor in the developmental process, pointing out the following:

A number of theorists point to the fact that establishing healthy, mutually satisfying peer relationships is a major developmental task for adolescents. Therefore, it is to be expected that adolescents will devote a significant amount of time and energy to involvement in and examination of peer interactions. Indeed, many adolescents find their peers to be the single most interesting component of the school environment. This situation is probably even more true for students with behavior problems. Since these students frequently experience considerable academic failure, peer interactions are likely to replace school achievement as an area in which these students can gain attention and experience success. (p. 15)

Peer relations may be a test of the youngster's true character, resulting in a show of independence or a weak "follow the crowd" phenomenon.

Empey and Rabow (1961), in an effort to apply sociological theory

to the treatment of delinquents, discuss the possibility that delinquent youths are likely to spend their time with friends who are likely to be delinquent also. Peers may also affect behavior changes in youngsters, but the extent of their influence may vary; in fact, disliked peers may be more effective change agents than liked peers. For instance, negative behavior reinforced by disliked peers may diminish in the classroom setting.

Kaplan (1978), reporting on a statewide survey of adolescents in the state of Illinois conducted by the Institute for Juvenile Research, addressed the issue of adolescents' perceptions of illegitimate authority and peer support for rebellion, suggesting that youngsters may define the school as at fault as they perceive inequalities. Using data from a statewide sample of 3,100 adolescents, Kaplan examined rebellious behavior in the high school, presenting insight into the concept of peer support for negative behavior. Justification and support from the peer group reinforces critical perceptions of the school setting. The peer group, which may be more important than certain aspects of the school program or the family, defends the youngster from many of the adverse experiences associated with adolescence. The allegiance shown to the peer group is not to be underestimated. Negative feelings toward any facet of the school milieu, reinforced by shared feelings of the peer group, often make maladaptive behavior a means of gaining peer acceptance. The peer group may impose certain expectations upon its members, including behavior that may result in suspension or expulsion. Actions around

such expectations depend on the strength of a youngster's desire to demonstrate solidarity with the group.

Self-Concept

While many personality theorists address the issue of self-concept, the subject must be dealt with in this writing in more specific terms. The writer is particularly concerned with the relationship between perceptions of self and negative behavior, or behavior which leads to exclusion from school.

In terms of school performance and self-concept, Brookover and Thomas (1962), using a sample of 1050 seventh grade pupils and a subsample of 110 over and underachieving pupils, found a significant relationship between self-concept of ability and grade point average in seventh grade pupils. As the above study deals with a specific aspect of self-concept, ability, it holds significance for a study relating to self-concept in the school setting.

Rubin, Dorle, and Sandidge (1976), using 530 subjects, related the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory to academics and school behavior. Their findings indicated a stronger relationship between self-esteem and intelligence and academic achievement than between self-esteem and socioeconomic status and school behavior.

If children are labeled delinquent at school for any number of reasons, their self-esteem is constantly being torn down. Perceived negatively in the school setting, they may experience a series of frustrations as they are evaluated by peers, teachers, and parents. With present day focus on educational success, all eyes are on children's

efforts to survive in the school setting. One of the most difficult choices in the adolescent's world is the choice of significant others as sources of data, orientation, and guidance (Curtis, 1975). Such choices are sometimes called "referent group" functions and can be turbulent during the adolescent years.

The child who brings a favorable self-concept to the classroom is usually able to elicit positive perceptions from significant others. In an effort to relate children's perceptions of their teachers' feelings toward them to self-perception, academic achievement and classroom behavior, Davidson and Lang (1960) produced some significant findings. Included among their major findings was evidence that children's perceptions of their teachers' feelings toward them correlated positively and significantly with self-perception. A favorable self-image resulted in more positively perceived teacher feelings. In many instances, the child's antisocial behavior may be the result of distorted perceptions of teacher feelings toward him or her. Davidson and Lang made a worthwhile contribution to the literature relative to pupils' behavior and perceived adult feelings toward them.

Okun and Sasfy (1977), upon examining various theories of self-concept, contend that the individual is not very capable of a valid self-construct until early adolescence. Such a theoretical posture supports the writer's choice of middle school subjects for the present study.

In discussing self-esteem enhancement as a preventive procedure,

Duke (1980) stresses the need for programs geared in this direction, indicating that low self-esteem can result in "failure, followed by frustration and eventually by behavior problems" (p. 20).

Suspension

Traditionally, suspension has been popular among consequences offered for school misbehavior. Also high on the list of responses to behavior problems are such practices as (1) office referrals, (2) counseling by psychologists and guidance personnel, and (3) parent conferences. Supposedly, suspension is the least desirable alternative, applied after other efforts toward good discipline have been exhausted. In this writing, the term suspension refers to a temporary dismissal from school or class for a period not to exceed ten days. In cases where pupils are facing long term dismissal from school (usually for the remainder of the school year), the term expulsion is applicable. In the Chesterfield County School System, pupils may, for sufficient cause, be suspended from school or class attendance by either the building principal or a designee (Sections 22-230.1 and 22-230.2 of Code of Virginia). As indicated in Section 22-230.2 of the Code of Virginia, only the local school board has the power to expel a pupil from any Virginia public school.

The term suspension usually has negative connotations and is viewed as punishment for serious or chronic norm-violating behavior at school. However, educators have been accused of suspending pupils in lieu of exploring more positive approaches to dealing with inappropriate behavior. Conversely, there are those who feel that

pupils who exhibit appropriate behavior are also entitled to a safe, orderly learning environment. Thus, literature and research efforts present various views supporting suspension as a "necessary evil." Jones (1974), in a study designed to determine the effects of suspension on the overall school environment, listed among his major conclusions that suspension is necessary for maintenance of an orderly school and as an effective deterrent to school misbehavior. Other major findings in Jones's study were that suspension policies should be clearly understood by students and staff and that policies around suspension should be uniformly enforced. Using a stratified sample of 126 persons from four groups; teachers, suspended students, nonsuspended students and administrators, Jones employed interviews and data from suspension records to examine the effects of suspension practices on the school setting.

Stallworth (1977) studied the disciplinary technique of suspension in a large city public school system. His findings indicated that suspension, when not misused as a quick and arbitrary punishment, is considered a positive disciplinary measure by both teachers and administrators.

Bordenick (1976) developed a questionnaire designed to assess the attitudes of educators, students, and parents toward suspension. Results of the questionnaire, made up of 24 objective type items and six open end questions, indicated that the majority of the respondents believed that suspension tends to increase respect for school personnel and has an effect, positively or negatively, on the behavior of other

pupils.

Tygart (1980) lists several justifiable reasons for dismissing recalcitrant youngsters from school, including (1) the need for examples to discourage other pupils from misbehaving, (2) assurance of a safe learning environment, (3) inability of schools to control or serve incorrigible pupils, and (4) the need to encourage parents to assume greater responsibility for their children's behavior.

The right or privilege of a child to attend a given school may be contingent upon compliance with reasonable school rules and regulations (Johnson, Collins, Dupuis, & Johansen, 1969). Even so, the term reasonable has come under close scrutiny in recent years. The issues of reasonableness and due process have been addressed by various legal agencies and other interest groups, leading to some salient court cases.

In 1961, it was held that students are entitled to due process in terms of a notice and some type of hearing before being suspended or expelled for misconduct (Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education, 1961). In 1975, the court held that a child cannot be deprived of education for disciplinary reasons, even on a temporary basis, without due process of law (Goss v. Lopez, 1975). Today's school officials are not likely to arbitrarily and capriciously suspend or expel a pupil without adhering to some due process guidelines (Rubel, 1977). Duke (1980) stated the following:

A hearing at which a student can answer questions and defend himself or herself is both an excellent opportunity for data collection and a basic element of the "due process" rights of any accused individual.

Due process procedure includes the following components: (1) notification of charges, (2) right to counsel, (3) opportunity to rebut charges, and (4) a separation among accuser, judge, and executioner. (p. 69)

Legal counsel, however, may only be necessary in very serious cases. In light of recent court rulings, at no time should suspension or expulsion be treated lightly.

Although discipline policies may be written for the entire student population of a particular school district, the suspension aspect often affects only a small percentage of the population. Certain factors within the school setting have been examined in the literature as being attributable to norm-violating behavior, the most common being poor academic achievement. Osborne (1976) studied pupils in five junior high schools in the Kalamazoo (Michigan) Public School System to determine relationships among the variables of sex, attendance, standard achievement test scores, and suspension. Using the subtests of the pretest and posttest of the Metropolitan Achievement Test, he compared a group with suspension histories (N=311) with a group without suspension histories (N=2050). Osborne found that, regardless of other factors, those students with lower academic scores had suspension histories at the end of the school year.

Reich (1974), in an analysis of all suspensions made in Region Two of the Detroit Public Schools during the 1967-68 school year, found suspension and poor academic achievement to be "somewhat related."

In recent years, the practice of suspending and expelling pupils as punishment for norm-violating behavior has been greatly questioned in terms of effectiveness. Responding to criticisms of suspension

and expulsion as a convenient means of getting rid of problems, many school systems are seeking alternatives to the perennial out-of-school suspension. An increasingly popular disciplinary measure in many school systems is in-school suspension. Although many variations of this alternative approach are being tried in systems throughout the country, the "in-school suspension" theme is growing in popularity. In-school suspension has been viewed as a means of keeping suspended youngsters "off the streets" and in the school setting. Mizell (1977, p. 2), warns that in-school suspension programs are often seen as "expedient alternatives to out-of-school suspension." He further suggests that in-school suspension programs should be designed with consideration for the channels through which pupils are assigned to the program, duration of the stay, and plans for follow-up and continued support once they leave.

Initiated in Chesterfield County Schools at the beginning of the 1978-79 school year, in-school suspension remains a component of the disciplinary process in the County schools.

Suspension is usually thought of as dismissal from the overall school setting. However, an inordinate number of suspensions can be traced to behavior patterns originating in a specific place, the classroom. The major cause of suspension in the middle schools of Chesterfield County could be generally categorized as "disruptive classroom behavior," including chronic tardiness to class, disrespect for teachers, and other infractions that impede the orderly classroom process. Although most classroom infractions do not result in instant

suspension, demerits may be issued for such violations. An accumulation of demerits (10 or more), however, may result in suspension from a Chesterfield County secondary school.

Most teachers have to handle discipline problems at one time or another. In most cases, the way in which these problems are handled by the classroom teacher may determine if the problem surfaces time and time again. Consequently, if classroom misbehavior is eliminated, a substantial reduction in suspensions may result. Teachers who avoid, prevent, and control potentially disorderly situations not only improve their effectiveness as teachers, but contribute positively to the overall academic and social atmosphere of the school.

Ciminillo (1980, p. 5) describes the classroom teacher as the one who "bears the brunt of discipline problems," indicating that there is "little in most teachers' training that prepares them for this aspect of teaching or for the complex set of pressures with which a teacher must deal."

The above review of literature represented an attempt to establish certain theoretical ties between school related delinquency and other variables proposed for examination. The major focus of this study was on the most popular consequence of misbehavior in the school setting--suspension. The examination also represented a noteworthy attempt to show how cognitive theories of self-concept may be used to make determinations about adolescent development and behavior.

While delinquent acts leading to eventual suspension may be the pupil's reaction to many factors, the aim of the review above was to

provide substantive commentary on such variables as school--achievement status, home--parent relations, peer relations, and general self-concept. Moreover, the writer attempted to offer further evidence that suspension, usually the result of misbehavior in the school setting, should be treated as a multivariate proposition.

The review of literature also revealed clusters of variables on the subject of school suspension and related areas worthy of investigation. Although the literature search focused on specific areas; namely, the variables addressed above, other variables surfaced as a result of the review. The writer sought to be somewhat discriminant as related variables emerged from the review. Therefore, for the sake of clarity, the major areas of focus were treated as major variables while emerging variables were listed under major variables to which they were closely related. The following list represents major variables and other related areas of concern:

1. School--Achievement Status

- a. Failure, causing pupils to be placed in classes with younger and physically smaller pupils.
- b. Tracking (leveling), or the grouping together of youngsters on the basis of common ability levels.

2. Peer Relations

- a. Association with other delinquents.
- b. Suspension status of immediate peers.

3. Home--Parent (Family) Relations

- a. Family mobility, or the number of times family moved since pupil started school.
- b. Number of adults in household, or determining if pupil comes from a single parent family.
- c. Number of children in household.

4. Self-concept

- a. Self-concept as a learner or student.
- b. General self-concept.
- c. Self-concept as perceived in peer setting.
- d. Self-concept as perceived by parents and other family members.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

In the present study, the investigator sought to examine the effects of suspension from school on middle school pupils with respect to four variables commonly addressed in the literature in relation to school delinquency. This section focuses on (1) the design of the study, (2) sample selection, (3) data sources and collection, (4) instrumentation, and (5) formulation of hypotheses. Variables examined in relation to suspension were (1) school--achievement status, (2) home--parent relations, (3) peer relations, and (4) general self-concept.

Design of the Study

The logic and structure of this research effort involved the investigation of suspension patterns of middle school pupils as related to the subjects' home, school, and social lives. The main assumption addressed in this study was that as suspension patterns vary, significant differences are noted in self and parent perceptions with respect to the variables referred to above. Data were sought on two measures, one designed to measure parent perceptions and the other designed to assess self-perceptions. Data were also sought on descriptive variables such as sex, age, ability grouping level, participation in extracurricular activities, number of adults in household, number of children in household, grades failed since entering school, close friends suspended during the school year, prior suspensions from

school, prior referrals to the principal's office for disciplinary reasons, and family mobility.

Since the focus of this investigation was on the frequency of suspensions among certain middle school pupils, the primary group was selected from the most frequently suspended pupils. This group was generated from a list of chronic suspendees (pupils suspended three or more times prior to April 29, 1981). A randomly selected group of one-time suspendees (pupils suspended once prior to April 29, 1981) was matched with the chronic suspendee group on the basis of sex, grade, and age. From the remaining middle school population, a randomly selected group of nonsuspendees (pupils who had not been suspended prior to the April 29 deadline) was matched with the chronic suspendee group on the same variables. The major aim of the research effort was to compare the three suspension groups on two measures; the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1959) and the Parent Perception Inventory, developed by the writer for this study. For the sake of gathering more descriptive statistics, data were also sought through the administration of the Discipline Information Questionnaire, also developed by the author for this study.

The Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) measures self-perceptions in four areas: namely, school--academic, home--parents, social self--peers, and general self. The Parent Perception Inventory (PPI) measures parents' perceptions of their own children in the areas of school--achievement status, family relations, peer relations, and general self-concept.

The research effort was basically ex post facto. According to

Kerlinger (1973), ex post facto research is "systematic empirical inquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulable" (p. 379).

The primary variables addressed in this study were (1) frequency of suspension, (2) school--achievement status, (3) home--parent (family) relations, (4) peer relations, and (5) general self-concept. Based on prior existence and conditions set forth in this study, frequency of suspension was considered the independent variable. On the basis of existing suspension records, subjects were classified into chronic, casual, and nonsuspendee categories. As subjects' suspension status may contribute to altered perceptions in certain categories, dependent variables were converted to measurable terms via raw scores on the selected instruments (SEI and PPI).

Sample Selection

The sample for the present study was drawn from pupils enrolled in the eight middle schools of Chesterfield County, Virginia. The focus was on pupils suspended before April 29 of the 1980-81 school year. The population was stratified into three distinct categories; casual, chronic, and nonsuspendees. The chronic suspendee group was already formed. Random sampling was applied to the casual and non-suspendee groups, resulting in the distribution of subjects among the three categories.

By April 29, 1981, a total of 75 middle school pupils had been suspended from Chesterfield County Public Schools at least three times

each. However, prior to pursuing the study further, the investigator confirmed that two of the pupils had been placed in special education classes on a full-time basis, three had recently moved out of the county, three had been incarcerated at local or state facilities for juvenile offenders, and one had withdrawn from school, leaving a total of 66 chronic suspendees for the investigation. Self-Esteem Inventories, Parent Perception Inventories, and Discipline Information Questionnaires were mailed to this group of pupils and their parents. Fifteen (23%) of the mailed items were returned completed. Of the remaining chronic suspendees, three had moved very recently, two returned cover letters stating that they chose not to participate, and the rest were not heard from at all.

By April 29, 1981, 426 pupils had reached casual suspendee (suspended only one time) status. After being matched with chronic suspendees, 66 casual suspendees were chosen for the study. Self-Esteem Inventories, Parent Perception Inventories, and Discipline Information Questionnaires were mailed to the 66 casual suspendees. Seventeen (26%) of the questionnaires and inventories were returned completed. Of the remaining subjects, seven had moved and the rest were not heard from at all.

After randomly selected nonsuspendees were matched with chronic suspendees on the basis of sex, grade, and age, Self-Esteem Inventories, Parent Perception Inventories, and Discipline Information Questionnaires were mailed to the 66 nonsuspendees. Fourteen (21%) of the nonsuspendees and their parents returned completed inventories and questionnaires.

Of the remaining subjects, three had recently moved, five returned form letters stating that they chose not to participate, and the rest were not heard from at all.

Although the writer deemed the inventories and questionnaires appropriate for the present study, certain parents and pupils viewed the same as somewhat invasive. Granted, some areas covered in the study were sensitive. However, the subject of suspension alone could possibly have evoked negative feelings in potential respondents. While some nonrespondents courteously submitted reasons for not participating, others simply did not respond at all.

Anticipating the low rate of return (23%), the researcher mailed inventories and questionnaires to a large number of pupils (198) in an effort to ensure a workable number of subjects. Forty-six (46) subjects chose to participate, 152 either chose not to participate or had recently changed residence.

To ensure against coercion, the research was carried out under certain restraining conditions. Follow-up efforts were discouraged because the researcher's position lends itself to frequent conferences with parents of suspended pupils throughout the school district. Cover letters (see Appendix A) were mailed from the Director of Pupil Personnel's office as use of the researcher's name on any correspondence could have been considered coercive.

Originally, there were 198 subjects forming the three suspension groups (chronic, casual, and nonsuspendees) in the sample, with 66 subjects in each group. The groups were matched on the basis of sex,

grade level, and age. The same variables were used as a basis for scrutinizing data gathered from the 46 responding subjects to determine if they were representative of the original sample. Percentage and mean figures (in each of the responding suspension groups) relative to the matching variables were compared with those of the original sample.

On the sex variable, percentage and mean figures of respondents proved to be close to those of the original sample in all three suspension groups (see Table 1). In each of the original sample groups, 55 (83%) of the subjects were male and 11 (7%) were female. Of the responding chronic suspendees 15 (100%) were male. The responding casual suspendee group (N=17) was comprised of 13 (76.5%) males and four (23.5%) females. Thirteen (92.9%) of the responding nonsuspendees (N=14) were male and one (7.1%) was female. In all three cases, the predominantly male structure of the responding groups closely resembled the composition of the original sample.

In terms of grade levels, each suspension group of the original sample was made up of 23 (34.8%) sixth graders, 18 (27.3%) seventh graders, and 25 (37.9%) eighth graders, with a mean grade of seven in each group (see Table 2). Percentage distributions among responding chronic suspendees (N=15) did not closely parallel those of the original sample. Two (13.3%) sixth graders, eight (53.3%) seventh graders, and five (33.3%) eighth graders comprised this group. However, the mean grade of responding chronic suspendees (7.2) was not inconsistent with the original sample. The casual suspendee group (N=17) was made up of

Table 1
 Comparisons of Original Sample/Respondents
 Sex Distributions of Suspension Groups

Group	Sex		means	Total
	Male(1)	Female(2)		
	n(%)	n(%)		
Chronic(0) ^a	55(83)	11(7.0)	1.2	66
Chronic(R) ^b	15(100)	0(0)	1.0	15
Casual(0)	55(83)	11(7.0)	1.2	66
Casual(R)	13(76.5)	4(23.5)	1.2	17
Nonsuspendee(0)	55(83)	11(7.0)	1.2	66
Nonsuspendee(R)	13(92.9)	1(7.1)	1.1	14

^aThe "0" in parentheses indicates the original sample.

^bThe "R" in parentheses indicates the subjects who responded.

Table 2
 Comparisons of Original Sample/Respondents
 Grade Distributions of Suspension Groups

Group	Grade Levels of Suspendees			means	Total
	6	7	8		
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)		
Chronic(O) ^a	23(34.8)	18(27.3)	25(37.9)	7.0	66
Chronic(R) ^b	2(13.3)	8(53.3)	5(33.3)	7.2	15
Casual(O)	23(34.8)	18(27.3)	25(37.9)	7.0	66
Casual(R)	6(35.3)	5(29.4)	6(35.3)	7.0	17
Nonsuspendees(O)	23(34.8)	18(27.3)	25(37.9)	7.0	66
Nonsuspendees(R)	2(21.4)	5(35.7)	6(42.9)	7.2	14

^aThe "O" in parentheses indicates the original sample.

^bThe "R" in parentheses indicates the subjects who responded.

six (35.3%) sixth graders, five (29.4%) seventh graders, and six (35.3%) eighth graders, a frequency distribution fairly close to that of the original sample. The mean grade of the responding casual suspendees (7.0) was the same as that of the original sample. Grade distributions among responding nonsuspendees were not consistent with those of the original sample. Three (21.4%) were sixth graders, five (35.7%) were seventh graders, and six (42.9%) were eighth graders.

In each of the original sample groups, the mean age was 13.4, with a percentage distribution of nine (13.6%) 11-year-olds, seven (10.6%) 12-year-olds, 15 (22.7%) 13-year-olds, 23 (34.8%) 14-year-olds, 10 (15.2%) 15-year-olds, one (1.5%) 16-year-old, and one (1.5%) 17-year-old (see Table 3). Percentage distributions among the responding chronic suspendees (N=15) did not correspond with those of the original sample. The responding chronic suspendee group was comprised of one (6.7%) 11-year-old, two (13.3%) 12-year-olds, seven (46.7%) 13-year-olds, two (26.7%) 14-year-olds, and one (6.7%) 15-year-old. The mean age among responding chronic suspendees was 13.1. The responding casual suspendee group (N=17) was comprised of three (17.6%) 11-year-olds, three (17.6%) 12-year-olds, five (29.4%) 14-year-olds, and one (5.9%) 15-year-old. Again, the percentage distribution was fairly inconsistent. Also, the mean age of the casual suspendee group was 12.9. Of the responding nonsuspendees (N=14), there were one (7.1%) 11-year-old, four (28.6%) 13-year-olds, seven (50%) 14-year-olds, one (7.1%) 15-year-old, and one (7.1%) 17-year-old. The mean age among the nonsuspendees was 13.8.

Table 3
 Comparisons of Original Sample/Respondents
 Age Distributions of Suspension Groups

Group	Ages of Suspendees							means	Total
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)		
Chronic(0) ^a	9(13.6)	7(10.6)	15(22.7)	23(34.8)	10(15.2)	1(1.5)	1(1.5)	13.4	66
Chronic(R) ^b	1(6.7)	2(13.3)	7(46.7)	2(26.7)	1(6.7)	0(0)	0(0)	13.1	15
Casual(0)	9(13.6)	7(10.6)	15(22.7)	23(34.8)	10(15.2)	1(1.5)	1(1.5)	13.4	66
Casual(R)	3(17.6)	3(17.6)	5(29.4)	5(29.4)	1(5.9)	0(0)	0(0)	12.9	17
Nonsuspendees(0)	9(13.6)	7(10.6)	15(22.7)	23(34.8)	10(15.2)	1(1.5)	1(1.5)	13.4	66
Nonsuspendees(R)	1(7.1)	0(0)	4(28.6)	7(50.0)	1(7.1)	0(0)	1(7.1)	13.8	14

Note. Ages as of January 1, 1981.

^aThe "0" in parentheses indicates the original sample.

^bThe "R" in parentheses indicates the subjects who responded.

Data Sources and Collection

Data for this research effort were obtained from suspension records on file at central office level, student schedules in main offices of the middle schools, and questionnaires and instruments mailed to pupils and their parents. Descriptive data also included sex, ages (as of January 1, 1981), grade levels, ability grouping levels in English and mathematics classes, frequency of participation in extracurricular activities, number of adults in household, number of children in household, grades failed since entering school at kindergarten or first grade level, close friends suspended from school during the school year, suspensions in past school years, referrals to principal's office for disciplinary reasons in prior years, and family mobility data.

The Self-Esteem Inventory, Parent Perception Inventory, and the Discipline Information Questionnaire were mailed during the first three weeks of May, 1981. A cover letter was included, explaining the nature of the study as well as provisions to ensure confidentiality. The cover letter also provided pupils and parents with the option of participating or not participating in the study. A stamped, self-addressed envelope also was included.

Copies of the cover letter, Self-Esteem Inventory, Parent Perception Inventory, and Discipline Information Questionnaire are included in Appendices A, B, C, and D, respectively.

After responses to the questionnaires and instruments were returned, three respondees were randomly selected from each category (casual suspendees, chronic suspendees, nonsuspendees) to be profiled in short

descriptive narratives. Based on data gleaned from the Discipline Information Questionnaires, suspension letters, and other available sources, a brief profile was written on each of the nine selected subjects. All data were handled in a confidential manner and anonymity of subjects was maintained at all times. As profiles evolved, the writer studied the data closely, seeking supportive data relative to existing research as well as data that would aid in the documentation of descriptive statistics. The remaining subjects were not profiled or dealt with in narrative terms; however, along with the nine profiled subjects, they were included in the procedures discussed below.

Each of the pupils was administered an inventory designed to assess self-perceptions in the areas of school--achievement status, (2) home--parent relations, (3) peer relations, and (4) general self-concept. Also, parents of the pupils were administered an inventory developed to determine how they perceived their children in the above categories.

Instrumentation

The Self-Esteem Inventory, a 50-item self-evaluation scale, was developed to assess children's self-perceptions in the four categories. Certain items were selected from a scale reported by Rogers and Dymond (1954) and reworded for use with children. Cooper-smith designed other items to supplement the Rogers and Dymond Scale. In scoring the Self-Esteem Inventory, one point is awarded for each response indicating high self-esteem. The total score is multiplied

by two so as to produce a maximum score of 100.

The Self-Esteem Inventory results can be reported in the form of a total self-esteem score, or, where desired, four subscale scores. The social self--peers, school--academic, and home--parents subscales are each comprised of eight items, resulting in a possible score of eight for each subscale. In the general self subscale, however, there are 26 items, resulting in a possible score of 26. Responses to Self-Esteem Inventory items are in a dichotomous format, with the respondent checking "like me" or "unlike me" after each statement. Items on the Self-Esteem Inventory represent general statements about the self in four categories; for example, "I'm popular with kids my own age," "my parents usually consider my feelings," "I'm proud of my schoolwork," and "I often wish I were someone else."

Coopersmith (1967) readministered the Self-Esteem Inventory to a fifth grade class (N=30) after a five week retest period. Test-retest reliability was .88. On another sample of 56 public school children, test-retest reliability after three years was reported to be .70 (Coopersmith, 1967). A study of internal consistency, using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20, reported reliability coefficients ranging from .80 to .86 based on a sample of 601 fifth, ninth, and twelfth grade pupils (Spatz & Johnson, 1973).

The Parent Perception Inventory is a 24-item scale developed to assess parents' perceptions of their children. The instrument was developed from a pool of reworded items after a review of several self-concept scales, including the Self-Appraisal Inventory (deJung, 1972) developed at the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation,

Instructional Objectives Exchange. Positively worded items are scored 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively, and the reverse, 1, 2, 3, and 4, for negatively worded items.

Results of the Parent Perception Inventory can be reported in terms of a total score or four separate subscale scores in the areas of peer relations, home--parent (family) relations, school--achievement status, and overall self-concept. The instrument is made up of 24 items, each scored on a four point Likert scale of "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," resulting in a possible full scale score of 96. Each subscale is comprised of six items, resulting in a possible score of 24 for each subscale. Some examples of statements on the inventory are as follows: "is liked by his/her peers," "creates problems for the family," "is a capable student," and "feels good about himself/herself."

The Parent Perception Inventory was administered to the parents of 10 middle and high school pupils (ages 11-17). A test of internal consistency, using the Spearman-Brown formula (split-halves) revealed reliability coefficients of .77, .96, .91, and .72 between subscales scores on peer relations, family relations, academic status, and general self, respectively. A split-half reliability coefficient of .96 was reported for the overall scale. The Parent Perception Inventory was readministered to the same group of parents after a three week retest period (N=10). Test-retest reliability coefficients were .93, .93, .90, and .83 between subscale scores on peer relations, family relations, academic status, and general self, respectively. A test-retest reliability coefficient of .91 was reported for the overall

Parent Perception Inventory.

Hypotheses

As stated previously in this writing, the purpose of the present inquiry was to examine differences among suspension groups when compared on the three selected variables. Stated in measurable terms and used as a theoretical framework and guide, the following null hypotheses served as the basis for examination:

$$1. H_{o1}: A_{sei} = B_{sei} = C_{sei}$$

Total scores on a selected measure of self-esteem (in this case, the SEI) will reflect no differences among suspension group means.

$$2. H_{o2}: A_{sa} = B_{sa} = C_{sa}$$

Scores on subscale "school--academic" of the SEI will reflect no differences among suspension group means.

$$3. H_{o3}: A_{hp} = B_{hp} = C_{hp}$$

Scores on subscale "home--parents" of the SEI will reflect no differences among suspension group means.

$$4. H_{o4}: A_{ssp} = B_{ssp} = C_{ssp}$$

Scores on subscale "social self--peers" of the SEI will reflect no differences among suspension group means.

$$5. H_{o5}: A_{gs} = B_{gs} = C_{gs}$$

Scores on subscale "general self" of the SEI will reflect no differences among suspension group means.

$$6. H_{o6}: A_{ppi} = B_{ppi} = C_{ppi}$$

Total scores on a selected measure of overall parent perceptions (in this case, the PPI) will reflect no differences among suspension group means.

$$7. H_{o7}: A_{sa} = B_{sa} = C_{sa}$$

Scores on subscale "school--achievement" of the PPI will reflect no differences among suspension group means.

$$8. H_{o8}: A_{fr} = B_{fr} = C_{fr}$$

Scores on subscale "family relations" of the PPI will reflect no differences among suspension group means.

$$9. H_{o9}: A_p = B_p = C_p$$

Scores on subscale "peers" of the PPI will reflect no differences among suspension group means.

$$10. H_{o10}: A_{gs} = B_{gs} = C_{gs}$$

Scores on subscale "general self" of the PPI will reflect no differences among suspension group means.

The null hypotheses above were formed and tested as a statistical means for determining significant differences (significance was set at the .05 level).

In summary, the preceding chapter has focused on the design of the study, data sources and collection, and the formulation of hypotheses to be tested in the inquiry.

The study, being ex post facto in design, represented an effort to determine if the already present independent variable, frequency of suspension, was a factor with respect to differences in mean scores on measures of parent and self-perceptions. Assessments were based on overall parent and self-perceptions as well as perceptions in specific categories; school--achievement status, home--parent (family) relations,

peer relations, and general self-concept (dependent variables). To make this determination, the writer mailed two inventories, the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and the Parent Perception Inventory (PPI), to certain middle school pupils and their parents. A Discipline Information Questionnaire was also mailed to gather descriptive statistics.

Samples for the research effort were drawn from middle school pupils in the Chesterfield County (Virginia) Public Schools. Subjects from the three suspension groups--chronic suspendees, casual suspendees, and nonsuspendees--were matched on the basis of sex, age, and grade level.

In terms of hypotheses to be tested, ten null hypotheses were developed and presented as a framework for the study.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND REPORTING OF DATA

This chapter is concerned with analysis and reporting of data gleaned from the present research effort. Areas covered in this chapter are (1) testing of the hypotheses using specific statistical procedures, (2) a discussion of descriptive statistics relative to pupil responses on the Discipline Information Questionnaire, and (3) a section devoted to discussion of reasons for and types of suspensions.

Testing the Hypotheses

As the independent variable, frequency of suspension, was broken down into three categories, chronic suspendees, casual suspendees, and nonsuspendees, statistical procedures were applied to determine if significant differences existed among the three groups with respect to the Self-Esteem Inventory and the Parent Perception Inventory. A one-way analysis of variance was applied to the resulting data to test the null hypotheses that no significant differences existed among independent means on full and subscale scores. An alpha level of .05 was set for the inquiry.

Results of the one-way analyses of variance indicated that the variation among mean scores was of such a magnitude as to warrant rejection of six of the ten original null hypotheses: (1) SEI--full scale, (2) SEI--subscale "general self," (3) PPI--full scale,

(4) PPI--subscale "school--achievement," (5) PPI--subscale "family relations," and (6) PPI--subscale "general self." Results of the one-way analyses of variance are presented in Table 4, which further describes mean differences.

At this point, the overall differences among means had been reported. The next process was one of determining where specific pairs of group means were significantly different. To determine which pairs contributed to the differences, the Scheffé test was employed (Kerlinger, 1973).

As indicated in Table 5, results of the Scheffé test indicated that the following pairs were significantly different (.05 level of significance) in the stated areas as follows: (1) SEI--full scale--significant differences between chronic and nonsuspendees, (2) SEI--subscale "general self"--significant differences between chronic and nonsuspendees, (3) PPI--full scale--significant differences between chronic and nonsuspendees, (4) PPI--subscale "school--achievement"--significant differences between chronic and casual suspendees, (5) PPI--subscale "school--achievement"--significant differences between chronic and nonsuspendees, (6) PPI--subscale "family relations"--significant differences between chronic and nonsuspendees, and (7) PPI--subscale "general self"--significant differences between chronic and nonsuspendees. In each instance of differences between specific pairs, chronic suspendees accounted for lower means.

In all cases of differences between groups, significance occurred between the chronic and nonsuspendees as indicated by the Scheffé test.

Table 4
 Mean Differences Among Suspension Groups
 on Self-Esteem Inventory and Parent Perception Inventory

Measure	Suspension Group Mean Scores			
	Chronic	Casual	Non	F
<u>Self-Esteem Inventory</u>				
full scale	52.0	60.5	67.6	3.64*
school--academic	2.7	3.5	4.1	2.14
home--parents	3.1	4.9	4.5	2.62
social self--peers	5.9	5.9	6.0	0.03
general self	14.2	16.0	19.1	4.21*
<u>Parent Perception Inventory</u>				
full scale	58.9	66.4	70.4	4.43*
school--achievement	11.9	15.1	15.8	5.83*
family relations	15.2	16.8	18.7	5.83*
peers	16.5	16.8	17.6	0.76
general self	15.2	17.7	18.3	3.52*

Note. Non = Nonsuspendees

*p < .05

Table 5
 Mean Differences Between Specific Pairs of Groups
 on Self-Esteem Inventory and Parent Perception Inventory

Measure	Suspension Group Mean Scores			
	PS ^a	Chronic	Casual	Non
<u>Self-Esteem Inventory</u>				
full scale	100 ^b	52.0	---	67.6*
general self	24	14.2	---	19.1*
<u>Parent Perception Inventory</u>				
full scale	96	58.9	---	70.4*
school--achievement	24	11.9	15.1*	---
school--achievement	24	11.9	---	15.8*
family relations	24	15.2	---	18.7*
general self	24	15.2	---	18.3*

Note. Non = Nonsuspendees.

^aPS = possible score.

^b50 x 2

*p < .05.

However, in the case of subscale "school--achievement" of the PPI, significant differences also were found between chronic and casual suspendees.

Descriptive Characteristics of the Suspension Groups

Another aim of the present study was to gather descriptive statistics from data gleaned from the Discipline Information Questionnaire which was mailed along with the Self-Esteem Inventory. In this section, descriptive statistics are presented in the areas of (1) sex, age, and family characteristics, (2) school--academic data, (3) school discipline data, and (4) family mobility. Sex, age, and family data are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6

Sex Distribution of Suspension Groups

Group	Sex		Total
	Male (1)	Female (2)	
	n(%)	n(%)	
Chronic suspendees	15(100)	0(0)	15
Casual suspendees	13(76.5)	4(23.5)	17
Nonsuspendees	13(92.9)	1(7.1)	14

As indicated in Table 6, the chronic suspendee group was made up of all male pupils. Of the casual suspendees, thirteen (76.5%) were male and four (23.5%) were female. Thirteen (92.9%) of the nonsuspendees were male and only one (7.1%) was female.

In terms of chronological factors, the examiner sought age related

Table 7
Age Distribution of Suspension Groups

Group	Ages of Suspendees						means
	11	12	13	14	15	17	
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	
Chronic ^a	1(6.7)	2(13.3)	7(46.7)	2(26.7)	1(6.7)	0(0)	13.1
Casual ^b	3(17.6)	3(17.6)	5(29.4)	5(29.4)	1(5.9)	0(0)	12.9
Nonsuspendees ^c	1(7.1)	0(0)	4(28.6)	7(50.0)	1(7.1)	1(17.1)	13.8

Note. Ages as of January 1, 1981.

^aN = 15

^bN = 17

^cN = 14

data on all subjects. Ages of pupils in the three suspension groups are reported in Table 7.

Ages among the chronic suspendees ranged from 11 to 15, with seven (46.7%) 13-year-olds. Ages among casual suspendees also ranged from 11 through 15; however, the highest percentage figures were between 13- and 14-year-olds (29.4% for each of the two age groups). Ages of nonsuspendees ranged from 11 through 17. Seven (50%) were 14-year-olds and four (28.6%) were 13-year-olds.

Family characteristics, in terms of children and adults in household, are presented in Tables 8 and 9. As noted in the tables, most of the chronic suspendees came from family settings where there were at least two adults in the household (80%). Ten (66.6%) of them came from families of no more than three children. Most of the casual suspendees (76.5%) also came from households where there were two adults. Reported numbers of children in the household ranged from one to at least five, with four being the most frequent number (five subjects, or 29.4%, reported four children in the household).

More than half of the nonsuspendees, eight (57.1%), came from households where there were only two children, while one was an only child and one reported five or more children at home. Three nonsuspendees came from single parent families while the rest came from households in which there were two adults.

In terms of school--academic related data illustrated in Tables 10, 11, 12, and 13, grade levels, failure histories, and ability grouping levels were examined. According to the data, most of the chronic suspendees were in the upper middle school grades. Of this

Table 8

Family Characteristics of Suspension Groups/Children in Household

Group	Number of Children in Household					means
	1	2	3	4	5 or more	
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	
Chronic ^a	3(20)	5(33.3)	5(33.3)	1(6.7)	1(6.7)	2.5
Casual ^b	4(23.5)	3(17.6)	2(11.8)	5(29.4)	3(17.6)	3.0
Nonsuspendees ^c	1(7.1)	8(57.1)	4(28.6)	0(0)	1(7.1)	2.4

^aN = 15^bN = 17^cN = 14

Table 9

Family Characteristics of Suspension Groups/Adults in Household

Group	Number of Adults in Household			means
	1	2	3 or more	
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	
Chronic ^a	3(20)	11(73.3)	1(6.7)	1.9
Casual ^b	3(17.6)	13(76.5)	1(5.9)	1.9
Nonsuspendees ^c	3(21.4)	11(78.6)	0(0)	1.8

^aN = 15

^bN = 17

^cN = 14

Table 10

School--Academic Characteristics of Suspension Groups/Grade Levels

Group	Grade Levels of Suspendees			means
	6	7	8	
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	
Chronic ^a	2(13.3)	8(53.3)	5(33.3)	7.2
Casual ^b	6(35.3)	5(29.4)	6(35.3)	7.0
Nonsuspendees ^c	3(21.4)	5(35.7)	6(42.9)	7.2

^aN = 15^bN = 17^cN = 14

Table 11

School--Academic Characteristics of Suspension Groups/Grades Failed

Group	Grades Failed Since Beginning School			means
	0	1	2 or more	
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	
Chronic ^a	7(46.1)	5(33.3)	3(20)	.73
Casual ^b	7(41.2)	4(23.5)	6(35.3)	.94
Nonsuspendees ^c	8(57.1)	3(21.4)	3(21.4)	.64

^aN = 15^bN = 17^cN = 14

Table 12

School--Academic Characteristics of Suspension Groups/Grouping Levels

Group	Ability Grouping Level--English				means
	1(X)	2(Y)	3(Z)	4(H)	
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	
Chronic ^a	5(33.3)	9(60.0)	1(6.7)	0(0)	1.7
Casual ^b	4(23.5)	11(64.7)	1(5.9)	1(5.9)	1.9
Nonsuspendees ^c	3(21.4)	7(50.0)	4(28.6)	0(0)	2.0

Note. X = classes for pupils who need extra instruction in basic skills; Y = classes for pupils who need reinforcement; Z = classes for pupils who are meeting or exceeding grade level expectations; H = classes for pupils who have demonstrated superior ability and can accept responsibility (Honors).

^aN = 15

^bN = 17

^cN = 14

Table 13

School--Academic Characteristics of Suspension Groups/Grouping Levels

Group	Ability Grouping Level--Mathematics				means
	1(X)	2(Y)	3(Z)	4(H)	
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	
Chronic ^a	4(26.7)	10(66.7)	1(6.7)	0(0)	1.8
Casual ^b	5(29.4)	10(58.8)	1(5.9)	1(5.9)	1.8
Nonsuspendees ^c	2(14.3)	7(50.0)	5(35.7)	0(0)	2.2

Note. X = classes for pupils who need extra instruction in basic skills; Y = classes for pupils who need reinforcement; Z = classes for pupils who are meeting or exceeding grade level expectations; H = classes for pupils who have demonstrated superior ability and can accept responsibility (Honors).

$${}^a_N = 15$$

$${}^b_N = 17$$

$${}^c_N = 14$$

group, eight pupils (53.3%) were in grade seven, and five (33.3%) were eighth graders. Most of the chronic suspendees were at the lower end of the ability grouping scale in English classes, where five (33.3%) were in the X group and nine (60%) in the Y group. Similar results were reported in mathematics placement where four pupils (26.7%) were in the X group and ten (66.7%) in the Y group (ability grouping levels in Chesterfield County Public Schools range from level X for pupils who need extra instruction in basic skills to H, or honors level, for pupils who demonstrate superior ability).

Seven (46.1%) of the three time (chronic) suspendees reported not failing any grades since entering school at first grade or kindergarten level. Eight (53.3%) of these youngsters had failed one or more grades since beginning school.

The casual suspendee group was not noticeably different from the chronic suspendee group on the categories described above. Grade levels among the casual suspendees were fairly evenly distributed (six sixth graders, five seventh graders, and six eighth graders). Most of them were at the lower end of the ability grouping level scale in English (23.5% in level X and 64.7% in level Y). One of the casual suspendees, however, was enrolled in the highest level (H) English class. Mathematics class enrollment among the casual suspendees was not very different from the English grouping level (29.4% in X level mathematics and 58.8% in Y level mathematics). One (5.9%) of the subjects was in H level mathematics.

Seven (41.2%) of the casual suspendees indicated that they had not

failed a grade since entering school at first grade or kindergarten level. Four (23.5%) of the casual suspendees had failed at least one grade while six, or 35.3%, reported failing at least twice.

School--academic related findings on the nonsuspendee group revealed that three were sixth graders, five were seventh graders, and six were eighth graders. In both English and mathematics classes there were seven (in each class) pupils in the Y group. However, the nonsuspendees had a higher representation in level Z of both subjects (four, or 28.6%, in English and five, or 35.7%, in mathematics) than the other two groups.

Eight (57.1%) of the nonsuspendees reported not failing a grade since entering school, three (21.4%) had failed one grade and the remaining three had failed at least two grades each.

Table 14 includes data based on participation in extracurricular activities as reported by the three suspension groups.

Table 14

Participation in Extracurricular Activities/Suspension Groups

Group	1(never)	2(seldom)	3(frequently)	means
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	
Chronic ^a	8(53.3)	5(33.3)	2(13.3)	1.6
Casual ^b	2(11.8)	9(52.9)	6(35.3)	2.2
Nonsuspendees ^c	5(35.7)	6(42.9)	3(21.4)	1.8

^aN = 15

^bN = 17

^cN = 14

Eight (53.3%) of the chronic suspendees reported "never" participating in extracurricular activities while only two, or 13.3%, reported "frequent" participation. Of the casual suspendees, nine (52.9%) indicated that they seldom participated in school-related extracurricular activities while six, or 35.3%, reported frequent participation. Five (35.7%) of the nonsuspendees reported "never" participating in extracurricular activities, six (42.9%) indicated that they "seldom" participated, and only three (21.4%) of the nonsuspendees considered themselves "frequent" participants.

Data relative to school--discipline history, as reported in Tables 15 and 16, indicated that chronic suspendees were conspicuously different from the other groups chosen for the study. Seven (46.7%) of these youngsters reported having been suspended from school three or more times in previous years. Also, fourteen pupils in the chronic suspendee group (93.3%) reported no less than three referrals to the principal's office for disciplinary reasons in previous school years.

Of the casual suspendees, twelve pupils (70.6%) reported "no suspensions" from school in prior years while three (17.6%) indicated having been suspended at least twice each. Only two (11.8%) of the one-time suspendees reported three or more suspensions in prior years. In terms of referrals to the principal's office for disciplinary reasons, two (11.8%) of the casual suspendees reported no prior referrals while 12 (70.6%) casual suspendees had been referred at least three times in prior years.

Data gathered from the nonsuspendees indicated that 12, or 85.7%

Table 15

School--Discipline Related History of Suspension Groups/Suspensions

Group	Suspensions from school in prior years				means
	0	1	2	3 or more	
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	
Chronic ^a	2(13.3)	4(26.7)	2(13.3)	7(46.7)	1.93
Casual ^b	12(70.6)	0(0)	3(17.6)	2(11.8)	.71
Nonsuspendees ^c	12(85.7)	1(7.1)	0(0)	1(7.1)	.29

^aN = 15

^bN = 17

^cN = 14

Table 16

School--Discipline Related History of Suspension Groups/Office Referrals

Group	Referrals to Principal's Office in Prior Years				means
	0	1	2	3 or more	
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	
Chronic ^a	0(0)	1(6.7)	0(0)	14(92.3)	2.9
Casual ^b	2(11.8)	1(5.9)	2(11.8)	12(70.6)	2.4
Nonsuspendees ^c	2(14.3)	3(21.4)	2(14.3)	7(50.0)	2.0

^aN = 15

^bN = 17

^cN = 14

of the subjects had never been suspended from school. One (7.1%) of the nonsuspendees had been suspended once since entering school while another reported three or more prior suspensions. Although nonsuspendees reported rather positive past suspension records, seven (50%) indicated that they had been referred to the principal's office in prior years for disciplinary reasons, while two (14.3%) reported "never being referred" to the principal's office.

Another category associated with school--discipline related data, "friends suspended during the school year," is addressed in Table 17.

Table 17
School--Discipline Related History
of Suspension Groups/Friends Suspended

Group	Friends suspended during the school year			means
	0	1	2 or more	
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	
Chronic ^a	1(6.7)	8(53.3)	6(40.0)	1.33
Casual ^b	10(58.8)	5(29.4)	2(11.8)	.53
Nonsuspendees ^c	6(42.9)	4(28.6)	4(28.6)	.86

^aN = 15

^bN = 17

^cN = 14

In the "friends suspended during the school year" category, only one (6.7%) of the chronic suspendees reported "no friends suspended"

during the 1980-81 school year, while 14 (93.3%) reported one or two close friends suspended during the school year. Of the one-time (casual) suspendees, 10 pupils (58.5%) indicated that none of their close friends had been suspended. Five (29.4%) reported one close friend suspended while the remaining two subjects (11.8%) each reported two or more close friends suspended. Of the nonsuspendees, six (42.9%) could not account for any close friends being suspended during the school year. However, four nonsuspendees (28.6%) reported one close friend suspended and four reported two or more.

The subject of family mobility was addressed on the Discipline Information Questionnaire in terms of family moves since beginning school and the number of different schools attended since entering school. Family mobility factors as reported by the three suspension groups are illustrated in Tables 18 and 19.

At least five (33.3%) of the chronic suspendees reported moving three or more times since beginning school at kindergarten or first grade level while two (13.3%) reported no family moves during their school years. One pupil reported attending six or more different schools. The remaining chronic suspendee group reported a moderate rate of family mobility.

In the casual suspendee category, three pupils (17.6%) reported no family moves, nine (52.9%) reported at least one move, one (5.9%) reported two family moves, and four, or 23.5%, reported three or more family moves. Nine (52.9%) of the casual suspendees also had attended three different schools while two casual suspendees reported

Table 18

Family Mobility Factors Among Suspension Groups/Different Schools Attended

Group	Number of Different Schools Attended Since Beginning School					means
	2	3	4	5	6 or more	
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	
Chronic ^a	2(13.3)	6(40)	3(20)	2(13.3)	2(13.3)	3.7
Casual ^b	3(17.6)	9(52.9)	2(11.8)	1(5.9)	2(11.8)	3.4
Nonsuspendees ^c	9(64.3)	3(21.4)	0(0)	1(7.1)	1(6.7)	2.7

^aN = 15^bN = 17^cN = 14

Table 19

Family Mobility Factors Among Suspension Groups/Family Moves

Group	Family moves since beginning school				means
	0	1	2	3 or more	
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	
Chronic suspendees ^a	2(13.3)	4(26.7)	4(26.7)	5(33.3)	1.80
Casual suspendees ^b	3(17.6)	9(52.9)	1(5.9)	4(23.5)	1.35
Nonsuspendees ^c	6(42.9)	5(35.7)	0(0)	3(21.4)	1.00

^aN = 15^bN = 17^cN = 14

attending at least six different schools apiece since entering.

Six (42.9%) of the nonsuspendees reported "no family moves" since beginning school and five (35.7%) had moved at least once. Three of the nonsuspendees (21.4%) reported three or more moves each. Nine (64.3%) of the nonsuspendees had attended two different schools each. Of the remaining five, three (21.4%) had attended three schools each and the remaining two had attended five and six schools respectively.

Although significant differences between specific pairs of groups were sought only on the SEI and PPI, a one-way analysis of variance with Scheffé test was applied to all variables, revealing significant differences (.05 level of significance) between pairs in several other categories as well. Based on responses to items on the Discipline Information Questionnaire, significant differences between specific pairs of groups were found in the areas of "friends suspended during the school year" and "suspensions in prior years." Findings are illustrated in Tables 20 and 21.

As indicated in Table 20, in the category "friends suspended during the school year" significant differences between specific pairs of groups were noted between the chronic and casual suspendee groups, with the casual suspendees reporting lower frequencies of friends suspended.

Responses to items on the Discipline Information Questionnaire revealed significant differences between specific pairs of groups between chronic and nonsuspendees as well as between chronic and casual suspendees. In both instances, chronic suspendees reported higher frequencies of prior suspensions.

Table 20
 Mean Differences Between Specific Pairs of Groups/Close
 Friends Suspended During School Year

Possible frequency	Mean Scores		
	Chronic	Casual	Nonsuspendees
2 or more	1.33	.53*	---

*p < .05.

Findings relative to the variable "suspensions in prior years" are illustrated in Table 21.

Table 21
 Mean Differences Between Specific Pairs of Groups/
 Suspensions in Prior Years

Possible frequency	Mean Scores		
	Chronic	Casual	Nonsuspendees
3 or more	1.93	---	.29*
	1.93	.71*	---

*p < .05.

Reasons for and Types of Suspension

During the 1980-81 school year, pupils were suspended from the middle schools of Chesterfield County for a number of reasons, including

those listed in Table 22.

Table 22
Reasons for and Frequency of Suspensions

Infraction	Frequency	
	Chronic	Casual
Alcohol and/or other drugs	0	1
Disrespect/school personnel	16	2
Disruptive behavior/classroom	21	17
Disruptive behavior/school setting	11	5
Fighting	8	7
Forging notes/signatures	3	1
Leaving grounds without permission	3	0
Possession of smoking paraphernalia	3	0
Skipping class	1	0
Smoking	6	0
Tardy/class	9	3
Tardy/school	3	0
Theft	1	0
Truancy	8	0
Inappropriate language	3	0
Other	20	0

Note. The above data relate to pupils who responded to the study.

As indicated in Table 22, with the exception of the "other" category, disruptive behavior in the classroom accounted for the

highest frequency counts with respect to both the casual and chronic suspendee groups (casual suspendees--17, chronic suspendees--21).

As noted earlier in this writing, many suspensions were in-school suspensions, allowing suspendees to spend suspension time within the school setting. However, in the case of more serious infractions and at the discretion of the building level administrator, some youngsters were given out-of-school suspensions. Types of suspensions and the amount of days spent in suspension are illustrated in Table 23.

Table 23

Types of Suspensions/Number of Days Among Suspension Groups

Group	Out-of-school suspensions	Number of days	In-school suspensions	Number of days
Chronic	14	63	34	113
Casual	5	15	11	32

As indicated in Table 23, the casual suspendee group (N=17) only accounted for five out-of-school suspensions and 11 in-school-suspensions; a total of 47 suspension days. Chronic suspendees (N=15) accounted for 14 out-of-school suspensions and 34 in-school suspensions; a total of 176 suspension days.

Pupils in Special Education Classes

As noted before in this writing (see delimitations), certain pupils were excluded from the study because they were enrolled in special education classes for more than three periods per day. However, four of the pupils included in the study were enrolled in special classes for limited time periods (one class period) during the school day.

One pupil (casual suspendee) was enrolled in an English class for learning disabled pupils, another (casual suspendee) was in a mathematics class for the learning disabled, and the other two (one chronic and one nonsuspendee) were in learning disabilities programs with special emphasis on organization and study skills (one class period each).

Profiles of Selected Suspendees

Brief profiles were compiled on nine subjects, three from each suspension group (chronic, casual, and nonsuspendees). The profiles are composed of data gathered from suspension letters as well as responses on the Discipline Information Questionnaire (See Appendix F). Certain subjects may not be typical of their suspension groups as they were randomly selected to be profiled.

In summary, all of the hypotheses set forth for this study were tested using a one-way analysis of variance with the Scheffe test. Six of the ten null hypotheses were rejected.

Descriptive statistics were gleaned from responses to the Discipline Information Questionnaire. A one-way analysis of variance with the Scheffé test on all variables dealt with in this study indicated statistically significant differences between specific groups in both "close friends suspended during the school year" and "suspensions from school in prior years" categories.

The final section of the chapter focused on reasons for and types of suspensions. Disruptive behavior in the classroom accounted for the highest frequency counts among infractions (reasons for suspension) with respect to both the chronic and casual suspendee groups.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present chapter focuses on a discussion of results as related to other research efforts on the subject, specific findings of the present study, conclusions, and related recommendations.

Discussion

In terms of school--achievement (academic) status, 29 of the 32 casual and chronic suspendees were enrolled in lower level (levels X and Y) mathematics and English classes. These findings were consistent with those of Osborne (1976), who reported that pupils with suspension histories were frequently at lower academic levels. Also, over half (56%) of the suspended pupils (chronic and casual) had failed at least one grade since entering school. Such findings support other research efforts suggesting parallels between low level achievement, failure, and delinquent behavior (Glasser, 1969; Armstrong, 1978; Ahlmstram & Havighurst, 1971; Osborne, 1977).

Pupils who do not achieve academic recognition may seek other forms of gaining attention at school. Acting out behavior often presents a means of gaining status among peers as well as the disfavor of teachers and administrators. Unfortunately, negative behavior can be encouraged by school personnel who "overplay" situations by singling out problem pupils in the classroom or constantly paging them over the public

address system. The frequently suspended pupil is often a product of too little academic support and far too much recognition for negative behavior.

On the subscale "school--academic" of the SEI, chronic and casual suspender mean scores were consistently lower (though not significantly lower) than mean scores of nonsuspendees. On subscale "school--achievement" of the PPI, mean scores were significantly different among the three suspension groups. Since these subscales addressed such factors as difficulty of school work, lack of achievement, and negative interactions with teachers, results were consistent with the findings of Nielson and Gerber (1979), who reported that delinquent youngsters often cited academic difficulties and personality conflicts with school authority figures as negative aspects of school life.

Problem pupils often derive satisfaction from voicing negative feelings toward the "system;" in this case, the school. Teachers, who are in direct contact with these pupils, are frequent targets of such animosity. Although suspension is necessary to remove certain problems from the setting, it often serves to compound existing pupil unrest.

Varied differences were noted among group mean scores on subscale "home--parents" of the SEI. Nonsuspended pupils perceived themselves more positively in this category, indicating a parallel between negative factors in the home setting and school behavior (Gouldner, 1978). One statement on the SEI, "my parents usually consider my feelings," was frequently responded to in a negative manner by pupils

who had experienced suspension. Such responses suggested that delinquent pupils were more likely to internalize negative parent perceptions than nondelinquents, a finding consistent with results of studies by Richman and Harper (1979). Banks (1968), who also studied parent and family influences, alluded to these influences as factors affecting school behavior and relations with school personnel.

Many of the negative behaviors and attitudes exhibited at school reflect home related factors. Lack of respect for authority figures is exhibited as often in relations with parents as with school personnel. School officials may view conferences with parents of recalcitrant youngsters as enlightening in terms of detecting home based factors attributable to negative school behavior.

The question of "close friends suspended during the school year" was addressed in the Discipline Information Questionnaire. Chronic and casual suspendees reported higher frequencies of suspended "close friends" than nonsuspendees, which is consistent with sociological theory set forth by Empey and Rabow (1961), who pointed out that delinquent pupils are likely to associate with other delinquents.

No matter what the suspension status, pupils manage to find their places in the social setting as they identify with certain peer groups. Usually, even the troublemakers find popularity and acceptance among their chosen peer groups, perceiving themselves positively relative to peer relations. Logically, pupils are attracted to others with similar social habits.

Significant differences among group mean scores were reported on

subscale "general self" on both the SEI and PPI, with the casual and chronic suspendees exhibiting lower self-perceptions than nonsuspendees, indicating a relationship between self-esteem and school behavior. Although Rubin, Dorle, and Sandidge (1976) found a stronger relationship between self-esteem and other variables (intelligence and academic achievement) than between self-esteem and school behavior, findings of the present study indicated significant differences between general self-concept of chronic suspendees and pupils who had not been suspended from school.

Pupils who perceive themselves negatively in other areas may exhibit low self-perceptions in the school setting, often with these feelings manifested in acting out behavior. In many instances, feelings of self-worth are reexamined and lowered as a result of exclusion from the school milieu.

Findings

Based on data analyses and descriptive statistics, the following major findings resulted from the study:

1. There were significant differences among suspension group mean scores on the total Self-Esteem Inventory; specifically, between the chronic and nonsuspendees. The nonsuspendees scored significantly higher than the chronic suspendees (.05 level of significance) Null hypothesis one rejected.
2. There were no significant differences among suspension group mean scores on the Self-Esteem Inventory subscale "school--academic." Null hypothesis two not rejected.
3. There were no significant differences among suspension group mean scores on the Self-Esteem Inventory subscale "home--parents." Null hypothesis three not rejected.

4. There were no significant differences among suspension group mean scores on the Self-Esteem Inventory subscale "social self--peers." Null hypothesis four not rejected.
5. There were significant differences among suspension group mean scores on the Self-Esteem Inventory subscale "general self;" specifically, between the chronic and nonsuspendee groups. The nonsuspendee group scored significantly higher than the chronic suspendee group (.05 level of significance). Null hypothesis five rejected.
6. There were significant differences among suspension group mean scores on the total Parent Perception Inventory; specifically, between the chronic and nonsuspendee groups. The nonsuspendee group scored significantly higher than the chronic suspendee group (.05 level of significance). Null hypothesis six rejected.
7. There were significant differences among suspension group mean scores on the Parent Perception Inventory subscale "school--achievement;" specifically, between the chronic and casual suspendees as well as between the chronic and nonsuspendees. The nonsuspendee group scored significantly higher than the chronic suspendee group while the casual suspendee group also scored significantly higher than the chronic suspendee group (.05 level of significance). Null hypothesis seven rejected.
8. There were significant differences among suspension group mean scores on the Parent Perception Inventory subscale "family relations;" specifically, between the chronic and nonsuspendee groups. The nonsuspendees scored significantly higher than the chronic suspendees (.05 level of significance). Null hypothesis eight rejected.
9. There were no significant differences among suspension group mean scores on the Parent Perception Inventory subscale "peers." Null hypothesis nine not rejected.
10. There were significant differences among suspension group mean scores on the Parent Perception Inventory subscale "general self;"

specifically, between the chronic and nonsuspendee groups. The nonsuspendee group scored significantly higher than the chronic suspendee group (.05 level of significance). Null hypothesis ten rejected.

11. Pupils suspended from the middle schools of Chesterfield County are usually male pupils assigned to lower level English and mathematics classes.
12. The major reason for suspension from the middle schools of Chesterfield County is disruptive behavior in the classroom.
13. In terms of descriptive statistics, significant differences among mean figures were reported in the areas of "suspension from school in previous years" and "close friends suspended during the school year."
14. On instruments developed to assess self-perceptions on the dependent variables addressed in the present study, casual and chronic suspendees generally reported lower group mean scores than nonsuspendees. Based on findings of the present investigation, suspended pupils tend to exhibit lower self-perceptions than nonsuspendees.
15. On instruments developed to assess parent perceptions of children on dependent variables addressed in the present study, parents of casual and chronic suspendees generally reported lower perceptions of their children than parents of nonsuspendees. Based on findings of the present study, suspended pupils are generally perceived lower by their parents than nonsuspendees.

Although restricted to a middle school population and limited in scope, findings of the study were significant in that differences among suspension groups were confirmed on six of the ten original hypotheses. Therefore, results of the study present implications for determining what areas are worthy of consideration when devising

preventive strategies relative to school suspensions.

Any attempt to replicate the present study or generalize the findings to other populations should be approached with caution as (1) the study was limited by a low rate of response and (2) responding subjects were not in all cases representative of the original sample.

Conclusions

Based on findings discussed above, the following major conclusions were drawn from the present study:

1. While chronic, casual and nonsuspendees were similar in characteristics examined on the Discipline Information Questionnaire, suspended pupils (chronic and casual) were consistently higher in frequencies of "suspensions in prior years" and "close friends suspended during the school year" than nonsuspendees, indicating that past suspension records and peer associations are areas worthy of consideration when devising strategies related to discipline.
2. It is important to note that mean scores on the SEI and PPI (full scale and subscale scores) followed a consistent pattern of low to high as suspension frequencies decreased (with the exception of SEI subscale "home--parents"). Such findings indicate that there are differences in mean scores on the stated variables as suspension patterns vary.
3. More significant differences were found among PPI mean scores than among SEI mean scores, indicating that parent perceptions should not be overlooked when considering school-related delinquency.

Recommendations

The recommendations below focus on strategies that may prove effective in reducing suspensions among middle school pupils. The list of recommendations is followed by proposed areas for further research.

1. Provisions should be made to include more sessions in self-awareness, decision making, etc. for pupils who create serious discipline problems so as to encourage them to exhibit more self-discipline in the school setting.
2. Parents and school personnel should be encouraged to observe children more closely so as to gain a clearer understanding of areas in which certain children exhibit low self-esteem. As a result, they may become more aware of and responsive to certain subtle needs of problem children.
3. Data from pupils' discipline folders should be reviewed periodically so as to determine if certain preventive measures are necessary.
4. Frequent suspendees should be referred to sources of professional help geared to the prevention of future suspensions or expulsions.
5. Proper screening steps should be instituted to alleviate unnecessary placement of behavior problems in classes for emotionally disturbed children as the labeling process can be avoided with proper concern for discipline problems.
6. Educational leaders (principals, guidance counselors, etc.) should facilitate more in-service and staff development sessions for classroom teachers and other school personnel. Such sessions should focus on improving home--school relations and understanding adolescent behavior, with emphasis on alleviating suspension as a major disciplinary measure.

Based on findings of the present study, additional research is recommended in the following areas:

1. Investigation of parent perceptions of early elementary school pupils to determine the degree of correlation between low parent perceptions and negative school behavior.
2. Further examination of the "associative pack" theory to determine if delinquent pupils are attracted to each other at both elementary and high school levels.

3. A study of parent responses to suspension of their children in terms of supportiveness or nonsupportiveness of school disciplinary measures.
4. In-depth case studies (as opposed to brief profiles) of school suspendees so as to examine more subtle aspects of their lifestyles with respect to causes of behavior problems.
5. A comparative study of suspension patterns among pupils in lower academic tracks (X and Y) with respect to class size, classroom management procedures, etc. as possible discriminating factors.

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APPENDIX A
COVER LETTER



CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CHESTERFIELD, VIRGINIA 23832 — (804) 748-1405

Dr. Howard O. Sullins, Division Superintendent

Secondary Schools and Special Services

CONFIDENTIAL

TO: Parents of Middle School Pupils Selected to Participate in a Study of Student Discipline in Chesterfield County Schools

FROM: Dr. John B. Finkler, Director for Pupil Personnel Services
Chesterfield County Public Schools

SUBJECT: Study of Middle School Pupils

Your child has been randomly selected from pupils in Chesterfield County middle schools to participate in a study of considerations around student discipline.

In a continuing effort to reduce suspensions in Chesterfield County Schools, we are seeking a clearer understanding of how certain middle school pupils view themselves as well as how they are viewed by their parent(s).

Enclosed is a pupil questionnaire to be filled out by your son/daughter as well as a parent questionnaire to be filled out by you, the parent(s). These questionnaires should require only a few minutes of your time. Please assist us in this study by returning the completed questionnaires by _____. Data gleaned from this effort will be treated as confidential and identity of subjects will remain anonymous. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may withdraw from this study at any time.

A self-addressed stamped envelope is enclosed to aid in the expedient return of the questionnaires. If you have any questions about the study, please call me at 748-1442.

If you choose not to participate in this research effort, please check below and return.

Not participating

JBF:jd

Enclosures

APPENDIX B
COOPERSMITH SELF-ESTEEM INVENTORY
FORM A

SELF-ESTEEM INVENTORY (SEI) (Coopersmith)

Please mark each statement in the following way:

If the statement describes how you usually feel, put a check (✓) in the column, "Like Me."

If the statement does not describe how you usually feel, put a check (✓) in the column, "Unlike Me."

	<u>Like Me</u>	<u>Unlike Me</u>
1. I spend a lot of time daydreaming.	_____	_____
2. I'm pretty sure of myself.	_____	_____
3. I often wish I were someone else.	_____	_____
4. I'm easy to like.	_____	_____
5. My parents and I have a lot of fun together.	_____	_____
6. I never worry about anything.	_____	_____
7. I find it very hard to talk in front of the class.	_____	_____
8. I wish I were younger.	_____	_____
9. There are lots of things about myself I'd change if I could.	_____	_____
10. I can make up my mind without too much trouble.	_____	_____
11. I'm a lot of fun to be with.	_____	_____
12. I get upset easily at home.	_____	_____
13. I always do the right thing.	_____	_____
14. I'm proud of my school work.	_____	_____
15. Someone always has to tell me what to do.	_____	_____
16. It takes a long time to get used to anything new.	_____	_____
17. I'm often sorry for the things I do.	_____	_____
18. I'm popular with kids my own age.	_____	_____
19. My parents usually consider my feelings.	_____	_____
20. I'm never unhappy.	_____	_____
21. I'm doing the best work that I can.	_____	_____
22. I give in very easily.	_____	_____
23. I can usually take care of myself.	_____	_____
24. I'm pretty happy.	_____	_____
25. I would rather play with children younger than me.	_____	_____
26. My parents expect too much of me.	_____	_____
27. I like everyone.	_____	_____
28. I like to be called on in class.	_____	_____
29. I understand myself.	_____	_____
30. It's pretty tough to be me.	_____	_____
31. Things are all mixed up in my life.	_____	_____
32. Kids usually follow my ideas.	_____	_____
33. No one pays much attention to me at home.	_____	_____
34. I never get scolded.	_____	_____
35. I'm not doing as well in school as I'd like to.	_____	_____
36. I can make up my mind and stick to it.	_____	_____

	<u>Like Me</u>	<u>Unlike Me</u>
37. I really don't like being a boy — girl.	_____	_____
38. I have a low opinion of myself.	_____	_____
39. I don't like to be with other people.	_____	_____
40. There are many times when I'd like to leave home.	_____	_____
41. I'm never shy.	_____	_____
42. I often feel upset in school.	_____	_____
43. I often feel ashamed of myself.	_____	_____
44. I'm not as nice-looking as most people.	_____	_____
45. If I have something to say, I usually say it.	_____	_____
46. Kids pick on me very often.	_____	_____
47. My parents understand me.	_____	_____
48. I always tell the truth.	_____	_____
49. My teacher makes me feel I'm not good enough.	_____	_____
50. I don't care what happens to me.	_____	_____
51. I'm a failure.	_____	_____
52. I get upset easily when I'm scolded.	_____	_____
53. Most people are better-liked than I am.	_____	_____
54. I usually feel as if my parents are pushing me.	_____	_____
55. I always know what to say to people.	_____	_____
56. I often get discouraged in school.	_____	_____
57. Things usually don't bother me.	_____	_____
58. I can't be depended on.	_____	_____

APPENDIX C

PARENT PERCEPTION INVENTORY

PARENT PERCEPTION INVENTORY

DIRECTIONS: Based on your own perceptions of your child, please show whether you agree or disagree with each of the statements below by circling one of the answers next to each statement.

SA-Strongly Agree; A-Agree; D-Disagree; SD-Strongly Disagree

For example:

SA A D SD My child watches too much television.

SA A D SD My child is a fast runner.

There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to each statement as honestly as you can.

Compared with other children in his/her age group, my child:

SA A D SD is liked by his/her peers.

SA A D SD likes doing things with the family.

SA A D SD is a capable student.

SA A D SD feels good about himself/herself.

SA A D SD spends lots of time with his/her friends.

SA A D SD creates very few problems for the family as a whole.

SA A D SD gets along well with his/her teachers.

SA A D SD is satisfied with his/her physical appearance.

SA A D SD is easily influenced by his/her peers.

SA A D SD seldom has to be punished by his/her parents.

SA A D SD puts forth his/her best effort in school.

SA A D SD has confidence in his/her ability to succeed.

SA A D SD has many friends who do well in school.

SA A D SD can be trusted by his/her parents.

SA A D SD always gets good grades.

SA A D SD is usually a cheerful person.

SA A D SD makes friends easily.

SA A D SD has a good relationship with his/her parent(s).

SA A D SD likes attending school.

SA A D SD is happy the way he/she is.

SA A D SD prefers to be alone very often.

SA A D SD gets along well with all members of the family.

SA A D SD usually completes his/her homework.

SA A D SD is highly competitive in almost everything he/she does.

COMMENTS: _____

APPENDIX D

DISCIPLINE INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

1980-81 DISCIPLINE INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please note: You, along with other pupils in Chesterfield County Schools, were randomly selected for this study. Many of you will not have experienced suspension from school, failure, etc. Please respond to each item as best you can.

1. Sex: ___male___female
2. Date of birth: _____ Age: _____
3. Grade level: ___6th___7th___8th
4. Ability grouping level: English: ___X___Y___Z___H
Mathematics: ___X___Y___Z___H
5. How often do you participate in school-related extracurricular activities? (Example: clubs, athletics, marching band)
___frequently___seldom___never
6. How many children are there in your household? ___boys
 ___girls
 ___total
7. How many adults are there in your household? ___one___two
___more (___mother___father___grandmother___grandfather___other)
8. How many grades have you failed since entering school at kindergarten or first grade level? ___none___one___two or more
9. Think of at least three of your closest friends at school. How many of these friends have been suspended from school (in-school or out of school) during the 1980-81 school year? ___none___one___two___all three
10. How many times have you been suspended from school (in-school or out of school) during the 1980-81 school year? ___never___once ___twice___three or more times
11. Before this school year, how many times were you suspended from school (in-school or out of school)? ___never___once___twice ___three or more times
12. Since entering school at kindergarten or first grade level, how many times have you been referred (sent) to the principal's office for misbehavior at school? ___never___once___twice___three or more times
13. How many times has your family moved since you entered school at kindergarten or first grade level? ___never___once___twice___three or more times

1980-81 DISCIPLINE INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE (CONTINUED)

14. How many different schools have you attended since entering school at kindergarten or first grade level? _____ elementary schools
_____ junior high (middle) schools

APPENDIX E
PARENT AND STUDENT COMMENTS

PARENT AND STUDENT COMMENTS

A special section for comments was provided at the end of each Self-Esteem Inventory and Parent Perception Inventory. Many of the parents and pupils who participated in the study provided feedback in the form of comments such as the ones listed below:

1. Comments from parents who chose not to participate

"I do not feel that these questions has (sic) anything to do with discipline. As far as my relationship with my children, it's fine. I also think if you are fair, listen, and make a decision with them having a part in it, they will understand why they are being rewarded or punished. Then when they become adults they will understand how to make a decision that's right for them."

"I would rather not share this information with strangers."

"I find all of this meaningless to the schools."

2. Comments from parents of nonsuspendees who participated

"_____ is an exceptionally good boy. He minds well at home and can always be trusted and depended upon."

"My child don't creates problems from her family (sic). This is the only way I could answers this question (sic)."

"Was quite resentful in answering the pupil questionnaire."

"We would like to know some of the conclusions from this study. Thank you."

"I think the questionnaire was unnecessary but I participated because of my son or daughter and I love both

PARENT AND STUDENT COMMENTS (CONTINUED)

of my children."

"Sometimes is moody, but reluctant to discuss why. Likes school for the social aspects, friends, sports; hates the classroom situation and homework, finds it very confining."

"I have tried to answer questions but I think what goes on between us and our son is private."

3. Comments from parents of one-time (casual) suspendees who participated in the study

"Most of his problems seem to be a lack of responsibility. He doesn't think things through. Most of the time he is considerate of everyone. When he doesn't get his way problems in consideration arise. There has been, and still is, some lack of communication in this family, but we are working hard on correcting this as well as the before mentioned problems. He has every ability to do good in school but for one reason or another doesn't apply himself. He likes to play and anything that isn't fun is for the birds."

"Misses his father very much. Has adjusted very well."

"I certainly hope everyone with this questionnaire answers and sends it in. Hopefully, a better understanding of our youth and why they do the things they do will result. It seems, today, there is

PARENT AND STUDENT COMMENTS (CONTINUED)

so much pressure for them to grow up and become responsible adults before they can really handle it mentally. Good luck!"

"_____ is a very bright child and has a lot of talent, but he is immature when it comes to applying his self (sic) to anything that doesn't interest him."

"These answers refer to my 14-year-old son. If they were to apply to my two daughters they would be quite different."

4. Comments from parents of three-time (chronic) suspendees who participated in the study

"He is basically a good child, a follower. He is very capable but lazy. Does not do homework! Causes more problems at school than he does at home."

"He is verbally aggressive and thinks he's joking and then wonders why children of his age group get angry at him."

"Can do better in all areas. But has shown improvements."

"My son is inconsistent in some areas. I'm very much in favor of in-school suspensions. I'm also strongly convinced that a warm, friendly, consistent but firm staff goes a long way in working with middle school students."

PARENT AND STUDENT COMMENTS (CONTINUED)

"_____ has been a problem and has caused problems for a while. Now it has gotten worse since the death of my mother. _____'s father has never cared enough about him to give him any attention and I think never knowing his father has something to do with it, too."

"He would spend a lot of time with his friends, but he has been restricted for making bad grades. The only problem he creates is making bad grades, back talking teachers, etc. He's really no big problem at home. He gets along with most of his teachers, maybe one or two he doesn't. If you would like to talk with us any time, you can contact our home (_____), or my work number (_____). We would really like to see _____ do better in school. Anything that we can do, we will."

"I would say my child is an average child. He does well in all school subjects he likes, but in ones like English, spelling, and reading, he does poorly since he does not enjoy them. He is a well behaved boy doesn't get into much trouble, never anything really serious."

"Does not use his learning abilities, could be an 'A' student if he puts his effort to it."

"Some of my answers I'm not really sure of. I answered as best as I could."

PARENT AND STUDENT COMMENTS (CONTINUED)

5. Pupil comments from nonsuspendees who participated in the study

"Sometimes discipline at our school is unfair."

6. Pupil comments from one-time (casual) suspendees who participated in the study

"Please note that some of the answers needed a sometimes category."

"I could do better in school if I really tried but I'm sometimes the class clown. I tell the truth most of the time. I try all the time. I wish I was younger (sic.) Sometimes I wish I had never failed so I could be with my friends."

"I do hope that this evaluation's results will prove to be helpful to other boys."

7. Pupil comments from three-time (chronic) suspendees who participated in the study

"I hesitated to fill in some of the questions because I do not feel self-centered."

"I am lazy when it comes to homework. I am much of a dreamer."

"The principles (sic) at my school, _____ Middle School, suspend kids for dumb things such as arguing."

"I have a higher goal set in life."

APPENDIX F
PROFILES OF SELECTED SUSPENDEES

Profiles of Selected Suspendees

The following brief profiles are composed of data gathered from suspension letters, Discipline Information Questionnaires, and other sources. Certain subjects may not be typical of their suspension groups as they were randomly selected to be profiled.

Profile 1 (Chronic suspendee):

Les, a 13-year-old eighth grader, had been suspended from school three times by April 29 of the 1980-81 school year. On September 22, 1980, Les was placed in in-school suspension for three days for entering a restricted area (dining hall) and stealing ice cream from a school freezer. On February 5, 1981, he was again placed in in-school suspension, this time for only one day. He was caught smoking on school premises. Finally, on February 24, 1981, Les was placed on suspension (in-school) for 10 days for unauthorized absences from school and forging his parents' signatures on absentee notes.

Les indicated on the Discipline Information Questionnaire that he had been suspended from school only once in previous years, although he had been referred to the principal's office three times or more for misbehavior. He also indicated that one of his closest friends had been suspended several times during the school year.

Les lives with his father, stepmother, a brother, and a sister. His family has moved at least twice since he entered school as a kindergartener.

According to Les, he frequently participates in school related extracurricular activities.

Profile 2 (Chronic suspendee):

Norris, a 12-year-old sixth grader, had been suspended from school at least three times by April 29 of the 1980-81 school year. On October 22, 1980, he was suspended from school for three days (out-of-school) for fighting in the hallway between classes. On January 23, 1981, Norris was involved in another fight; this time he was suspended for five days. On March 6, 1981, he was referred to the assistant principal's office for refusing to stop talking and other disruptive classroom behavior. The assistant principal assigned him to three days of in-school suspension.

Prior to the 1980-81 school year, Norris had been referred to the principal's office at least three times for misbehavior; however, he had never been suspended from school prior to the 1980-81 school year. Norris also indicated on the Discipline Information Questionnaire that at least one of his close friends had been suspended from school during the school year.

Norris lives with his parents, a brother, and a sister. His family has moved more than three times since he started school. He has attended seven different elementary schools and is currently enrolled in his first middle school. Norris has not failed any grades since entering school.

Norris indicated that he seldom participates in school related extracurricular activities.

Profile 3 (Chronic suspendee):

Ken, a 12-year-old seventh grader, had been suspended from school four times by April 29 of the 1980-81 school year. On October 30, 1980, he was given three days of in-school suspension for disruptive classroom behavior. On January 23, 1981, he was suspended out of school for a three day period, this time for fighting. On February 20, 1981, Ken made a series of obscene gestures toward several female students, causing him to be suspended for five days. On March 20, 1981, Ken pushed another pupil down the hall and then tried to start a fight with him on the bus ramp. On the same day, he started a fight on the bus with even another pupil. For this, he was suspended out-of-school and referred to the Central Office. As a result of the Central Office conference, he was placed on strict administrative probation for the remainder of the school year.

Ken's responses to questions on the Discipline Information Questionnaire indicated that, prior to the 1980-81 school year, he had never been suspended from school. However, he admitted to being referred to the principal's office three or more times for disciplinary reasons in past school years. Ken reported that only one of his close friends had been suspended from school during the current school year.

An only child, Ken lives with his mother, who is a single parent. They have moved more than three times since Ken started school, resulting in his having attended three different elementary schools prior to enrolling in his present middle school.

According to Ken, he "seldom" participates in school related extracurricular activities.

Profile 4 (Casual suspendee):

Patrick, a 12-year-old seventh grader, was given a three day in-school suspension on February 24, 1981, his only suspension from school prior to April 29 of the 1980-81 school year.

Although he had been referred to the principal's office more than three times in previous years, he had never been suspended from school before. Patrick also indicated that two of his close friends had been suspended from school during the 1980-81 school year.

Patrick lives with his parents, two brothers, and a sister. His family has moved once since he started school, resulting in his attending one elementary school and two middle schools. He has not failed a grade since entering school.

Patrick indicated on the Discipline Information Questionnaire that he frequently participates in school related extracurricular activities.

Profile 5 (Casual suspendee):

Kenny, a 13-year-old sixth grader, was suspended from school once before April 29 of the 1980-81 school year. On October 2, 1980, he was involved in a fight, resulting in a three day out-of-school suspension.

On the Discipline Information Questionnaire, Kenny indicated that he had never been suspended from school before. He reported "no close friends suspended" during the current school year. He also reported "no referrals to the principal's office" for disciplinary reasons since starting school.

Kenny lives with his parents and a sister. His family has moved once since he started school. He has attended two elementary schools and two middle schools, including the present one. He has also failed one grade, placing him one grade level below other pupils in his age group.

Kenny indicated that he "never" participates in school related extracurricular activities.

Profile 6 (Casual suspendee):

Mark, a 13-year-old sixth grader, was suspended from school on March 3, 1981 for horseplay, disruptions in the classroom, and an accumulation of office referrals. For these infractions, he was given a three day out-of-school suspension, his only suspension from school prior to April 29 of the 1980-81 school year.

Prior to the 1980-81 school year, Mark had been suspended from school three or more times and referred to the principal's office at least three times for school misbehavior. However, Mark noted that none of his close friends had been suspended from school during the current school year.

Mark, an only child, lives with his mother and father. His family has moved only once since he started school; however, he has attended three different elementary schools and is presently enrolled in his first middle school. Mark reported failing three grades since starting school.

Mark also reports that he seldom participates in school related extracurricular activities.

Profile 7 (Nonsuspendee):

Sammy, a 13-year-old seventh grader, had not been suspended from school as of April 29 of the 1980-81 school year. In fact, in response to items on the Discipline Information Questionnaire, he indicated that he had never been suspended from school.

Sammy has been referred to the principal's office only once for misbehavior since he started school. None of his close friends experienced suspension during the 1980-81 school year.

Sammy, an only child, lives with his mother and father. His family has moved only once since he

started school. Sammy has never failed a grade.

Sammy reports that he "frequently" participates in school related extracurricular activities.

Profile 8 (Nonsuspendee):

Peter, a 17-year-old eighth grader, had not been suspended from school as of April 29 of the 1980-81 school year.

Peter had been referred to the principal's office at least three times for disciplinary reasons in previous school years. However, he had been suspended from school only once since entering at kindergarten level. Two of his close friends had been suspended during the 1980-81 school year.

Peter lives with his parents and his sister. His family has not moved since he started school. Peter has attended one elementary school and two middle schools, failing three grades.

According to Peter, he "never" participates in school related extracurricular activities.

Profile 9 (Nonsuspendee):

Carl, a 14-year-old eighth grader, had not been suspended from school as of April 29 of the 1980-81 school year. Although he had been referred to the principal's office for disciplinary reasons in previous years, he had never been suspended from school.

In responding to items on the Discipline Information Questionnaire, Carl indicated that none of his close friends had experienced suspension during the 1980-81 school year.

Carl lives with his parents, a brother, and a sister. His family has not moved since he entered school at kindergarten level. He has attended one elementary school and one middle school, never failing a grade.

Carl also indicated that he is a "frequent" participant in school related extracurricular activities.

The profiles above, comprised of randomly selected respondents, present some rather interesting observations. The frequently suspended pupils (chronic suspendees) reported higher frequencies in two categories; referrals to the principal's office and friends suspended during the school year. Frequencies in the other categories (suspensions in prior years, family mobility factors, and failure) were fairly evenly distributed among the profiled subjects.

APPENDIX G

SCHOOL DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PUPIL PERSONNEL

6017

STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURESSECTION 1 -- ResponsibilitiesPart 1 -- The School Environment

Students are responsible, with each principal, faculty, and staff member, for maintaining a school environment in which educational programs can flourish and extracurricular programs can go forward for the pleasure and benefit of all participants.

- A. Violation of Laws, Rules, and Regulations - No student shall violate, while on school property or while under the supervision of school authority, any laws or rules and regulations of the School Board and the school.
- B. Drugs and Intoxicants - The use, possession, or distribution of intoxicants and the illegal use of drugs on school property or in association with any school activity is prohibited.
- C. Gambling - Gambling in any form is prohibited on school property or in association with any school activity.
- D. Vandalism - No student shall maliciously or willfully injure, damage, or destroy school property or personal property of others.
- E. Weapons and Explosives - No student shall possess unauthorized firearms, knives, military armament or any other type of weapon or smoke bombs and explosives, including fireworks, on school property or in association with any school activity.

Part 2 -- The Individual Student in the School

Students have a primary responsibility for creating a climate of mutual respect and trust in each school in order that the dignity of the individual is protected and the hopes and ambitions of each student may be realized.

- A. Violence or Disruption - No student shall behave in a disorderly manner or in any other manner interrupt or disturb the orderly operation of the school while on school property or under the supervision of school authority.
- B. Verbal Abuse and Vulgarly - No student shall curse or verbally abuse anyone or use vulgar, profane, or indecent language, nor shall any student be subjected to such verbal abuse from any source.

Part 2 -- The Individual Student in the School (continued) 6017

C. Forgery - No student shall forge any writing or attempt to employ as true any forged writing knowing it to be forged.

D. Dishonesty - No student shall lie to any school employee. No student shall take or attempt to take any property, including money, which does not rightfully belong to him/her. No student shall present academic work for credit which is not the original work of the student, except where research papers and related writing projects are properly annotated. No student shall cheat on any quiz, test, or examination.

Part 3 -- The School Staff

The principals of the schools and those to whom they delegate the authority for the discipline of students, including teachers, are responsible for the consistent and uniform application of all School Board policies and all school regulations.

A. Violation of Laws, Rules, and Regulations - The Code of Virginia, as amended, and the United States Code govern the conduct of all persons on school property and/or under the authority of the school. Violations of such laws shall not be tolerated and shall be dealt with as School Board policy, school regulations, and/or laws direct.

B. Vandalism - Students and parents may be held directly responsible for the willful damage or destruction of school property.

C. Weapons - All employees of the school division shall confiscate unauthorized weapons pending transmittal to the parents of the student or to a law enforcement officer. Weapons described in Section 1, Part 1E, of this policy shall be deemed to be unauthorized unless the student has the express prior written permission of the principal for the possession of the weapon on school property or in association with any school activity.

Part 4 -- Smoking

Smoking is considered a hazard to health by medical authorities and the School Board.

A. Smoking by elementary and junior high school students on school property or in association with any school activity at any time is prohibited.

Part 4 -- Smoking (continued)

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B. Senior high school principals may designate one or more reasonable outdoor areas where smoking may be permitted during specified times.

C. Senior high school principals may designate certain indoor areas for smoking during certain extracurricular activities held outside of regular school hours.

D. Smoking by senior high school students is prohibited except as provided in sub-parts B and C above.

SECTION 2 -- EnforcementPart 1 -- Forms of Enforcement

A. Warning and Counseling - Warning and counseling should be used where appropriate to assist a student to understand when his/her conduct interferes with his/her educational process, threatens the rights of others, or is contrary to school policy or regulations and needs to be corrected.

B. Detention - A student may be detained for a reasonable period of time after the closing of his/her last scheduled class and may be required during this time to engage in such activities as may reasonably contribute to better behavior. Any student who has been assigned detention time shall promptly inform his/her parents. Except in certain circumstances, a student shall be given at least one day's notice if he/she has been assigned detention time.

C. Suspension from Extracurricular Activities - A student's privilege to participate in all or certain extracurricular activities and/or school sponsored activities may be suspended for a fixed period of time or until certain specified conditions have been fulfilled. Suspension from extracurricular activities may be imposed in conjunction with other penalties.

D. Suspension from School - A student's privilege to attend school may be suspended under authority of Sections 22-230.1 and 22-230.2 of the Code of Virginia for violations of this Policy as further set forth herein.

E. Expulsion from School - A student's privilege to attend school may be terminated by the School Board under authority of Section 22-230.2 of the Code of Virginia for violations of this Policy.

Part 2 -- Suspension from School

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School officials shall thoroughly consider each case of misconduct or continual misconduct to justify any suspension in order to insure that the misconduct does threaten the welfare of the school or other students, disrupt the educational process, deprive other students of an effective opportunity to pursue their own education, or violate school regulations or School Board policies.

Suspension - A student may be suspended for any violation or violations of any section of this policy. The first suspension in a school year may be for three school days. The second suspension in the same school year may be for five school days. All subsequent suspensions in the same school year shall be conditioned upon a satisfactory conference with an assistant superintendent who will determine the length. A suspended student may not enter any school building or come onto any school property during the period of suspension except with the prior permission of the principal. Any student who is suspended from any Chesterfield County School and who is also enrolled in a vocational school shall be deemed to be suspended from both his/her home school and the vocational school. A student enrolled in a work cooperative program who is suspended may be also restricted from employment during the tenure of his/her suspension.

Conduct which may constitute cause for suspension shall include, but not be limited to, any of the following:

1. continued and willful disobedience
2. open defiance of the authority of any employee of the school system
3. conduct of such character as to constitute a continuing danger to the physical well-being of others
4. fighting or physical assault upon another student or upon any teacher, administrator, other school employee, or any other person
5. taking or attempting to take another person's personal property or money including school owned property or money
6. willfully causing, or attempting to cause damage to school property
7. participation in the unauthorized occupancy of any part of the school or school grounds, or failure to leave promptly after having been directed to do so by the principal or other school employee or law enforcement officer.
8. use, possession, distribution, or being under the influence of intoxicants or illegal drugs on school property, or in association with any school activity and as further set forth in School Board Policy 6007

Part 2 -- Suspension from School (continued)

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9. use or possession of any unauthorized firearm, knife, military armament, or any other weapon on school property or in association with any school activity or the use or possession of any explosives, including fireworks
10. violation of smoking regulations
11. cursing or verbally abusing any person
12. willful interruption or substantial disturbance of any school
13. trespassing upon the property of any other Chesterfield County school during the regular school day
14. any threat or attempt to bomb, burn, or destroy in any manner a school building or any portion thereof
15. violation of law or School Board policy or school regulations
16. leaving school grounds without the prior written permission of the principal or his/her designee
17. the accumulation of ten demerits in one semester
18. any other conduct which, in the judgment of the principal, interferes with the orderly operation of the school

Part 3 -- Criminal Charges

The School Board recognizes that certain misconduct that may constitute just cause for suspension may also constitute probable cause that a State or Federal law has been violated. The principal is specifically authorized by this policy to impose a penalty or penalties provided by School Board policy or by school regulation for a case of misconduct or to seek through the appropriate legal means criminal adjudication of the misconduct or both, if in the judgment of the principal the circumstances warrant.

SECTION 3 -- Due Process

With the inherent requirements of fair and equitable treatment of all students within the Chesterfield County Public Schools and with the guidelines of the Federal Judiciary the following shall constitute the minimum procedures to be followed in the detention and suspension of students.

Part 1 -- Detention

- A. The student shall be apprised of the nature and facts of the alleged misconduct.
- B. The student shall be given an opportunity to explain the circumstances of the alleged misconduct from his/her perspective and to

Part 1 -- Detention (continued)

6017

present witnesses on his/her behalf.

- C. The student should be informed of any detention time assigned at least one school day prior to the time to be served in order that the student may have an opportunity to make transportation arrangements.
- D. The parents of elementary school students shall be notified at least one school day prior to the time to be served in order that the student may have an opportunity to make transportation arrangements.

Part 2 -- Suspension

- A. The student shall be apprised of the nature and facts of the alleged misconduct.
- B. The student shall be given an opportunity to explain the circumstances of the alleged misconduct from his/her perspective and to present witnesses on his/her behalf.
- C. The student shall be informed of the conditions of the suspension, such as required parental conference prior to return, prohibition from coming on school property and/or to scheduled school activities, etc.
- D. The principal shall execute a letter of suspension stating the condition of the suspension and the date that the student may return to school. Copies of the letter of suspension shall be given to the student, if possible, and mailed to the student's parents and to the Superintendent or his designee.

Part 3 -- Appeals

- A. The parents of a suspended student or the student, if he/she is eighteen years or older, may appeal the decision of a principal to suspend to the assistant superintendent assigned to the student's school area.
- B. The decision of the assistant superintendent may be appealed to the Superintendent.
- C. The decision of the Superintendent may be appealed to the School Board on a regular meeting date of the Board in accordance with the following regulations:
 - 1. The accused student shall be informed of the charges against him and be apprised of his rights.

Part 3 -- Appeals (continued)6017

2. The parents or guardians of the student shall be informed through written statement of the specific reasons for the action taken and be apprised of the procedures for a formal hearing.
 - (a) The right to appear before the School Board
 - (b) The right to have witnesses and to cross-examine complaining witnesses.
 - (c) The right to be represented by legal counsel or adviser.
 - (d) The right to a hearing.
 - (e) The right to testify and present evidence.
 - (f) The date of the proposed hearing.
3. The school officials shall assure that appropriate records of the hearing be kept and that the accused be provided a copy of the summary report.
4. The accused shall be informed by written notice of the decision rendered and the basis for such action.

Revised 9/28/77
Effective 9/28/77

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the scanned document**

SUSPENSEES IN A SUBURBAN MIDDLE SCHOOL SETTING

by

John Cornelius Baskerville

(ABSTRACT)

The literature is inundated with data on 1) academic achievement, 2) family relations, 3) peer relations, and 4) general self-concept in relation to other areas. The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between the same variables and the frequency of school suspensions.

Raw scores, including full scale and subscale scores, on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) and the Parent Perception Inventory (PPI) were used as the basis for comparing three suspension groups: 1) nonsuspendees (N=14), 2) one-time suspendees (N=17), and 3) three (or more) time suspendees (N=15). Descriptive data were gathered in the areas of 1) sex, age, and family characteristics, 2) academic status, 3) school discipline history, and 4) family mobility.

A one-way analysis of variance was applied to the data to determine if there were significant differences among group mean scores. The Scheffé test was applied to determine where differences occurred between specific groups.

Three-time suspendees reported significantly lower mean scores than nonsuspendees on the overall SEI and subscale "general self" of the SEI.

Three-time suspendees reported significantly lower mean scores than nonsuspendees on 1) the overall PPI, 2) PPI subscale "school--achievement," 3) PPI subscale "family relations," and 4) PPI subscale "general self." Three-time suspendees also reported significantly lower scores than one-time suspendees on PPI subscale "school--achievement."

In terms of descriptive data, noteworthy findings were that 1) three-time suspendees reported higher frequencies of "friends suspended during the school year" and "suspensions in prior years" than the other two groups and 2) nonsuspendees reported more placements in higher level mathematics and English classes.