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The Exclusion of Black Girls: A Quantitative Study

by

Ursula Moorer

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Presented to the

Faculty of the

College of Education, Information, and Technology

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Hubert and Elaine Moorer. My first cheerleaders, teachers and protectors. The foundation both of you instilled carries with me today. You taught me to be kind and to keep my heart pure. I witnessed your dedication to community service and your strong commitment to social justice through your advocacy work. You raised me to be great and never settle. You taught me that life isn't always fair and sometimes you have to create your own path to manifest your dreams. Your unconditional love always made me feel safe and allowed me to take risks. All these things molded me into I am the woman I am today. I am blessed to have you as my parents. Daddy, I know you are watching over me smiling. Just know, your princess followed the plan. Mommy, my favorite girl, we did it!

I dedicate this dissertation to my family. My brother, nieces, and nephew mean the world to me. Thank you for allowing me to be me and loving me for who I am. To my brother, your little big sister has finally grown up. To all my aunts, uncles, and cousins thank you for the love and support through the years.

I dedicate this dissertation to my friends. My friends are my family. Thank you for listening and supporting me through this whole process. Allowing me to interview you, helping with writing sessions, helping to get me organized, checking on me, cheering me on, sending me articles, and not allowing me to quit. All your understanding and words of encouragement helped me to persevere.

Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to all Black girls. You are not invisible, you are special, you are loved, you deserve to be heard, and you matter.

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ABSTRACT

Existing research consistently indicates that Black girls are assigned disproportionately exclusionary disciplinary consequences such as, suspension and expulsion rates, surpassing their White counterparts and Black boys. According to the Report to Congressional Requesters, (United States Governmental Accountability Office, 2018), exclusionary discipline is any type of removal from a student's normal educational setting. This quantitative correlational study examined the relationship between the racial demographics within a school's student and personnel populations and occurrences of suspensions faced by Black female students in grades 9 through 12. Archival data were used from the New York State Education Department (NYSED) website. NYSED data are publicly available and provides information regarding the New York State Board of Regents, New York State education certifications, learning standards and instruction, data and reporting, and school business. The sample was comprised of 80 high schools from Long Island, NY with solely grades 9-12. The study used descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression models for data analysis. The descriptive statistics showed Black girls were assigned disproportionate in-school and out-of-school suspensions. This study sought to understand the relationship between the racial demographics of a school and the suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12. The overall model of the first dependent variable of out-of-school suspensions Black/African American and the second dependent variable in-school suspensions Black/African American was statistically significant. Student race of Black/African American was a significant predictor of out-of-school and in-school suspensions for Black girls. Additionally, the study sought understand the relationship between the racial demographics of the school personnel and the suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9-12. The overall model for the dependent variables, out-of-school suspensions Black/African American and in-school suspensions, was not statistically significant. The study's findings indicated how race plays a

major role of suspensions for Black girls on Long Island. The implications of the study show that school suspensions are related to long term negative consequences for Black girls on Long Island.

Keywords: Black girls, school personnel, exclusionary discipline, school suspension, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The catalyst for this dissertation stemmed from a detailed reflection of my educational journey as an educator and a student. My first year as a teacher was challenging because I was ill-equipped and inexperienced. Despite my willingness to work hard, I found myself navigating uncharted territory, existing in survival mode for the first three years of my career. I encountered difficulties in tailoring instruction and behavioral interventions to meet the individual needs of my students while adhering to state learning standards. Many of my students were several grade levels behind in literacy and mathematics, which complicated efforts to provide effective instruction for each of my students. Despite my strong belief in every student's ability to learn, I required additional support to educate my students. In my quest for professional improvement, I consistently sought advice from seasoned educators.

During my first year of teaching, one of the challenges was classroom and behavioral management. Removing students from class for behavioral issues was routine practice in my classroom. As a student in grades kindergarten through twelve, I observed this practice daily. I was under the impression; this was an effective behavioral intervention. Upon reflection after my first year of teaching, I realized this practice yielded marginal long-term success with students. Eventually, I recognized the limitations and ineffectiveness of certain forms of exclusionary discipline with students. Through mentorship and extensive self-reflection, there was significant improvement in my classroom and behavioral management practices. I established classroom routines and communicated clear behavioral expectations to all students. Involving students in creating classroom rules and procedures fostered a strong sense of community in my classroom. I also focused on deescalating behavioral situations, encouraged students to reflect on their

behavior, and following up with all involved after any behavioral incidents. As a result of these changes, I rarely removed students from class and took pride in the progress made.

The student racial demographics of the school where my teaching career began were like the schools I attended but starkly contrasted in school culture. The school's student racial population was predominately Black, and the second most represented racial group was Hispanic/Latino. A noticeable difference in school culture was the routine school bag searches for students during school arrival and the presence of school safety agents that resembled the local police force. This was foreign to me and as an adult made me feel uncomfortable at times, but I never challenged this practice. Most students received free or reduced lunch and used public transportation to travel to school.

I transitioned to a different school district during my fourth year of teaching. I immediately noticed differences in the support systems for student behavior compared to where my teaching career began. There was a presence of security guards with no resemblance of local police officers. The student body was racially diverse and the school personnel were predominately White. Although the school had the same number of students and deans as the previous school where I worked, it employed various personnel dedicated to student support in all aspects of education. The resources available to address student behavior significantly contrasted my prior experiences working in education. The resources included social workers, school counselors, and psychologists working in collaboration with teachers and administrators. Being at the early stage of my career, I sought guidance on utilizing these resources effectively. My administrators and colleagues were invaluable in providing support and sharing pertinent background information about students that would aid the teacher in providing a quality education for a student. This was a school environment that mirrored my educational experience

as a student. Before my tenure in this school district, delving into the root causes of student behavior was not a priority.

With over 20 years invested in my educational career, my focus on student behavior and the student accountability measures by school districts intensified. Over time, the racial demographics of the school district shifted to predominantly comprising Black students. The change in racial demographics prompted me to dissect the school's code of conduct and zero-tolerance policies, with deep introspection into the underlying reasons behind student behavior. The varied perspectives among administrators on discipline became apparent during my inquiry. One of my responsibilities was assigning various forms of exclusionary discipline to students. Through experience and observation, exclusionary discipline produces minor improvements in student behavior, but raised concerns regarding its disproportionate application to Black girls. Considering the disparities, it was imperative to interrogate the root causes of the disproportionate issuance of exclusionary discipline targeting Black girls.

Background Information

The history of exclusionary school discipline for Black girls in the United States reflects deep-seated biases and systemic inequalities within the education system. Dating back to the era of United States chattel slavery, Black girls were often denied access to formal education altogether, and those who did attend schools faced discriminatory treatment and harsh disciplinary measures (Hine, 1994). During the post-Civil War period, segregated schools for Black children perpetuated these discriminatory practices, further marginalizing Black girls and reinforcing negative stereotypes (Crenshaw, 1991). Despite efforts to address discriminatory discipline practices during the Civil Rights Movement, Black girls continued to experience disproportionate exclusionary discipline, including suspension and expulsion, contributing to the

pervasive school-to-prison pipeline ([STPP] Morris, 2016b). Recently, attention was given to the disproportionate impact of exclusionary discipline of Black girls.

Exclusionary discipline in United States public schools has severe consequences for Black girls' well-being, educational experiences, academic performance, self-esteem, mental health, and overall development. According to Lieberman and Loewenberg (2022), exclusionary discipline refers to a school disciplinary action that removes a student from their typical education setting. The United States government tracks three types of exclusionary discipline: in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions (U.S. Department of Education for Civil Rights, 2021). Research shows Black girls often face harsher disciplinary measures than their peers, including higher suspensions and expulsions, which disrupts learning and contributes to the STPP phenomenon (Morris, 2016b). Aldrige (2018) defined the STPP as a “phenomenon which criminalizes student behaviors and increases a student’s likelihood of involvement in the criminal justice system” (para 2).

According to the United States Education Department, Office of Civil Rights Data Collection (OCR) (2023), there were approximately 23.9 million girls enrolled in public schools in grades K-12 and Black girls accounted for 7% of the total female population during the 2020-2021 school year. During the 2017 – 2018 school year, Black girls received 11.2% of in-school suspensions and 13.3% of out-of-school suspensions, which is nearly twice the female public-school enrollment in the United States (U.S Education Department, Office Civil Rights Data Collection 2021). According to the most recent nationally reported data from the 2020 – 2021 school year, 88% of United States students were provided hybrid instruction and 5% of students were provided solely virtual instruction due to COVID-19 (U.S Education Department, Office Civil Rights Data Collection 2021). Even with the changes in the modality in the delivery of

instruction provided to students, Black girls received 8% of in-school suspensions and 9% of out of school suspensions. The reported data confirmed a significant disparity of out-of-school and in-school suspension rates for Black girls in schools in the United States. According to Frohlich et al. (2014), Black girls were 5.5 times more likely to be suspended than White girls and 2.5 times more likely to be suspended than White boys in grades kindergarten through 12th grade. This trend begins as early as preschool; in the 2017-2018 school year Black girls comprised 8.6% of preschool enrollment in the United States but accounted for 9.1% of all preschool suspensions in the United States (United States Education Department, Office of Civil Rights Data Collection, 2021).

The reasons for the disparities are complex. A contributing factor is implicit bias among educators who perceive Black girls' behavior as disruptive or aggressive. Although many Americans believe Black people should not be treated differently, unconsciously there are negative associations with Black people because of frequent occurrences of antiblackness in the American society (Marcucci, 2019). Black girls are often perceived as "angry" or "promiscuous" and are subject to harsher punishment for minor offenses (Morris, 2016b). Perceptions of Black girls are rooted in the treatment of Black women in the United States throughout history. According to Dumas and Nelson (2016), during slavery Black children were viewed as property and even toddlers were required to work. Dumas and Nelson also explained that Black children were subjected to the same disciplinary measures as Black adults and were never permitted to exhibit child-like behavior. To continue with this thought, Morris (2016b) indicated Black girls are treated as if they possess prior knowledge of model behavior and are choosing to misbehave. According to Blake et al. (2017), treating Black children in this manner reinforces a perception

to the children that their misbehavior is deliberate in contrast to White children, which perpetuates harmful stereotypes of Black children.

The outcomes of these discipline disparities are significant. Suspended students are at greater risk of dropping out of school, becoming involved in the juvenile justice system, and experiencing other adverse outcomes (Lacoe & Steinberg, 2018). Students that have been suspended, expelled, or repeat a grade in middle school have an increased likelihood of being arrested when they are older (Annamma et al., 2016). Addressing these disparities requires an all-inclusive approach that includes policy changes, teacher training, and efforts to combat implicit bias and discrimination in schools. Schools must take proactive measures to ensure Black girls are not unfairly punished and instead receive the support needed to address their unique needs.

Exclusionary discipline can limit the educational opportunities available to Black girls. Black girls experience a lack of access to advanced courses, gifted programs, and extracurricular activities, which can hinder their academic growth and future opportunities (Crenshaw et al., 2015). According to the United States Education Department, Office of Civil Rights Data Collection, 2017-2018, 42.9% of transfers to alternative schools were Black children, while Black children were 15.1% of the total school population. An alternative school can address the behavioral needs of elementary through high school students that cannot be met in a regular school program (United States Education Department, Office of Civil Rights Data Collection 2021). Additionally, biased curricula and teaching practices perpetuate racial stereotypes, spare cultural experiences, and damage sense of belonging in educational settings.

Statement of the Problem

A vast amount of scholarly research examining racial disparities in school discipline focuses on Black boys because they are more likely to be severely punished in comparison to all other racial groups (Peterson et al., 1997). According to the U. S. Department of Education Statistics (2021), there is a steady increase in the disproportionate number of Black females represented in exclusionary discipline. Scholarly research on Black girls tends to be from a deficit lens and celebrates the resiliency of Black girls, but never addresses the contributing factors in a school setting that negatively affects Black girls (Evans - Winter & Esposito, 2010).

Exclusionary discipline of Black girls overlaps with other forms of discrimination, such as sexism and classism, further intensifying the challenges faced by Black girls. When discussing Black girls Morris (2016b) said:

Black women and girls in America are subjected to dormant assumptions about their sexuality, their “anger, or their “attitude.” They have long understood that their way of engaging with the world – how they talk, how they walk, how they wear their hair, or how they hold their bodies – is subject to scrutiny, especially by those in positions of relative power. They feel the gaze. They intuit its presence. They live with the knowledge in their bodies and subconsciously wrestle with every personal critique of how they navigate their environments. (p. 35)

Although the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees equal protection under the law, research shows Black girls are being denied of their constitutional rights. Furthermore, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed 60 years ago to enforce the desegregation of public schools and end discrimination based on race and class, but Black girls are still suffering. More research is needed to explore how race and gender intersect to shape Black girls' experiences with

exclusionary discipline. Without further research, Black girls will continue to be disciplined disproportionately.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine if racial the demographics of a school's student population has a relationship with the rates of exclusionary discipline, in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions, imposed on Black girls in grades 9 – 12. This study compared female students in-school and out-of-school suspension rates by school district and race. Additionally, this study examined the races of school personnel from high schools with grades 9 - 12 to determine if there was a relationship with race of the school's personnel and suspension rates of Black girls. Overall, this study aimed to assess different factors that contribute to the disproportionate number of Black girls receiving suspensions.

Significance of Study

The research findings may guide educators, policymakers, parents, and community members in addressing the disparities in exclusionary discipline of Black girls. Schools can utilize this research to provide training for educators, enabling them to recognize and counteract implicit bias. Moreover, the results accentuate the need for further study in examining exclusionary discipline across different racial groups. To resolve these disparities, it is necessary to have an all-inclusive approach involving the active participation of educators, policymakers, parents, and community members. By working together, a more equitable and just educational system can be established to benefit all students.

Research showed that the overuse of exclusionary disciplinary has negative consequences for Black children's academic success and future opportunities. A report by the Council of State Governments Justice Center (Fable et al., 2011) found that students who were suspended or expelled were more likely to be held back a grade, drop out of school, and become involved in

the juvenile justice system. According to Johnson and Johnson (2023), when students are not in school, they are likely to be loitering in the streets leading them to get into serious trouble which can make them more susceptible to victimization. This has long-lasting impacts on the individual and their communities, contributing to the cycle of poverty and inequity.

Poverty combined with race increases challenges faced by Black girls in education. Students from low-income families often attend underfunded schools with limited resources, widening existing disparities in academic achievement (Aldo et al., 2020). The relationship between poverty and race is evident in the disproportionate impact of economic deprivation on Black communities that stems from systemic inequalities perpetuated by historical legacies and contemporary circumstances (Chetty et al., 2020). As a result, Black girls are more likely to attend schools lacking support systems and face numerous barriers to academic success.

Poverty creates barriers to accessing support services that could alleviate the factors leading to disciplinary issues among Black girls. Financial difficulties often limit Black families ability to seek counseling or therapy for underlying trauma or mental health issues (Lewis et al., 2017). Without adequate support systems in place, Black girls may resort to behaviors that increase the likelihood of disciplinary actions. The intersection of poverty and race further marginalizes Black girls within the school environment, perpetuating a cycle of neglect and punitive measures (Morris 2016b).

Suspension rates and zero tolerance policies are major contributors to the STPP, particularly for Black girls. According to Knoff and Raffaele (2003), zero tolerance policies contribute to the STPP, as these policies often result in the exclusion of vulnerable students from educational settings, increasing their likelihood of involvement with the juvenile justice system. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including those living in poverty or with disabilities,

are more likely to be subjected to punitive disciplinary measures under zero tolerance policies (Skiba et al., 2014). This approach fails to address the underlying factors contributing to student misbehavior, such as trauma, mental health issues, or socioeconomic stressors. These are reasons for reforming disciplinary practices in schools to prioritize prevention, intervention, and support over punitive exclusionary discipline.

It is imperative for schools and districts to adopt more inclusive and effective approaches to discipline that prioritize repairing harm and restoring relationships rather than punishing students for misbehavior. Restorative discipline strategies offer a range of benefits specifically tailored to the needs of Black girls within educational settings. These approaches prioritize building relationships, fostering empathy, and facilitating dialogue among students, educators, and administrators (Morris, 2016a). Using a restorative approach, students are held accountable for their actions by using interventions that aim at changing perspectives and healing (Mallett, 2016). Restorative practices foster values and principles that advocate for active listening and dialogue, ensuring that all voices within the community are heard and respected, validating their experiences and needs (Amstutz & Mullett, 2015). Using an approach centered on understanding rather than punishment, empowers Black girls to address conflicts collaboratively and promotes a sense of belonging (Morris, 2016a).

Additionally, high suspension rates can have a negative impact on the broader community. Marcucci (2019) believed school discipline is used to control the conditions Black students are permitted in educational spaces. When large numbers of students are suspended, it can create a culture of fear and mistrust in the community. This can lead to increased tension between the school and the community and can make it more difficult for schools to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Addressing discipline disparities for Black girls requires a systemic approach that addresses the root causes of inequities within educational systems. This includes advocating for policy reforms that dismantle punitive disciplinary policies and tracking practices that disproportionately impact Black girls (Morris, 2016a). Schools must also work to create environments that affirm the identities and experiences of Black girls, providing access to supportive resources and interventions that address trauma, mental health needs, and socioeconomic stressors (Morris, 2016a). Schools should also invest in professional development for educators to enhance cultural competence and bias awareness, enabling them to recognize and challenge implicit biases that may influence disciplinary decisions (Clark-Louque & Sullivan, 2020). Adopting a holistic approach to addressing discipline disparities, schools will create more equitable and inclusive learning environments that promote positive and safe environments for Black girls and all students.

Theoretical Frameworks

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that emerged in the late 20th century, primarily within legal studies, and has since expanded into various disciplines such as education, sociology, and political science (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT was founded on several core tenets that provide an approach to understanding and dismantling systemic racism within legal and social structures. The research focused on the tenants of interest convergence and intersectionality. The concept of interest convergence proclaims racial progress is likely to occur when it aligns with the interests of those in power (Bell, 1980). Intersectionality explores how social identities like race, class, and gender interact to shape life experiences, particularly in terms of privilege and oppression (Gopaldas, 2013). These tenets collectively contribute to the

development of CRT as a dynamic and critical framework for analyzing and addressing racial injustice.

Kimberle Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality” while writing the paper, *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics* (1989). Intersectionality refers to the interconnected nature of race, class, gender, and other identity factors, which create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage (Crenshaw, 1991). Crenshaw wrote to share the experiences of oppression Black women faced from gender and race. Additionally, she argued that understanding intersecting identities is essential for comprehensively addressing social inequality and oppression, as individuals experience discrimination not just based on one aspect of their identity but through the combination and interaction of various social factors. This framework highlights the complexity of social justice issues and underscores the need for inclusive approaches to advocacy and policymaking. Using CRT as a framework for this research may assist in navigating through the complex legal and social structures in the school system.

Adultification Theory

Adultification is a type of stereotype associated with adults perceiving a child as older in age and viewing them as less innocent and more mature than their same aged peers (Blake et al., 2017). Often adultification is applied with the lack of knowledge of a child’s behavior and is based solely on the child’s appearance (Culotta et al., 2014). This framework showed the perception of Black girls as not as innocent as their counter parts and how this stereotype impacts Black girls’ experiences in the school setting with exclusionary discipline.

Black Feminist Thought

Black feminist thought (BFT) is an intellectual framework that emerged in response to the limitations of traditional feminist theories, which often failed to address the experiences of Black women. Originating in the mid-20th century, BFT encompasses a rich and diverse body of scholarship that delves into the intersectionality of race, gender, and class. Bell Hooks, Audre Lorde, and Patricia Hill Collins played pivotal roles in shaping this theoretical perspective. Hooks (1981) argued for a more inclusive feminism that recognized the distinct struggles and experiences faced by Black women, which challenged dominant notions prioritized by the experiences of white women. Lorde (1981), through essays and poetry, emphasized the importance of embracing one's unique identity and the power arises from acknowledging and embracing differences.

Collins (1990) further expanded this idea, introducing the concept of the "matrix of domination" to explain how multiple systems of oppression intersect and reinforce each other. Reframing the understanding of domination experienced by Black women within any historical context as structured by an interwoven system of race, class, and gender oppression directs attention towards the interconnectedness of these systems rather than solely delineating their individual characteristics (Collins, 1990). In this study, BFT was a tool for understanding the complexities of identity and advocating for social justice by challenging and deconstructing intersecting systems of oppression.

Research Questions

While recent efforts have been made, such as implementing restorative practices, examining discipline policies, and establishing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committees in many schools, further research was warranted in this area. This research

addressed the following questions to explore the effects of exclusionary discipline on Black girls:

1. To what extent is there a statistical difference in suspension rates for Black girls compared to other racial groups in high school grades 9-12 between school districts?
2. To what extent is there a statistical relationship between the racial demographics of a school district and the suspensions rates of Black girls in high school grades 9 – 12?
3. To what extent is there a statistical relationship between the racial demographics of the school personnel and the suspension rates of Black girls in high school grades 9-12 compared to other racial groups of high school girls?

Definition of Terms

Black girls: The U.S. Census Bureau (2022) define Black as an individual having origins in any of the Black racial groups in Africa. According to The Meriam-Webster Dictionary (2023), a girl is defined as a female child from birth to adulthood and an adult is and individual after being 21 years of age defined by law. The study focused on Black girls in high school, ages 13 – 21.

School personnel: When the study refers to school personnel, this includes school instructional faculty and selected school building administration.

Exclusionary discipline: According to Lieberman and Loewenberg (2022), exclusionary discipline refers to a school disciplinary action that removes a student from their typical education setting. Examples are in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions. The study focused on in-school and out-of-school suspensions.

School suspension: According to The Meriam-Webster Dictionary (2023), a suspension is a temporary removal from privileges. Education Law § 3214 (3) (a) states that a student who is “insubordinate or disorderly or violent or disruptive, or whose conduct otherwise endangers the

safety, morals, health or welfare of others” can be suspended from school (*NYSED:SSS:S 3214 Student Placement, Suspensions and Transfers.*, 2011). The student is removed from their typical educational setting. The study used New York State Education Law.

In-school suspensions: The student is removed from their typical educational setting. The student will serve the in-school suspension in the school building they attend or an alternate setting. In-school suspensions do not exceed 5 days.

Out-of-school suspension: According to NYSED:SSS:S 3214 Student Placement, Suspensions and Transfers (2011), in the state of New York there are short term suspensions or long term suspensions. Short term suspensions are five or less days and known as “principal suspensions.” Long term suspensions are six or more days and are known as “superintendent’s suspensions.” During both suspensions the student is assigned to a different location. The study used New York State Education Law.

Limitations

All research has limitations, and this study was no exception. One significant limitation was that the focus was solely on selected high schools in Long Island, NY. This narrow scope overlooked the possibility that Black girls attending high schools outside Long Island, NY may face disproportionate suspension rates. Additionally, there was a possibility that Black girls below high school age encounter similar experiences. Although this was a quantitative study, the study was unable to infer causation. Lastly, the lack of qualitative data from both students and school personnel restricted a comprehensive understanding of the subject. Despite these constraints, this study offered quantitative insights that stimulate further discussion about the disproportionate number of suspensions of Black girls.

Chapter Summary

Exclusionary discipline, in-school and out-of-school suspensions, disproportionately affects Black girls, leading to negative consequences. The negative consequences include involvement in the juvenile justice system, poor academic achievement, and poverty. Factors contributing to these disparities include implicit biases among educators and societal perceptions of Black girls as more aggressive or less innocent. Addressing these inequities requires a comprehensive approach involving policy reforms, teacher training, and efforts to mitigate implicit bias in schools. The study investigated the relationship between school demographics, personnel, and exclusionary discipline rates for Black girls in grades 9-12 through the lens of CRT, adultification theory, and BFT. Despite its limitations in scope and data availability, the research contributes to ongoing discussions about disciplinary disparities and their impact on Black girls' educational experiences and outcomes. Chapter 2 includes literature that discusses factors that contribute to the disproportionate discipline of Black girls.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature reviewed included research that examined, described, and analyzed the factors contributing to the imposition of exclusionary discipline on Black girls. Clark-Loque and Sullivan (2020) asserted that disproportionate discipline based on race is not a new educational dilemma or discussion topic. The earliest published work detailing the disproportionate discipline of Black children dates back over four decades (Children's Defense Fund, 1975; Khan & Slate, 2016). Although attention was paid to racial disparities in school discipline, the disparities in United States schools remain. Disproportionate exclusionary discipline in the form of in-school and out-of-school suspension continues for Black girls. This review includes a synopsis of stereotypes of Black females, school discipline, zero-tolerance policies, discrimination, STPP, and teacher race.

Stereotypes of Black Females

The Jezebel stereotype, portraying Black women as overly sexual and immoral, began during slavery when Black women were sexually exploited by slave owners (Wallace-Sanders, 1995). According to Hooks (1981), this perception not only justified the sexual violence Black women endured but also reinforced beliefs about their inherent lack of morals. Contemporary media continues to portray Black women in a hypersexual manner, leading to their objectification and dehumanization (Collins, 2004). The continued portrayal of the Jezebel stereotype in the media undermines the independence and empowerment of Black women, reinforcing harmful stereotypes that contribute to systemic inequalities and violence against them.

The impact of the Jezebel stereotype extends into various aspects of Black women's lives, affecting their legal experiences and interpersonal relationships. In legal contexts, victims of

sexual violence may face skepticism and blame, with their experiences being invalidated due to the prejudiced belief that they are naturally promiscuous and thus cannot be truly victimized (Donovan & Williams, 2002). Likewise, in personal relationships, Black women may encounter unfounded assumptions about their sexual behaviors, leading to stigma and discrimination. Addressing the Jezebel stereotype requires critical engagement with and deconstruction of these harmful narratives, promoting a more respectful and nuanced understanding of Black women's identities and experiences (Collins, 2004).

Conversely, the Sapphire stereotype depicts Black women as loud, assertive, and emasculating, reinforcing the perception of their inherent aggression (Collins, 1990). This stereotype, obtained from the character Sapphire Stevens in the 1950s television show "Amos 'n' Andy," portrays Black women as commanding and persistent (Collins, 1990). According to Collins (1990), the Sapphire stereotype reinforces racialized and gendered stereotypes, which continues the marginalization and oppression endured by Black women. However, it neglects to recognize the diverse range of experiences and identities within the Black female population, thus perpetuating harmful narratives that undermine their humanity and dignity.

The Sapphire stereotype continues to influence contemporary perceptions of Black women, affecting how they are treated in various social contexts, including the workplace, media, and educational settings. It contributes to the adultification bias, where Black girls are viewed as less innocent and more aggressive than their peers, leading to disproportionate disciplinary actions in schools (Morris, 2016). This stereotype not only dehumanizes Black women but also limits their opportunities and reinforces systemic inequalities. By perpetuating the idea that Black women are inherently combative, the Sapphire stereotype undermines their

legitimate expressions of emotion and assertiveness, often resulting in their voices being dismissed or unfairly criticized (Collins, 1990).

The angry Black woman stereotype depicts Black women as angry, hostile, and irrational. This stereotype is often employed to dismiss and undermine the legitimate expressions of frustration and anger that Black women may experience in response to systemic injustices (Harris-Perry, 2011). This stereotype operates as an instrument of racial and gender oppression that silences Black women's voices and reinforces their marginalization in various atmospheres, including the workplace (Crenshaw, 1991). The presence of this stereotype in popular culture reinforces negative perceptions, making it difficult for Black women to be recognized as complex and multifaceted individuals. (Collins, 1990). By reducing Black women to this simplistic and negative image, the stereotype continues a cycle of discrimination and exclusion, obscuring their true diversity and contributions (West, 2008).

A study conducted by Thomas et al. (2004) highlighted the psychological impact of the angry Black woman stereotype on Black women. The researchers indicated that internalizing this stereotype can lead to increased stress and mental health issues, as Black women may feel pressured to suppress their emotions to avoid being perceived negatively. Emotional suppression can contribute to feelings of isolation and a lack of authenticity in personal and professional relationships. This study also showed that this stereotype can damage self-esteem and self-worth, as Black women might struggle with the internal conflict of wanting to express their true feelings while fearing the consequences of being labeled as angry or aggressive (Thomas et al., 2004).

Black Feminist Thought (BFT)

BFT is a critical social theory that centers on the experiences and perspectives of Black women, emphasizing their unique struggles and contributions to feminist discourse. Developed

by scholars like Patricia Hill Collins (2004), it challenges mainstream feminism's tendency to overlook the intersection of race and gender, arguing that Black women experience oppression in ways that are distinct from both white women and Black men.

Pivotal to BFT is the concept of intersectionality, introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw. Intersectionality suggests that social identities, such as race, gender, and class, do not exist in isolation but rather intersect to create unique experiences of oppression and privilege (Crenshaw, 1989). By considering the interconnected nature of race, gender, and other social categories, intersectionality provides a deeper analysis of the issues affecting Black women. This perspective became fundamental to feminist and critical race theories. Additionally, BFT places a strong emphasis on the role of knowledge production in the struggle for liberation. Black women's lived experiences and community-based knowledge are seen as vital sources of understanding and resistance against oppressive systems (Collins, 1990).

BFT was deeply influenced by Audre Lorde (1984), a Black feminist writer. Lorde stressed the importance of recognizing and valuing the diverse experiences of women, particularly Black women. She argued that the survival of marginalized communities hinges on embracing these differences rather than suppressing them in the name of unity (Lorde, 1984). Lorde's concept of dismantling the "master's house" with "the master's tools" highlighted the necessity of radical approaches rooted in the experiences of the most marginalized. She stressed the significance of Black women's voices in feminist discussion, offering invaluable insights into the dynamics of oppression and pathways to liberation.

Audre Lorde's contributions to BFT extend to her critique of the "matrix of domination," a concept further developed by Patricia Hill Collins. Lorde (1984) argued that interlocking systems of oppression, such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism, create a complex web

of domination that disproportionately affects Black women. This matrix of domination underscores the interconnectedness of these systems and the necessity of addressing them simultaneously. Lorde challenged the feminist movement to adopt a holistic approach to social justice that recognizes the full scope of oppression experienced by Black women.

School Discipline

In 1975, one of the first publications detailing the disproportionate discipline of Black children was entitled, *School Suspensions: Are They Helping Children? A Report* (1975). The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) examined suspension rates reported to the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) from 2,862 school districts. The study also included an independent survey of over 6,500 families in nine states and the District of Columbia as well as over 300 interviews of school officials and community leaders. According to the sample, 22 school districts suspended one-third to half of their Black students; one school district suspended 64% of Black students, and another district reported suspending 53% of Black students. During 1972 – 1973 school year, Black students accounted for 27.1% of the school population in the United States for schools reporting to the OCR but received 42.3% of racially identified suspensions. In the CDF study 4.4% of all students were suspended at least once but the rate for Black children was 7.7%. At the secondary level Black children were suspended more than three times as many times as White students. During the time of the survey OCR did not collect information about the gender of suspended students.

A teacher interviewed in this study shared how they felt the Black students were treated differently than their classmates of different races and were being suspended for the same behaviors for which White students were not suspended. Another teacher participant in the study reported that White school officials fear, misinterpret, and lack sensitivity toward Black children

which leads to more Black children being removed from the classroom than White children.

According to an interview from a participant in *School Suspensions: Are They Helping Children? A Report* (1975), the Black teacher reported:

A White teacher challenged the possession by a Black student of a “pick” – a style of Afro comb used by many Black students for grooming purposes. The teacher’s attempt to confiscate the comb resulted in resistance by the student and a confrontation. It is my belief that this situation occurred solely because of the inexperience of the people involved in relating to those of different backgrounds. It is also my belief, based on personal experience and observation, that when an incident of racial strife occurs, some teachers see the Black student as the original aggressor and as the source of the continuing threat to school order, even when neither perception is true. (p. 27)

During the time of this study, besides racial integration, there was not a national agenda of addressing racial insensitivity and discrimination in the United States public school system.

To examine perceptions of student behavior, Zimmermann (2018) conducted a study that focused on the intersection of race and gender disparities in teachers' perceptions of problematic student behavior. The study utilized a nationally representative sample of children surveyed from the start of kindergarten through the completion of fifth grade. The sampling methodology was comprised of a three-stage design: selection of U.S. counties, followed by schools within those counties, and ultimately students within 968 chosen schools. The dataset encompassed children's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. Additionally, the survey included inquiries about children's home environment, educational activities at home, school and classroom environments, curriculum, teacher qualifications, before-school, and after-school care. Zimmermann investigated racial differences within conventional gender categories and the

contrasting perceptions of Black girls' behavior compared to non-Black girls. The study found that girls of all racial and ethnic categories exhibited fewer behavioral problems than White boys and Black girls were perceived to have more problematic behaviors than White boys. Teachers tended to report more positive relationships with girls than with boys. However, when considering past behavior, Black girls do not receive more favorable evaluations compared to White boys (Zimmerman, 2018).

Combining academic and behavior concerns, Morris and Perry (2016) probed into the “punishment gap” where African American students were disproportionately subjected to suspensions compared to their White counterparts and its impact on academic achievement. Using data from the Kentucky School Discipline Study, the data analysis of the study focused on identifying the association between race and ethnicity, suspension, and academic achievement in grades 6 – 10 over a three-year period. According to Morris and Perry, after adjusting for socioeconomic status, African Americans and Latinos are more likely to be suspended than Whites and Asians in the same school. The researchers determined that students faced with suspension performed lower on end-of-year exams compared to their peers without a history of suspension. Additionally, students prone to suspension demonstrated weaker academic performances in the years they experienced suspension compared to the years they did not face disciplinary actions (Morris & Perry, 2016). Morris and Perry provided evidence that suspension hindered academic achievement and maintained the racial gap in academic achievement.

Solely examining discipline, Blake et al. (2010) investigated over one academic school year whether Black girls were subjected to unequal disciplinary measures compared to all female students, particularly when compared to White and Hispanic girls in both primary and secondary schools. Moreover, the study sought to explore the types of infractions for which Black girls

were disciplined in comparison to their same-gendered peers. This quantitative study used a sample of 9,364 female students with at least one discipline sanction to represent a racially and ethnically Midwestern school district. Blake et al. found that Black girls were disproportionately subjected to exclusionary discipline and were twice as likely to receive an in-school suspension than Hispanic female students and four times as likely to receive an in-school suspension in comparison to White female students. The researchers indicated that Black girls faced a significantly higher risk of receiving exclusionary discipline compared to White girls, as they were more prone to disciplinary actions that led to their removal from the classroom when compared to their counterparts (Blake et al., 2010).

Blake et al. (2010) found that the behavioral infractions that Black girls were disciplined for varied from their Hispanic and White counterparts. White girls were more likely to be referred than Black girls for truancy (Blake et al., 2010). They also found that Black girls were disciplined for defiance, followed by inappropriate dress, the use of profanity toward peers, and engaging in physical aggression. Blake et al. discussed the possibility that increased referral rates for Black girls could stem from them not following traditional standards of femininity and lack of consistency in defining defiant behavior within the educational system.

Annamma et al. (2016) had many of the same questions in a mixed methods study using Colorado's largest urban school district. The quantitative sample was comprised of 183 disciplined female participants in grades kindergarten to grade 12. This mixed methods study sought to identify racial differences in office referrals and whether Black girls were overrepresented in exclusionary discipline. The researchers also examined the reasons for Black girls being referred to as subjective or objective and the dominant narrative about Black girls. According to Annamma et al., the qualitative results showed that Black girls were more likely to

be referred for subjective reasons (ex., disobedience) versus objective reasons (e.g., alcohol possession). This study examined how behavior is perceived, and ultimately, if this perception caused Black girls to receive disproportionate amounts of discipline referrals. Annamma et al. found that Black girls were being punished based on the perception of a threat, non-compliance, and harm.

Annamma et al. (2016) also examined racial differences in discipline referrals and found that Black girls were 49% more likely to have their behavior labeled as defiant or disobedient. In the school district's student handbook, detrimental behavior was defined as:

Behaviors on or off school property that are detrimental to the welfare or safety of other students or of school personnel," including behavior that "creates a threat of physical harm ...such as harassment, hazing and incidents that result in minor injuries. (SDI, 2013 – 2014, p. 19)

When Annamma et al. examined office referral by race, 52% of all Black girls referred for discipline received a school suspension, as opposed to 20% of Asian girls, 31% of White girls, and 41% of Latinas who received suspensions. The study also found that Black girls were more likely to be expelled and be referred for disobedience or defiance than White girls.

In a quantitative study conducted by Araneo and Paul (2018), the data analysis showed that Black females were overrepresented in out-of-school suspensions and in-school suspensions in New Jersey. Araneo and Paul used publicly available data from the Civil Rights Data Collection to study out-of-school suspensions in New Jersey. In 2000, the study found that Black females received 13.44% of out-of-school suspensions in New Jersey and 14.17% of school expulsions, but Black females comprised 8.62% of the population. By 2011 – 2012, the Black female school population increased to 15.76%, and the out-of-school suspension rate was 8.06%,

along with a concerning expulsion rate of 20.95%. Moreover, the study concluded that the overrepresentation of Black females is worse in New Jersey than the national average of out-of-school suspension and expulsion (Araneo & Paul, 2018). Araneo and Paul reminded the reader about the importance of accurate and appropriate data on school discipline.

Morris (2016b) added to the body of research pertaining to the exclusionary discipline of Black girls in schools by examining the underlying factors, biases, and historical elements that contribute to the overrepresentation of Black girls being subjected to harm through exclusionary measures. Morris emphasized the detrimental impact of suspensions and expulsions, which correlate with involvement in the criminal justice system for Black girls. The literature continued to add there is a standard narrative that Black girls are disciplined for falling asleep, standing up for themselves, asking questions, wearing natural hair, wearing revealing clothing, and being a threat to the school (Morris, 2016b).

Zero Tolerance Policies

The first zero-tolerance policy in the United States implemented in public schools was The Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (Johnson & Johnson, 2023). According to Johnson and Johnson (2023), The Guns Free Act was in response to school violence and was comprised of four key components:

1. A required one-year expulsion for students found in possession of firearms on school premises.
2. The school was required to refer students to the juvenile justice system if their behavior amounted to a criminal offense.
3. School administrators were granted limited discretionary authority to lessen expulsions based on individual circumstances.

4. Schools were mandated to report discipline statistics to the United States Department of Education.

Zero-tolerance policies have broadened to encompass violence, possession of any drug paraphernalia on school premises, threats, perceived threats, and any behavior considered disruptive. Zero-tolerance policies were designed for consistent enforcement to discourage misconduct; however, a significant problem persists due to the inconsistent application and interpretation of these policies (Johnson & Johnson, 2023).

Dunbar and Villarruel (2004) conducted a study in a predominately Black and urban community in Michigan that used a policy analysis framework from L.W. Downey to examine administrator's understanding of zero-tolerance policies and their implementation of zero-tolerance policies. The study was conducted in four phases. Forty-two school administrators participated with 36 of them employed in an urban school district. Administrators participated in interviews about their understanding, views, and implementation of Michigan's zero-tolerance policy. Dunbar and Villarruel found that rural administrators did not find zero-tolerance policies necessary because the school district had measures in place to address violence. Conversely, 60% of urban educators felt the policy was helpful in removing ambiguities in disciplinary measures (Dunbar & Villarruel, 2004). Additionally, the study revealed multiple interpretations of zero-tolerance policies from the participants, and this can influence the administrator's use of the policy. The installation of cameras, enhanced security measures, the mandatory wearing of name badges by school personnel, the implementation of metal detectors, and the adoption of a zero-tolerance policy all serve as institutional responses that implicitly convey that students should be monitored, searched and, where feasible, security should be strengthened (Dunbar & Villarruel, 2004).

Cornell and Huang (2021) conducted a study exploring teachers' opinions about zero-tolerance policies and whether this support differs based on teacher gender and race/ethnicity. The study also explored if there is an association between teacher support for zero-tolerance policies and student suspensions. Using the Virginia Secondary School Climate statewide survey, data was collected from students in 422 schools in grades 6 to 8 and teachers from participating schools. Cornell and Huang found that 73.8% of the teachers surveyed supported zero-tolerance policies and believed they were effective disciplinary measures. The study also found that schools with higher levels of support for zero tolerance had higher suspension rates for Black and White students. Black students were still suspended at a rate 2.2% higher than White students. Although the teachers supported the use of zero-tolerance policies, the teachers and students expressed lower feelings of safety.

Multitiered Approach to Discipline

A multitiered approach to school discipline is vital for effectively addressing challenges encountered by Black girls in educational environments. In schools, a multitiered discipline approach blends universal, targeted, and intensive interventions and multiple school personnel to manage behavior across a spectrum of needs (Horner & Sugai, 2008). At the initial tier, schools concentrate on establishing a positive and inclusive atmosphere that acknowledges the specific needs and experiences of Black girls (Crenshaw, 1991). This entails implementing strategies such as culturally responsive teaching, fostering robust mentorship relationships, and offering opportunities for identity affirmation (Morris, 2016b). By actively confronting issues such as racial and gender biases, educational institutions can mitigate the likelihood of disproportionate disciplinary actions against Black girls and enhance their overall well-being and academic achievements (Blake & Epstein 2019).

Targeted interventions specifically designed to meet the needs of Black girls can offer supplementary assistance to those in need (Morris, 2016b). These interventions might include culturally sensitive counseling services, empowerment initiatives, or restorative justice approaches aimed at fostering healing and community cohesion (Morris, 2016b). By acknowledging the intersectional experiences of Black girls and providing tailored support, educational institutions can better address the root causes of their behavioral difficulties and promote favorable outcomes (Morris, 2016a).

Lastly, the highest tier of a multitiered approach involves intensive interventions aimed at Black girls with the most significant behavioral needs (Morris, 2016a). This may involve the development of individualized behavior plans that consider the intersecting identities and experiences of Black girls, the provision of trauma-informed care, and collaboration with community-based organizations specializing in supporting marginalized youth (Morris, 2016a). Intensive interventions strive to deliver comprehensive support to Black girls, address systemic inequities, and cultivate their resilience and academic success (Morris, 2016a).

Restorative Discipline

Using a restorative approach, Amstutz and Mullet (2015) defined discipline as “teaching children rules to live by and helping children to control their impulses and to develop social skills that allow them to fully participate in lifelong interactions with others around them” (p. 9). Restorative discipline addresses the parties that were harmed and the students who caused the harm, intending to improve the educational community (Amstutz & Mullet, 2015).

According to Amstutz and Mullet (2015), the key goals of restorative discipline are:

1. To understand harm and develop empathy for all parties involved.
2. To listen and respond to the needs of all parties involved.

3. To foster culpability and responsibility through personal reflection within a shared planning process.
4. To reintegrate all parties involved back into the community as necessary, supporting members.
5. To create caring climates to support healthy communities.
6. Change systems that contribute to the harm of parties.

Lastly, Amstutz and Mullet believed discipline should be individualized to meet the different needs of the students.

Boyes-Watson and Pranis (2015) believed restorative discipline is a collaborative approach that works to improve the entire school community in a “positive resolution of wrong doing and by using conflict as an opportunity to strengthen positive relationships” (p.7).

Restorative discipline aims to resolve conflict where all parties feel is just and fair, which is imperative for healthy and positive school culture (Boyes-Watson & Pranis 2015).

Originally, restorative discipline did not address race. The absence of racial justice consciousness within the restorative justice community was a direct consequence of structural and institutional racism, mirrored in the historical trend of predominantly White origins in U.S. social movements, often failing to engage with issues of race (Davis, 2019). According to Davis (2019), “Healing interpersonal harm requires a commitment to transforming the context in which the injury occurs: the socio-historical conditions and institutions that are structured precisely to perpetuate harm” (p. 35). Davis indicated restorative practice’s relevance may diminish if we fail to enhance our ability to recognize, navigate, and address racial harm effectively. Lustick (2020) suggested authors are increasingly recognizing that just understanding cultural aspects is insufficient - educators must comprehend the structural inequalities and view their personal

pedagogy (including disciplinary decisions and proceedings) that contribute to exclusionary discipline.

Klevan (2018) conducted a case study of a White male principal in New York City. The study took place over 14 months at West Side Community School. Data collection included school-based observations, semi-structured interviews as well as focus groups with school administrators, educators and students, and document collection. During new teacher orientation, the principal discussed his experiences as a White heterosexual male and the ways his identity afforded him certain privileges. He also explained that his identity and privilege is the cause of him spending large amounts of additional time listening to students about their lives outside of the school setting. Additionally, the principal modeled for his staff how restorative practices can work to build school culture and build a connection between staff and students of diverse backgrounds

Currently, restorative discipline aligns with the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy, recognizing and honoring cultural identities and students (Dubin, 2016). Lustick (2020) referred to this restorative approach as culturally relevant restorative practice. Lustick defined culturally relevant restorative practice as adults' ability to understand the cultural, systemic, and interpersonal aspects of a specific conflict enables us to support young people in understanding how harm functions on individual and systemic levels. These approaches acknowledge the importance of incorporating culturally relevant practices into disciplinary interventions to promote equity and inclusivity. By creating spaces where Black girls' perspectives are valued and respected, restorative practices contribute to a positive school climate, academic engagement, and academic achievement (Lustick, 2020).

Ultimately, restorative discipline can help mitigate the impacts of systemic inequalities and foster resilience among Black girls, promoting their overall well-being and success in educational settings. Unfortunately, there is a small number of studies solely dedicated to examining Black girls' perceptions and experiences with restorative discipline, continuing not limit the voices of Black girls.

School to Prison Pipeline (STPP)

The 13th Amendment, ratified in 1865, abolished slavery and involuntary servitude in the United States, with one exception: as a punishment for individuals convicted of a crime. The connection between the STPP and the 13th Amendment lies in the amendment's exception clause, which permits the continuation of involuntary servitude as a punishment for individuals convicted of a crime (Alexander, 2010). This exception was exploited, contributing to systemic injustices, particularly through harsh disciplinary measures within schools that disproportionately impact marginalized students, including Black and Latino youth (Morris, 2016). The historical legacy of the 13th Amendment's exception clause intersects with the STPP, allowing for the continuation of coercive labor practices through contemporary prison labor programs (Alexander, 2010). The 13th Amendment formally abolished chattel slavery but its exception clause assisted in the continuation of unequal practices and contributed to the creation and perpetuation of the STPP.

The STPP refers to the phenomenon where students are disproportionately pushed into the criminal justice system because of harsh disciplinary policies and practices within schools (American Civil Liberties Union, n.d.). This phenomenon continues through various policies and practices within educational institutions. Racial and socioeconomic disparities in disciplinary actions further exacerbate the problem, with students of color, particularly African American and

Latino students, facing harsher penalties (Morris & Perry, 2016). Insufficient support services, including counseling and mental health resources, contribute to penalizing students instead of addressing underlying issues (Losen & Skiba, 2010). The overreliance on punitive measures like suspensions and expulsions removes students from the learning environment, thereby increasing the risk of disengagement and involvement in delinquent activities (Morris & Perry, 2016). Additionally, the presence of law enforcement in schools, such as School Resource Officers, amplifies the likelihood of students being involved in the criminal justice system for non-criminal behavior (Rausch & Skiba, 2006).

A case study was conducted exploring the STPP system using inmates from a Long Island, NY correctional facility (Roff & Russo, 2023). According to the New York State Education Department (2019), school districts outside of New York City have higher rates of disproportionate discipline of Black girls than New York City schools. The exploratory case study of 55 female inmates explored the relationship between exclusionary discipline and the criminal justice system with females. The data were based entirely on the inmate's responses and experiences. By analyzing participant responses, this study sought to confirm the existence of the STPP in both Suffolk and Nassau counties, encompassing Long Island, New York, as a whole entity. An overwhelming amount of 75% of the participants responded that they had been suspended while in school, and 63% of the participants responded to being issued an expulsion (Roff & Russo, 2023). Roff and Russo (2023) discovered that most participants, accounting for 32%, had their initial contact with the criminal justice system between the ages of 16 and 20. The findings imply that individuals with high suspension rates also faced increased arrest and incarceration rates, indicating a direct correlation between school suspensions and future involvement in the criminal justice system (Roff & Russo, 2023).

Research also suggests that frequent absences among Black girls is associated with involvement in the juvenile justice system, teen pregnancy, and unemployment (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). When students are suspended from school, they miss valuable instructional time and are at risk of falling behind academically. In the 2017-2028 school year students missed 11,205,797 days of schools due to out of school suspensions (An Overview of exclusionary discipline practices in public schools for the 2017-18 school year U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights Civil Rights Data Collection, 2021). Absenteeism disrupts the continuity of learning, hindering academic progress and reducing opportunities for skill development and socialization. Furthermore, persistent absenteeism can lead to disengagement from school, exacerbating feelings of alienation and increasing the likelihood of dropout (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012).

Discrimination

According to Boyes-Watson et al. (2021), the culture of public schools is aligned with their upbringing and their community and for many students of color their norms are not aligned with the public school. Boyes-Watson et al. (2021) indicated White educators have work to do because they must understand their own implicit biases and how whiteness is ingrained in the public school system. It is important to discuss race and how students perceive it and how it shapes their lives.

According to Davis (2019), there are three types of racism:

1. **Structural Racism:** The normalization and validation of White supremacy originated from the collaborative efforts of various systems in the United States, perpetuating racial inequality.

2. Institutional Racism: Includes practices and policies across schools, workplaces, financial institutions, housing, hospitals, the criminal justice system, and other entities that, systematically produce outcomes that privilege White people while placing non-White people at a disadvantage.
3. Individual Racism: Entails the explicit or implicit racial bias observed within interpersonal dynamics.

Racism is not a new concept but many White people continue to benefit from existing structures and policies in the United States. Failure to challenge racist notions will continue to perpetuate the racism.

In the school setting, Joseph et al. (2016) explored how Black female adolescents defined racism and their experiences with racism within the school environment. The researchers collected data over two years from informal surveys and interviews. Participants were from two high schools in one large urban school district. One school served predominately Black and Latinx students and was one of the lowest-performing schools in the district. The other school's population was a third Black, a third Latinx, and a third White. Of the 18 participants, nine reported encounters with racism in schools. Two participants did not have a definition of racism to report. The study reported that many of the participants of the study associated their defining of racism with discrimination and differential treatment (Joseph et al., 2016). The study revealed that these students felt they were treated differently in schools and noticed the existence of a racial hierarchy, feeling judged, or hated because of their race (Joseph et al., 2016). Joseph et al. stated that Black female students reported racist encounters with teachers, highlighting the institutionalized nature of racism based on their experiences, perpetuating racial biases.

Female students can feel differential treatment due to cultural disconnects. In a qualitative study of seven girls completed by Acosta et al. (2013), middle school girls of color were interviewed and the girls drew pictures to explain and justify their behaviors. The study also explored how the girls' experiences in education contributed to shaping their views about their behaviors. Many of the participants found school to be a hostile environment. A participant in the study described the school learning environment as a place that assists them in managing their changing moods and emotions while having experienced repeated acts of degradation and peer drama (Acosta et al., 2013).

Acosta et al. (2013) also focused on is cultural disconnects: misunderstandings and subjective expectations. They discussed subjective perceptions shaped by dominant ideals of femininity, where educators anticipated girls of color to conform to stereotypes of being demure, attractive, and submissive (Acosta et al., 2013). Three of the participants were seen as "loud" by their teachers. The participants perceived being loud as a negative trait. Morris (2016b) stated that being "loud" is a demand to be listened to. According to Acosta et al., the idea of womanhood is related to permissive behaviors, which originates from Eurocentric paradigms. A participant was told by a teacher not to enter the classroom loudly and to act like a lady. The participant was confused because they believed they always acted like a lady, and they were uncertain about their teacher's definition of acting like a lady.

Freire (1970) highlighted how systemic discrimination is embedded in educational practices, particularly through the banking concept of education. In this model of education teachers deposit information to students without encouraging critical engagement or dialogue. The more students focus on storing the information given to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness needed to transform the world; accepting a passive role leads them to

merely adapt to the existing fragmented reality (Freire, 1970). By making students objects filled with information, the banking concept reinforces social hierarchies and continues existing power dynamics. Freire believed oppressed people live inside structures that made them “being for others.” This one-sided approach to education maintains the dominance of privileged groups while marginalizing the oppressed, effectively perpetuating systemic discrimination within the educational system. According to Freire, the answer lies not in incorporating them into the oppressive system, but in transforming that system so they can become autonomous individuals.

Adultification Bias

A quantitative study by Culotta et al. (2014) explored the concept of “innocence” of Black boys compared to other races. One hundred and twenty-three students from a large public school university participated in the study. Ninety-six percent of the participants were women, and the median age of the participants was 19 years of age. Most of the participants identified as White. In study 1, the participants were asked about their perception of innocence and how this relates to children. Results of study 1 found that Blacks were seen as less innocent as children and more as adults compared to Whites and people generally (Culotta et al., 2014). At the age of 10, there was a noticeable shift in the perception of innocence because the results showed Black children were perceived as less innocent compared to their counterparts across all age groups (Culotta et al., 2014). According to Culotta et al., after age 10, the perceived innocence of Black children aged 10–13 corresponded to that of non-Black children aged 14–17, and the perceived innocence of Black children aged 14–17 resembled that of non-Black adults aged 18–21.

Blake et al. (2017) continued with this research and conducted a quantitative study focusing on the perceptions of Black girls. This study sought to determine if Black girls were perceived as less innocent compared to their White counterparts and seen to have more adult

qualities. The findings demonstrated that participants perceived Black girls as more mature and knowledgeable about adult topics, inadvertently subjecting them to less protection than their White counterparts. The study found that different treatments begin as early as five years old (Blake et al., 2017). This treatment would be referred to as “adultification bias.” Blake et al. emphasized that these perceptions contribute to the harsher treatment of Black girls compared to similarly-aged White girls.

To support their quantitative data, Blake and Epstein (2019) wanted to expand their understanding of bias towards Black girls and how this research can be further explored. They collected narratives from Black females ranging from 12 years of age to 60 years of age. The study explored how damaging stereotypes can be the cause of adultification bias toward Black females. The stereotypes associated with Black women discussed in this study included “the angry Black woman” and “hypersexualized Black woman” (Blake & Epstein, 2019). Study participants provided suggestions to address adultification bias: bringing additional awareness to this topic, improving the cultural proficiency of educators and law enforcement, training on de-escalation with Black girls to reduce discipline problems, and training educators and law enforcement on treating Black girls with respect and empathy (Blake & Epstein, 2019).

Morris (2016b) continued this argument by stating that many social structures treat Black girls as if they are fully developed adults and Black girls start to believe this about themselves. When Black girls start to change their behavior based on this belief and treatment, the adults often miss the structures and influences of power that may impact decision-making (Morris 2016b).

Teacher Diversity

Racial diversity of teachers is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in shaping the educational experiences and outcomes of students, particularly those from historically marginalized communities. Studies suggest that students benefit from exposure to teachers who share their racial or ethnic background. Egalite et al. (2015) found Black students who had at least one Black teacher in elementary school were more likely to report feeling cared for, supported, and academically challenged. This highlights the importance of racially diverse teaching staff in fostering positive relationships and creating inclusive learning environments for students of color (Egalite et al., 2015).

Furthermore, racially diverse teachers bring varied perspectives and approaches to instruction, which can enhance the educational experiences of all students. Culturally responsive teaching, which acknowledges and incorporates students' cultural backgrounds into the curriculum, has been shown to improve student engagement and academic achievement (Banks, 2019). Teachers who reflect the racial and cultural diversity of their students are better equipped to address their unique needs and experiences, thus promoting a more equitable and effective learning environment (Banks, 2019).

Likewise, the representation of diverse teachers in classrooms can positively impact students' sense of belonging and identity development. Studies demonstrated that students, particularly those from underrepresented racial or ethnic groups, experience greater academic motivation and self-esteem when they see themselves reflected in their teachers (Gershenson et al., 2018). This sense of connection and affirmation contributes to a positive school climate where all students feel valued and supported, ultimately enhancing their overall academic success and well-being (Gershenson et al., 2018). Research shows that having a diversified

teaching force will increase critical thinking and creativity, which will lead to reduced prejudice (Levy & Mangino, 2019).

Levy and Mangino (2019) conducted a study about teacher diversity in Long Island's Public Schools. Using archival data from New York State Education Department, 390 out of 642 public schools did not have a Black teacher. According to this research, 49% of all Long Island students will never see a Black teacher in their school (Levy & Mangino, 2019). Additionally, 61% of White students, 19% of Black students, 34% of Latinx students, 52% of Asian students, 55% of multiracial students, and 34% of Native Americans attended schools without a Black teacher (Levy & Mangino, 2019). For school with 2% or less teachers, 30% of Black students attend these schools. The research showed there is a lack and need for Black educators in Long Island's Public Schools.

Chapter Summary

Disproportionate discipline of Black children was recorded and documented for more than 40 years and the problem still exists. Although there is a growing body of literature about Black girls and discipline, the current literature is limited because it mainly focuses on Black boys. While significant attention has been devoted to addressing the challenges faced by Black boys, recent research reveals a rapid increase in suspension rates among Black girls.

Exclusionary discipline experienced by Black girls has many similarities as Black boys, but there is a lack of literature about the Black girl experience. While significant attention was dedicated to addressing the challenges faced by Black boys, recent research reveals a rapid increase in suspension rates among Black girls. (Losen & Skiba, 2010). The information provided in this literature shows disproportionate discipline of Black girls and how this affects them. Like

Black boys, Black girls have higher rates of exclusionary discipline than their peers of other races. Chapter 3 includes the methodology used in this quantitative correlational study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes the research methodology used in this quantitative correlational study. This quantitative correlational study aimed to investigate the relationship of racial demographics within a school's student and personnel populations with the occurrences of suspensions faced by Black female students in grades 9 through 12. The chapter includes the research design, research questions, hypothesis, variables, data collection, population, sample, and data analysis that was used for this study.

Research Design

This quantitative study used nonexperimental research designs to examine the research questions. Quantitative research aims to measure variables and explore their interconnections using objective measurements and statistical analyses, which offers empirical evidence to validate or challenge hypotheses and research studies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A nonexperimental research design was the best approach because no variables were manipulated in this study (Mertler, 2022). The nonexperimental design used is correlational research. Correlational research aims to identify relationships between two or more variables or conditions that co-relate (Mertler, 2022). According to Christensen and Johnson (2020), the researcher investigates the correlation between one or more numerical independent variables and one or more numerical dependent variables. In correlational research, the independent and dependent variables are quantitative. Correlational research was appropriate for this study because the study sought to determine if there was a relationship between variables that include the percentages of racial demographics of both the school's student population and its personnel and the percentage of school suspensions for Black female students.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to investigate school suspensions of Black girls and the possibility of relationships that may contribute to it. The research in the study was centered around the following research questions and hypotheses:

1. To what extent is there a statistical difference in suspension rates for Black girls compared to other racial groups in high school grades 9-12 between school districts?

H_0 : There is no statistical difference in suspension rates for Black girls.

H_1 : There will be a statistically higher suspension rates for Black girls compared to other racial groups in grades 9-12.

2. To what extent is there a statistical relationship between the racial demographics of a school and the suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12?

H_0 : There will not be a statistically significant relationship between the demographics of a school and suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12.

H_1 : There will be a statistically significant relationship between the demographics of a school and suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12.

3. To what extent is there a statistical relationship between the racial demographics of the school personnel and the suspension rates of Black girls in high school grades 9-12 compared to other racial groups of high school girls?

H_0 : There will not be a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of the school personnel and the suspension rates of Black girls.

H_1 : There will be a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of the school personnel and the suspension rates of Black girls.

Instrument

Archival data were used in this study. Research data that has been archived was initially utilized for research purposes and is typically stored in a computerized format for potential future use (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). This study used archival data from the New York State Education Department (NYSED) website. The NYSED website is a public website that provides information about the New York State Board of Regents, New York State education certifications, learning standards and instruction, data and reporting, and school business. Archival data were found in the data and reporting section of the NYSED website. Student school enrollment was found in NYSED public data section. The data for the race of the school personnel were found in the NYSED information and reporting services. NYSED provides a report for staff race and ethnicity for public schools in New York.

Data Collection

This quantitative correlation study used archival data from the NYSED website. The NYSED website is a public website that provides data from every public school in New York. School enrollment data was collected from the NYSED website for the 2021 – 2022 school year and this was located in the public data section. New York school district enrollment totals were gathered from the Basic Educational Data Systems (BEDS) day, which is typically held on the first Wednesday of October of each school year. The enrollment statistics were organized through the New York State Education Department's Student Information Repository System (SIRS) in the student and educator data section. The NYSED school report page allows the public to filter the data for each school. Data from each school included in this study were filtered by gender and race because this information was not provided in a report. Data were manually entered into an Microsoft excel spreadsheet.

School personnel racial data were collected from the NYSED website by going to the information and reporting section and then to the teacher/data section. The NYSED Personnel Master File (PMF) Staff Race and Ethnicity Data 2018 and on was used. The PMF document was downloaded from the NYSED website in a Microsoft excel spreadsheet. New York school district's school personnel and administrator data are gathered from the Basic Educational Data Systems (BEDS) day, which is typically held on the first Wednesday of October of each school year. NYSED provides a report of personnel race and ethnicity for each public school in New York.

For in-school and out-of-school suspension data by gender and race for all high schools for the school year of 2021 – 2022, a request was made to NYSED's Office of Information and Reporting Services by. A request was made because in-school and out-of-school suspension data by gender and race was not publicly available on the NYSED website. NYSED provided the data requested by email in a Microsoft excel spreadsheet.

Once data were collected, the data were examined. Data were examined to ensure the collected data were appropriate for the sample. The data collection process uncovered that there were high schools on Long Island that comprise grades other than 9 – 12. All data collected were in raw values and were converted to percentages on Microsoft excel. Data were organized in a singular Microsoft excel spreadsheet then imported into the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program for further data analysis.

Study Variables

There were 24 variables for this study as seen in the table below.

Variable	Operationalization
School Student Race American Indian or Alaskan Native (SRAIAN)	% of female students who are American Indian or Alaskan Native

Student Race Black/African American (SRBAA)	% of female students who are Black/African American
Student Race Hispanic or Latino (SRHL)	% of female students who are Hispanic or Latino
Student Race White (SRW)	% of female students who are White
Student Race Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (SRANPI)	% of female students who are Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
Student Race Multiracial (SRM)	% of female students who are Multiracial
Personnel Race American Indian or Alaskan Native (PRAIAN)	% of school personnel who are American Indian or Alaskan Native
Personnel Race Black/African American (PRBAA)	% of school personnel who are Black/African American
Personnel Race Hispanic or Latino (PRHL)	% of school personnel who are Hispanic or Latino
Personnel Race White (PRW)	% of school personnel who are White
Personnel Race Multiracial (PRM)	% of school personnel who are Multiracial
Out-of-school suspension American Indian or Alaskan Native (OSSAIAN)	% of female students who received OSS who are American Indian or Alaskan Native
Out-of-school suspensions Black/African American (OSSBAA)	% of female students who received OSS who are Black or African American
Out-of-school suspensions Hispanic or Latino (OSSHL)	% of female student who received OSS who are Hispanic or Latino
Out-of-school suspensions White (OSSW)	% of female student who received OSS who are White
Out-of-school suspensions Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (OSSRANPI)	% of female student who received OSS who are Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
Out-of-school suspensions Multiracial (OSSM)	% of female student who received OSS who Multiracial
In-school suspensions American Indian or Alaskan Native (ISSAIAN)	% of female students who received ISS who are American Indian or Alaskan Native
In-school suspensions Black/African American (ISSBAA)	% of female students who received ISS who are Black/African American
In-school suspensions Hispanic or Latino (ISSHL)	% of female students who received ISS who are Hispanic or Latino
In-school suspensions White (ISSW)	% of female student who received ISS who are White
In-school suspensions Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (ISSRANPI)	% of female student who received ISS who are Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
In-school suspensions Multiracial (ISSM)	% of female student who received ISS who Multiracial

Population & Sample

The population for this quantitative correlation study was female students enrolled in public Long Island high schools in grades 9-12 during the 2021 – 2022 school year. Long Island is comprised of two counties, Nassau County and Suffolk County. During the 2021 – 2022 school year, 66,408 female students were enrolled in grades 9 – 12 in public Long Island school districts. The study focused on females enrolled in public school districts on Long Island, NY. High schools with solely grades 9 – 12 were sampled. There were 80 schools used in the sample. For the 2021-2022 school year, Black female students in grades 9 – 12 made up approximately 10% of Long Island’s school population (NYSED). The percentages were calculated based off values on the NYSED website.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were calculated for all variables in this study. According to Christensen and Johnson (2020), descriptive statistics describe, summarize, and make sense of the data collected. Descriptive statistics include means, standard deviations, minimums, maximums, percentages, and percentile ranks. Additionally, inferential statistics were used to test the hypotheses. Parametric assumptions were first tested which included linearity, homoscedasticity, normality of regression residuals, absence of outliers, and absence of multicollinearity before performing data analysis. Multiple linear regression (MLR) was used to determine if there is a statistical relationship between two or more independent variables and a single dependent variable (Christensen & Johnson, 2020). MLR allows researchers to assess how changes in one or more independent variables are associated with changes in the dependent variable.

Research Questions

1. To what extent is there a statistical difference in suspension rates for Black girls compared to other racial groups in high school grades 9-12 between school districts?

H_0 : There is no statistical difference in suspension rates for Black girls.

H_1 : There will be a statistically higher suspension rates for Black girls compared to other racial groups in grades 9-12.

Research Question 1 (RQ1) sought to understand to what extent is there a difference in suspension rates for Black girls compared to other racial groups in high school grades 9 -12.

Descriptive statistics were calculated to determine the differences in the mean suspension rates between the different racial groups in sample school districts. Descriptive statistics allowed for a visual representation of the results. The visual representation of descriptive statistics described and summarized suspensions rates Black girls compared to other races in the study.

2. To what extent is there a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of a school and the suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12?

H_0 : There will not be a statistically significant relationship between the demographics of a school and suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12.

H_1 : There will be a statistically significant relationship between the demographics of a school and suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12.

Research Question 2 (RQ2) sought to understand to what extent is there a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of a school and the suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12. Prior to the analysis, the parametric assumptions were tested which included linearity, homoscedasticity, normality of regression residuals, absence of outliers, and absence of multicollinearity. MLR models were used to determine if there is a statistically

significant relationship between the racial demographics of a school and suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9-12. The six independent variables in the model are (a) Student Race American Indian or Alaskan Native, (b) Student Race Black/African American, (c) Student Race Hispanic or Latino, (d) Student Race White, (e) Student Race Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and (f) Student Race Multiracial. The dependent variable for the first MLR RQ2 was out-of-school suspensions for Black girls. The dependent variable for the second model for RQ2 was in-school suspensions for Black girls. A significance level of .05 was used to determine if there is a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of a school and suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12.

3. To what extent is there a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of the school personnel and the suspension rates of Black girls in high school grades 9-12 compared to other racial groups of high school girls?

H_0 : There will not be a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of the school personnel and the suspension rates of Black girls.

H_1 : There will be a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of the school personnel and the suspension rates of Black girls.

Research Question 3 (RQ3) sought to understand to what extent is there a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of the school personnel and the suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9-12. Prior to the analysis, the parametric assumptions were tested and included linearity, homoscedasticity, normality of regression residuals, absence of outliers, and absence of multicollinearity. MLR models were used to determine if there is a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of school personnel and suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9-12. The five independent variables in the model are

(a) Personnel Race American Indian or Alaskan Native, (b) Personnel Race Black/African American, (c) Personnel Race Hispanic or Latino, (d) Personnel Race White, and (e) Personnel Race Multiracial. The dependent variable for the first MLR model for RQ3 is out-of-school suspensions for Black girls. The dependent variable for the second model for RQ3 is in-school suspensions for Black girls. A significance level of .05 was used to determine if there is a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of a school and suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12.

Ethical Concerns

This correlational quantitative study used archival data on female students in Nassau County, NY and ethical considerations were always at the forefront. Given the archival nature of the data, informed consent did not apply. However, measures were implemented to ensure privacy and anonymity of all schools included in the sample by removing names or coding the data. There was never any contact made to any of the school districts included in the sample. Data for this dissertation was always stored on a password protected laptop and a password protected cloud-based program.

Chapter Summary

The methodology for this quantitative correlational study investigated the relationship between racial demographics within a school's student and personnel populations and the occurrences of suspensions faced by Black female students in grades 9 through 12. This chapter outlined the research design, research questions, hypotheses, variables, data collection methods, population, sample, and data analysis techniques. Utilizing nonexperimental research designs, specifically correlational research, the study aimed to identify relationships between variables without manipulating any factors. The research questions created explored the differences in

suspension rates for Black girls compared to other racial groups, the relationship between school demographics and suspension rates for Black girls, and the association between the racial demographics of school personnel and suspension rates for Black girls.

Data collection involved retrieving archival data from the NYSED website, including school enrollment data, racial demographics of students and personnel, and suspension data for the 2021-2022 school year. The study population included female students enrolled in public high schools on Long Island, with the sample focusing on schools with grades 9-12. Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the data. While inferential statistics, multiple linear regression models, were used to test the hypotheses. The study prioritized ethical considerations by ensuring the privacy and anonymity of the schools included in the sample and storing data securely. Chapter 4 includes the findings of this quantitative correlational study using descriptive statistics and MLR models.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This quantitative correlational study investigated the relationship between racial demographics within a school's student and personnel populations and occurrences of suspensions faced by Black female students in grades 9 through 12. Archival data were used from the NYSED website. NYSED is publicly available and provides information regarding the New York State Board of Regents, New York State education certifications, learning standards and instruction, data and reporting, and school business. This chapter provides a discussion of the study variables and the results of the descriptive analysis of the study variables. Additionally, the testing results of parametric assumptions required for multiple regression are provided followed by the results of multiple regression.

Study Variables

All variables in this study were measured at the interval level of measurement. Table 1 includes a description of the study variables as well as how they were operationalized for analysis.

Table 1

Study Variables

Variable	Operationalization
Student Race American Indian or Alaskan Native (SRAIAN)	% of female students who are American Indian or Alaskan Native
Student Race Black/African American (SRBAA)	% of female students who are Black/African American
Student Race Hispanic or Latino (SRHL)	% of female students who are Hispanic or Latino
Student Race White (SRW)	% of female students who are White
Student Race Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (SRANPI)	% of female students who are Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
Student Race Multiracial (SRM)	% of female students who are Multiracial

Variable	Operationalization
Personnel Race American Indian or Alaskan Native (PRAIAN)	% of school personnel who are American Indian or Alaskan Native
Personnel Race Black/African American (PRBAA)	% of school personnel who are Black/African American
Personnel Race Hispanic or Latino (PRHL)	% of school personnel who are Hispanic or Latino
Personnel Race White (PRW)	% of school personnel who are White
Personnel Race Multiracial (PRM)	% of school personnel who are Multiracial
Out-of-school suspension American Indian or Alaskan Native (OSSAIAN)	% of female students who received OSS who are American Indian or Alaskan Native
Out-of-school suspensions Black/African American (OSSBAA)	% of female students who received OSS who are Black or African American
Out-of-school suspensions Hispanic or Latino (OSSHL)	% of female student who received OSS who are Hispanic or Latino
Out-of-school suspensions White (OSSW)	% of female student who received OSS who are White
Out-of-school suspensions Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (OSSRANPI)	% of female student who received OSS who are Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
Out-of-school suspensions Multiracial (OSSM)	% of female student who received OSS who are Multiracial
In-school suspensions American Indian or Alaskan Native (ISSAIAN)	% of female students who received ISS who are American Indian or Alaskan Native
In-school suspensions Black/African American (ISSBAA)	% of female students who received ISS who are Black/African American
In-school suspensions Hispanic or Latino (ISSHL)	% of female students who received ISS who are Hispanic or Latino
In-school suspensions White (ISSW)	% of female student who received ISS who are White
In-school suspensions Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (ISSRANPI)	% of female student who received ISS who are Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
In-school suspensions Multiracial (ISSM)	% of female student who received ISS who are Multiracial

Descriptive Statistics of Study Measures

The dataset consisted of 80 schools. The descriptive statistics are presented below.

Personnel Race

Regarding personnel race, most personnel were White ($M = 89.50\%$, $SD = 10.60\%$). This was followed by Hispanic or Latino ($M = 5.27\%$, $SD = 4.69\%$); Black/African American ($M = 3.04\%$, $SD = 6.46\%$); Multiracial ($M = 0.12\%$, $SD = 0.39\%$); and American Indian or Alaskan Native ($M = 0.07\%$, $SD = 0.35\%$). Table 2 includes this information.

Student Race

Regarding student race, most female students were White ($M = 48.51\%$, $SD = 26.88\%$). This was followed by Hispanic or Latino girls ($M = 27.90\%$, $SD = 20.82\%$); Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander girls ($M = 13.01\%$, $SD = 18.52\%$); Black/African American ($M = 8.39\%$, $SD = 10.42\%$); and multiracial girls ($M = 1.95\%$, $SD = 1.19\%$). Table 2 includes this information.

Out-of-School Suspensions

Out of school suspensions were highest for White girls ($M = 36.84\%$, $SD = 33.51\%$). This was followed by Hispanic or Latino girls ($M = 31.49\%$, $SD = 25.42\%$); Black/African American girls ($M = 20.70\%$, $SD = 25.00\%$); Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander girls ($M = 5.91\%$, $SD = 12.85\%$); Multiracial girls ($M = 3.09\%$, $SD = 8.94\%$); and Indian or Alaskan Native girls ($M = 0.73\%$, $SD = 5.07\%$) students. Table 2 includes this information.

In-School Suspensions

In-school suspensions were highest for Hispanic or Latino girls ($M = 34.39\%$, $SD = 27.26\%$). This was followed by White girls ($M = 32.67\%$, $SD = 32.30\%$); Black/African American girls ($M = 14.97\%$, $SD = 20.58\%$); Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander girls

($M = 5.46\%$, $SD = 12.43\%$); Multiracial girls ($M = 2.55\%$, $SD = 6.18\%$); and Indian or Alaskan Native girls ($M = 0.64\%$, $SD = 4.15\%$). Table 2 includes this information.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 80)

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Personnel Race American Indian or Alaskan Native (PRAIAN)	.00	2.94	.07	.35
Personnel Race Black/African American (PRBAA)	.00	45.24	3.04	6.46
Personnel Race Hispanic or Latino (PRHL)	.00	22.82	5.27	4.69
Personnel Race Multiracial (PRM)	.00	2.30	.12	.39
Personnel Race White (PRW)	34.52	99.40	89.50	10.60
Student Race American Indian or Alaskan Native (SRAIAN)	.00	7.50	.30	.94
Student Race Black/African American (SRBAA)	.00	48.33	8.39	10.42
Student Race Hispanic or Latino (SRHL)	.12	86.21	27.90	20.82
Student Race Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (SRANPI)	.00	86.36	13.01	18.52
Student Race White (SRW)	.00	86.62	48.51	26.88
Student Race Multiracial (SRM)	.00	7.19	1.95	1.19
Out-of-School suspensions Indian or Alaskan Native (OSSAIAN)	.00	42.86	.73	5.07
Out-of-School suspensions Asian or Native Hawaiian /Other Pacific Islander (OSSRANPI)	.00	66.67	5.91	12.85
Out-of-School suspensions Black/African American (OSSBAA)	.00	100.00	20.70	25.00
Out-of-School suspensions Hispanic or Latino (OSSHL)	.00	100.00	31.49	25.42
Out-of-School suspensions Multiracial (OSSM)	.00	50.00	3.09	8.94
Out-of-School suspensions White (OSSW)	.00	100.00	36.84	33.51
In-School suspensions Indian or Alaskan Native (ISSAIAN)	.00	33.33	.64	4.15
In-School suspensions Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (ISSRANPI)	.00	75.00	5.46	12.43
In-School suspensions Black/African American (ISSBAA)	.00	100.00	14.97	20.58
In-School suspensions Hispanic or Latino (ISSHL)	.00	100.00	34.39	27.26
In-School suspensions Multiracial (ISSM)	.00	33.33	2.55	6.18
In-School suspensions White (ISSW)	.00	100.00	32.67	32.30

Results of Statistical Analysis

Results for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 sought to understand to what extent there was a difference in suspension rates for Black girls compared to other racial groups in high school grades 9 -12. The following research question and hypotheses were addressed:

1. To what extent is there a statistical difference in suspension rates for Black girls compared to other racial groups in high school grades 9-12 between school districts?

H_0 : There is no statistical difference in suspension rates for Black girls.

H_1 : There will be a statistically higher suspension rates for Black girls compared to other racial groups in grades 9-12.

Descriptive statistics were calculated to determine the differences in the mean suspension rates between the different racial groups of girls in sample school districts. Black/African American girls had the third highest out of school suspensions ($M = 20.70\%$, $SD = 25.00\%$). Out of school suspensions were highest for White girls ($M = 36.84\%$, $SD = 33.51\%$). This was followed by Hispanic or Latino girls ($M = 31.49\%$, $SD = 25.42$); Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander girls ($M = 5.91\%$, $SD = 12.85\%$); multiracial ($M = 3.09\%$, $SD = 8.94\%$); and Indian or Alaskan Native girls ($M = 0.73\%$, $SD = 5.07\%$). Table 3 and Figure 1 provide this information.

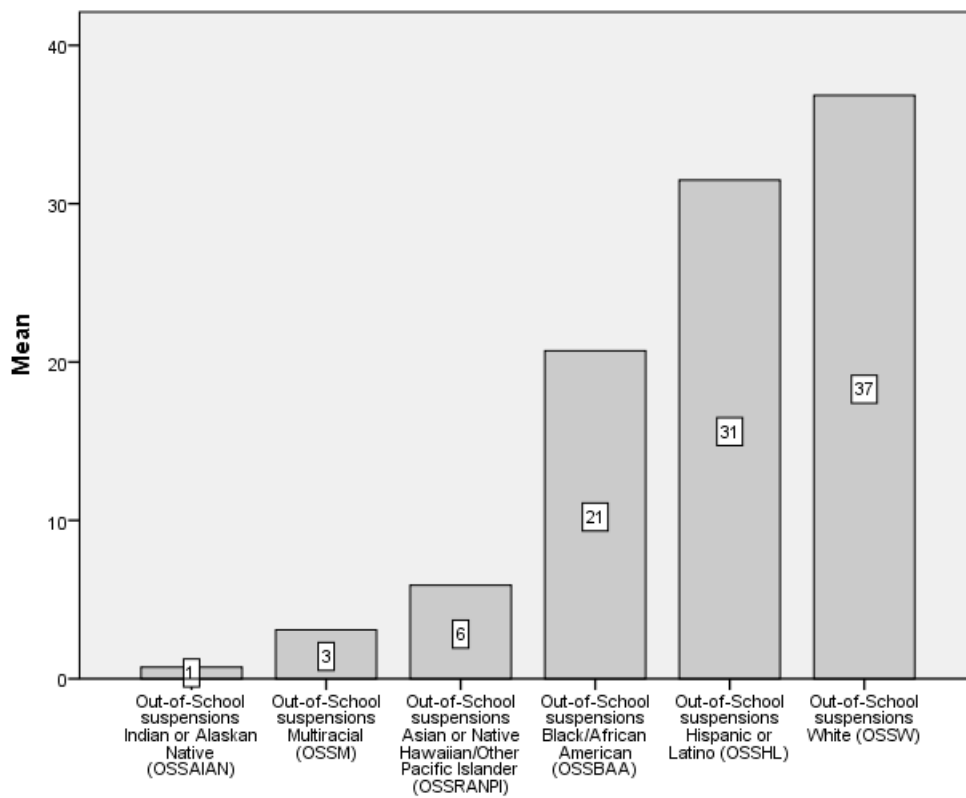
Table 3

Out-of-School Suspensions by Race

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Out-of-School suspensions White (OSSW)	36.84	33.51
Out-of-School suspensions Hispanic or Latino (OSSHL)	31.49	25.42
Out-of-School suspensions Black/African American (OSSBAA)	20.70	25.00
Out-of-School suspensions Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (OSSRANPI)	5.91	12.85
Out-of-School suspensions Multiracial (OSSM)	3.09	8.94
Out-of-School suspensions Indian or Alaskan Native (OSSAIAN)	.73	5.07

Figure 1

Bar Chart of Out-of-School Suspensions by Race



According to the findings of in-school suspensions, Black/African American girls were the third highest in in-school suspensions ($M = 14.97\%$, $SD = 20.58\%$). Hispanic or Latino girls had the greatest percentage ($M = 34.39\%$, $SD = 27.26\%$). This was followed by White girls ($M =$

32.67%, $SD = 32.30\%$); Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander girls ($M = 5.46\%$, $SD = 12.43\%$); multiracial girls ($M = 2.55\%$, $SD = 6.18\%$); and Indian or Alaskan Native girls ($M = 0.64\%$, $SD = 4.15\%$). Table 4 and Figure 2 provide this information.

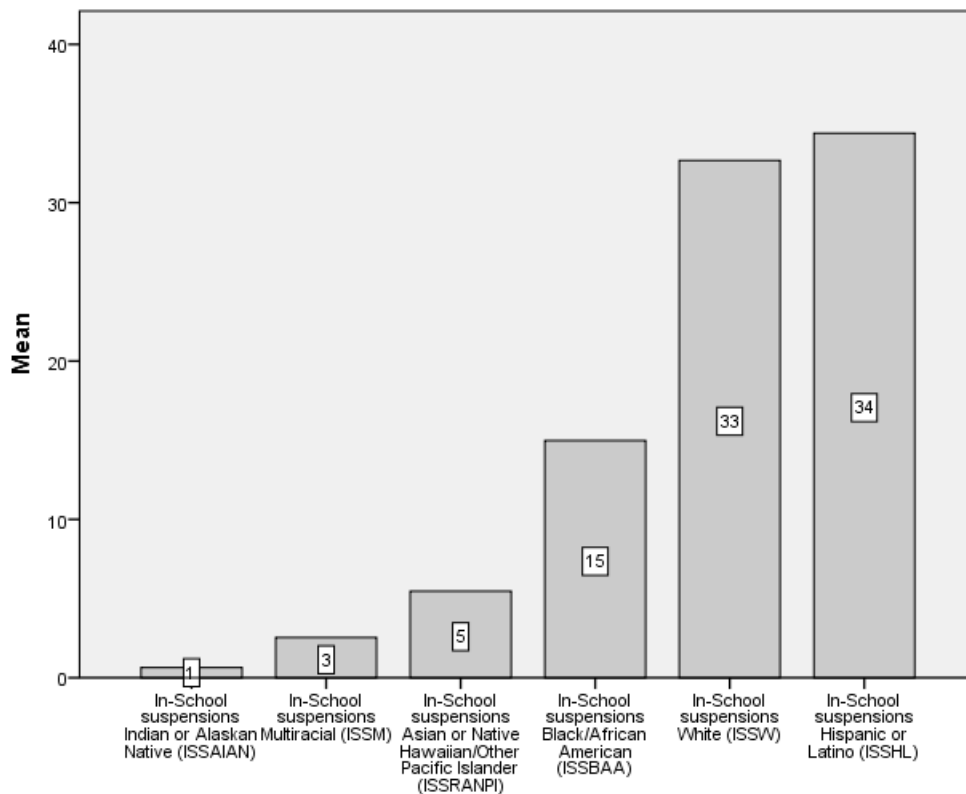
Table 4

In-School Suspensions by Race

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
In-School suspensions Hispanic or Latino (ISSHL)	34.39	27.26
In-School suspensions White (ISSW)	32.67	32.30
In-School suspensions Black/African American (ISSBAA)	14.97	20.58
In-School suspensions Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (ISSRANPI)	5.46	12.43
In-School suspensions Multiracial (ISSM)	2.55	6.18
In-School suspensions Indian or Alaskan Native (ISSAIAN)	0.64	4.15

Figure 2

Bar Chart of In-School Suspensions by Race



Results for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 (RQ2) sought to understand to what extent was there a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of a school and the suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12.

2. To what extent is there a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of a school and the suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12?

H₀: There will not be a statistically significant relationship between the demographics of a school and suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12.

H₁: There will be a statistically significant relationship between the demographics of a school and suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12.

MLR models were used to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of a school and suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9-12. The six independent variables in the model were (a) Student Race American Indian or Alaskan Native, (b) Student Race Black/African American, (c) Student Race Hispanic or Latino, (d) Student Race White, (e) Student Race Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and (f) Student Race Multiracial. The dependent variable for the first MLR model for RQ2 was out-of-school suspensions for Black girls. The dependent variable for the second MLR model for RQ2 was in-school suspensions for Black girls.

Testing of Parametric Assumptions (RQ2)

Before conducting the analysis, the parametric assumptions were tested, which included checking for linearity, homoscedasticity, normality of regression residuals, the absence of outliers, and the absence of multicollinearity. Linearity and homoscedasticity were evaluated by visually examining scatter plots of the standardized residuals versus the standardized predicted

values. The plots were not curved, so there were no violations of the linearity assumption (Field, 2018). Additionally, the homoscedasticity assumption was not violated because the plots appeared to be a random pattern (Field, 2018, see Figures 3 and Figure 4).

Figure 3

Scatter Plot of Standardized Residuals Versus Standardized Predicted Values (DV: Out-of-School Suspensions)

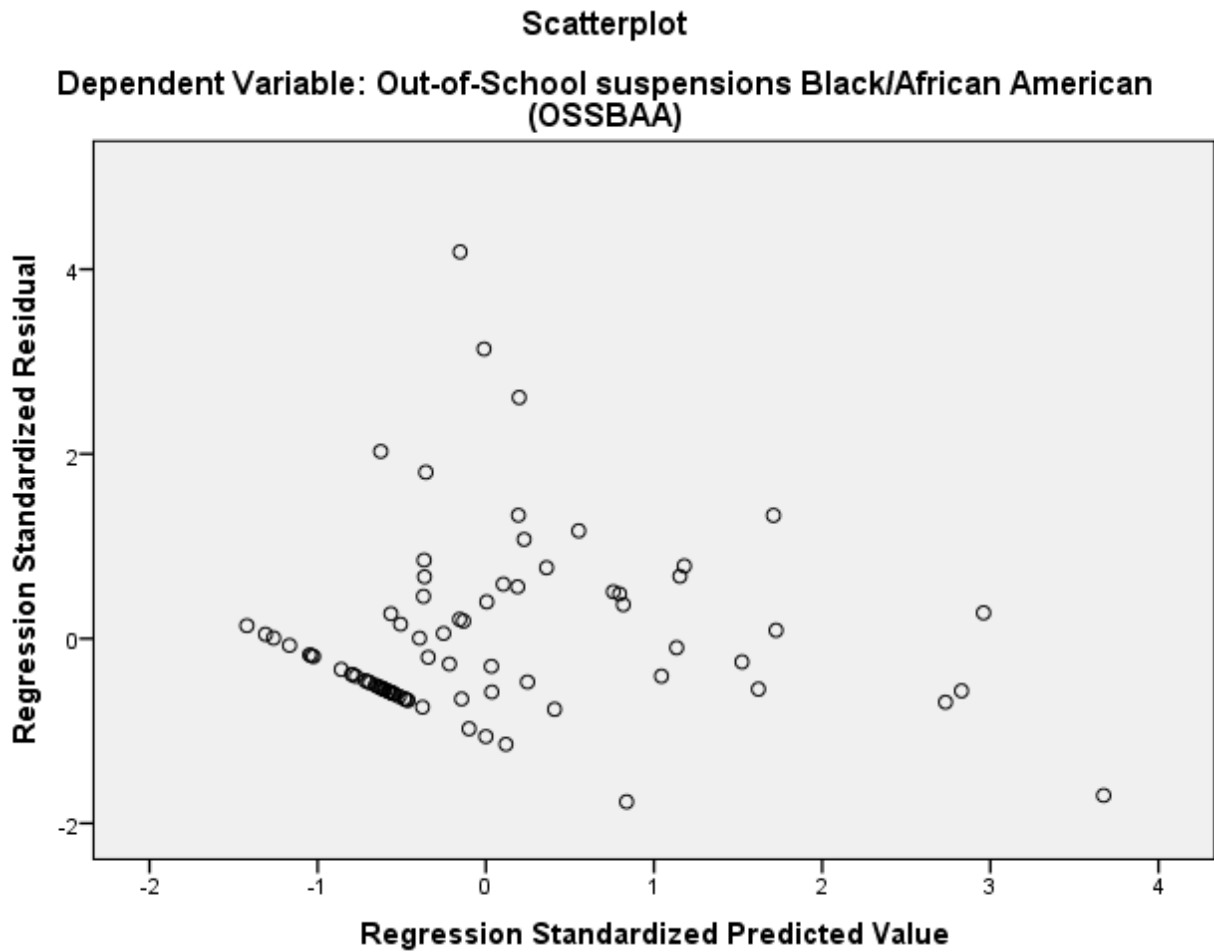
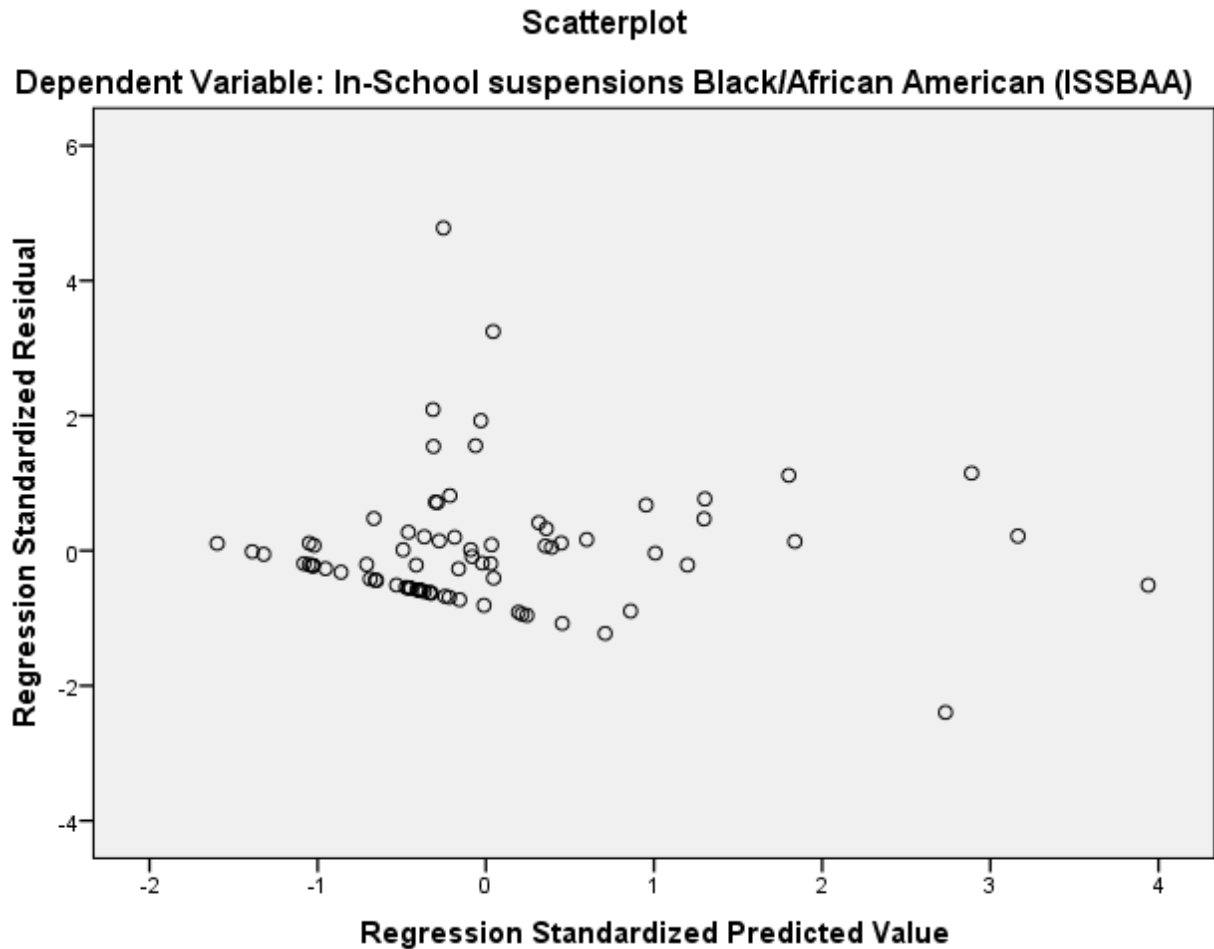


Figure 4

Scatter Plot of Standardized Residuals Versus Standardized Predicted Values (DV: In-School Suspensions)



Kurtosis and skewness statistics were calculated to evaluate normality. According to Hair et al. (2010) and Bryne (2010), data are considered normal if skewness is between -2 and +2 and kurtosis is between -7 and +7. All skewness and kurtosis values fell within these acceptable ranges. Additionally, histograms of regression residuals indicated an approximate normal distribution (see Figures 5 and Figure 6).

Figure 5

Histogram of Regression Residuals (DV: Out-of-School Suspension)

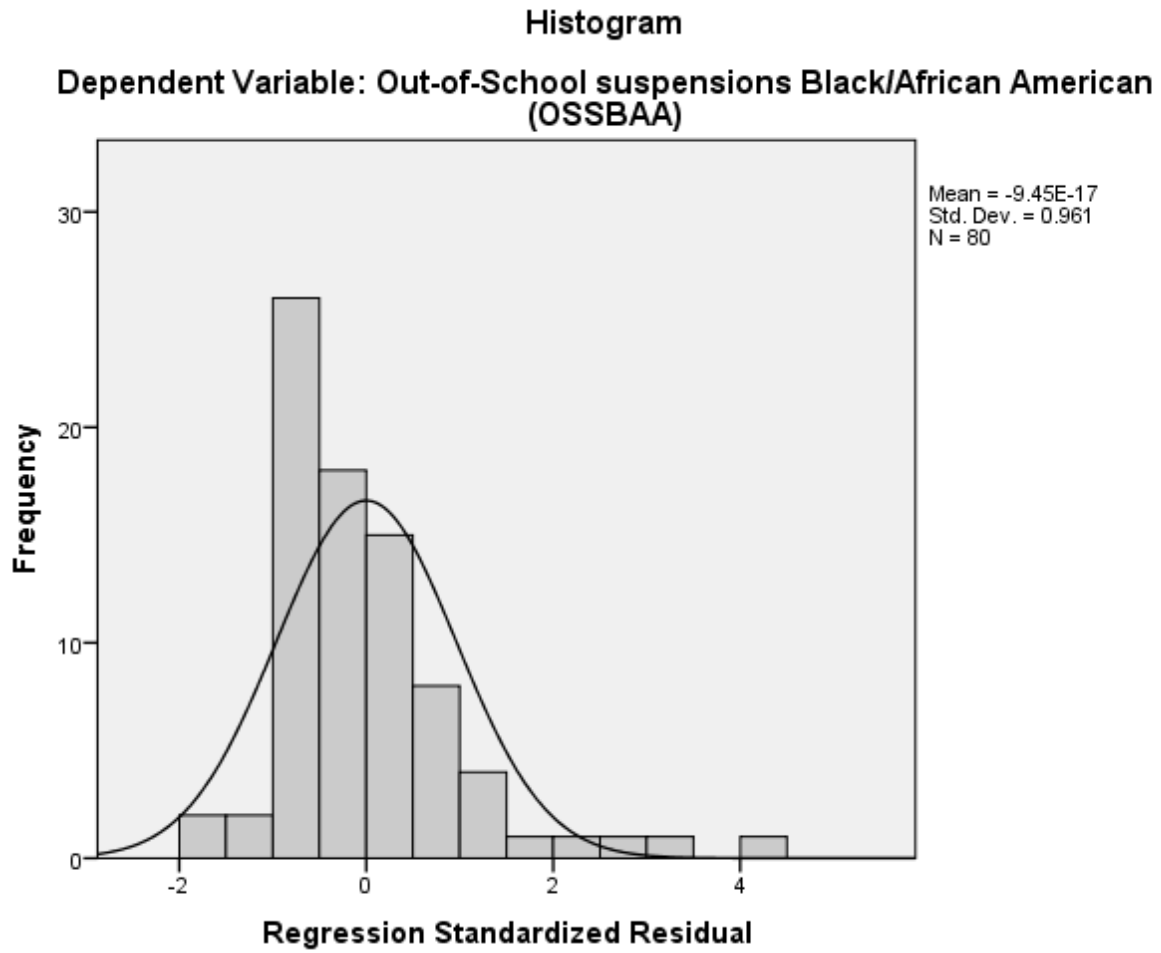
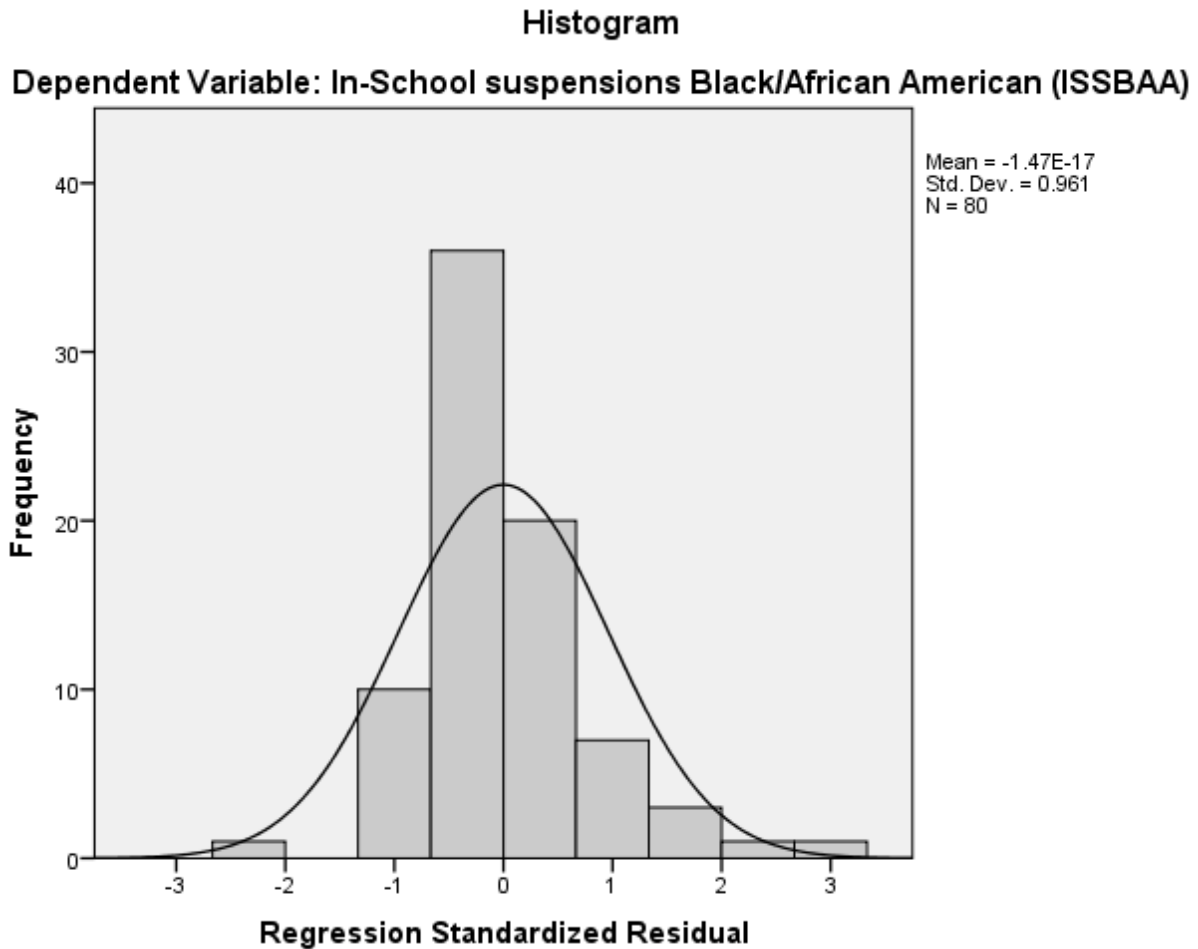


Figure 6*Histogram of Regression Residuals (DV: In-School Suspension)*

To determine if there was multicollinearity between any two variables, the variable inflation factors (VIF) were computed for each variable (Field, 2018). Acceptable VIFs are less than 10 (Field, 2018). There were no issues with multicollinearity, as VIFs were below 10. Additionally, there were no outliers, as all standardized scores were within -3 to +3 standard deviations (see Table 5).

Results of Multiple Regression (RQ2)

The overall model of the first dependent variable of Out-of-School Suspensions Black/African American was statistically significant, $F(6, 79) = 9.396, p < .001$. The model explained 38.9% of the variation in predicting out-of-school suspensions (adj. $R^2 = .389$). Student Race Black/African American was a significant predictor of Out-of-School Suspensions Black/African American ($B = 1.598, p < .001$). A 1% increase in Student Race Black/African American results in a mean increase in Out-of-School suspensions Black/African American by 1.598%. No other predictors were statistically significant ($p > .05$). See Table 5.

Table 5

*Regression Coefficients for RQ 2 (DV: Out-of-School Suspensions Black/African American)**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients β	t	p	Collinearity Statistics VIF
	B	SE				
(Constant)	.333	20.532		.016	.987	
Student Race American Indian or Alaskan Native (SRAIAN)	-.515	2.366	-.019	-.218	.828	1.031
Student Race Black/African American (SRBAA)	1.598	.331	.666	4.830	.000	2.460
Student Race Hispanic or Latino (SRHL)	.095	.230	.079	.412	.682	4.741
Student Race Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (SRANPI)	-.093	.203	-.069	-.459	.648	2.930
Student Race White (SRW)	.093	.215	.099	.431	.668	6.902
Student Race Multiracial (SRM)	.620	1.850	.030	.335	.738	1.010

Note. * $F(6, 79) = 9.396, p < .001$; adj. $R^2 = .389$.

The overall model for the second dependent variable, In-school Suspensions Black/African American, was statistically significant, $F(6, 79) = 4.399, p < .001$. The model explained 20.5% of the variation in predicting in-school suspensions Black/African American (adj. $R^2 = .205$). Student Race Black/African American was a significant predictor of in-school suspensions Black/African American ($B = 1.179, p < .001$). A 1% increase in Student Race Black/African American results in a mean increase for In-school Suspensions Black/African American by 1.179%. No other predictors were statistically significant ($p > .05$; see Table 6).

Table 6

Regression Coefficients for RQ 2 (DV: In-School Suspensions Black/African American)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Collinearity Statistics VIF
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>			
(Constant)	2.767	19.284		.144	.886	
Student Race American Indian or Alaskan Native (SRAIAN)	-.354	2.222	-.016	-.159	.874	1.031
Student Race Black/African American (SRBAA)	1.179	.311	.597	3.796	.000	2.460
Student Race Hispanic or Latino (SRHL)	-.033	.216	-.034	-.154	.878	4.741
Student Race Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (SRANPI)	-.064	.191	-.057	-.333	.740	2.930
Student Race White (SRW)	.115	.202	.150	.570	.571	6.902
Student Race Multiracial (SRM)	-.718	1.737	-.042	-.413	.681	1.010

Note. * $F(6, 79) = 4.399, p < .001$; adj. $R^2 = .205$.

Results for Research Question 3

Research Question 3 (RQ3) sought to understand to what extent was there a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of the school personnel and the suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9-12.

3. To what extent is there a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of the school personnel and the suspension rates of Black girls in high school grades 9-12 compared to other racial groups of high school girls?

H_0 : There will not be a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of the school personnel and the suspension rates of Black girls.

H_1 : There will be a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of the school personnel and the suspension rates of Black girls.

MLR models were used to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of school personnel and suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9-12. The six independent variables in the model were (a) Personnel Race American Indian or Alaskan Native, (b) Personnel Race Black/African American, (c) Personnel Race Hispanic or Latino, (d) Personnel Race White, (e) Personnel Race Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and (f) Personnel Race Multiracial. The dependent variable for the first MLR model for RQ3 was Out-of-school Suspensions for Black girls. The dependent variable for the second model for RQ3 was In-school Suspensions for Black girls.

Testing of Parametric Assumptions (RQ3)

Before conducting the analysis, the parametric assumptions were tested, which included checking for linearity, homoscedasticity, normality of regression residuals, the absence of outliers, and the absence of multicollinearity. Linearity and homoscedasticity were evaluated by visually examining scatter plots of the standardized residuals versus the standardized predicted

values. The plots were not curved so there were no violations of the linearity assumption (Field, 2018). Additionally, the homoscedasticity assumption was not violated because the plots appeared to be a random pattern (see Figures 7 and 8).

Figure 7

Scatter Plot of Standardized Residuals Versus Standardized Predicted Values- RQ3 (DV: In-School Suspension)

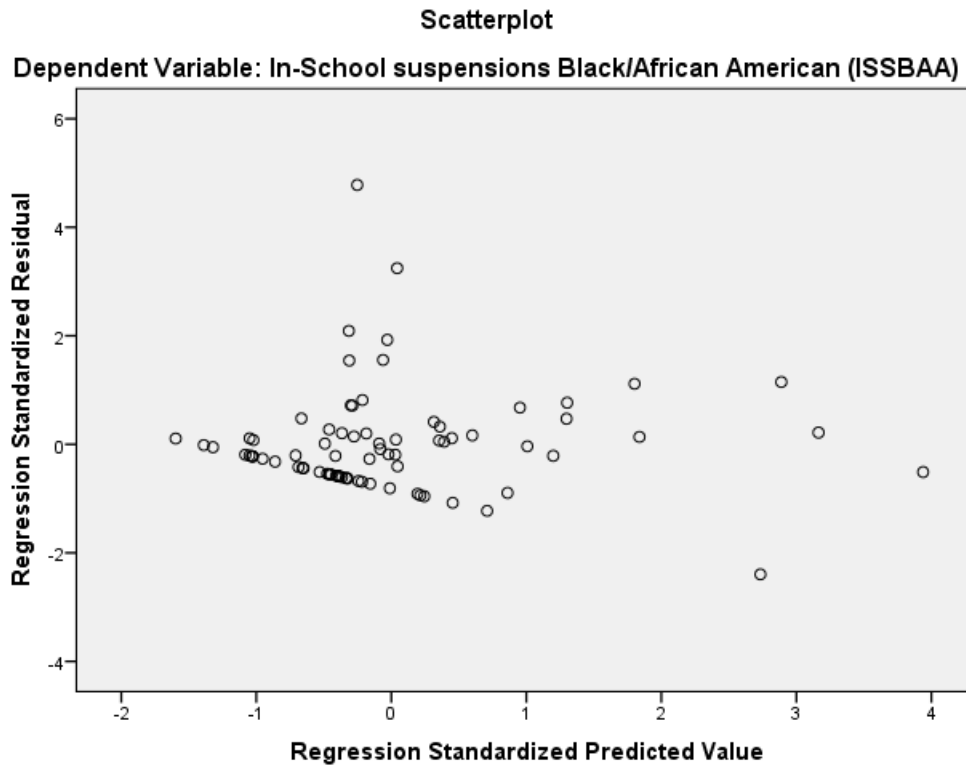
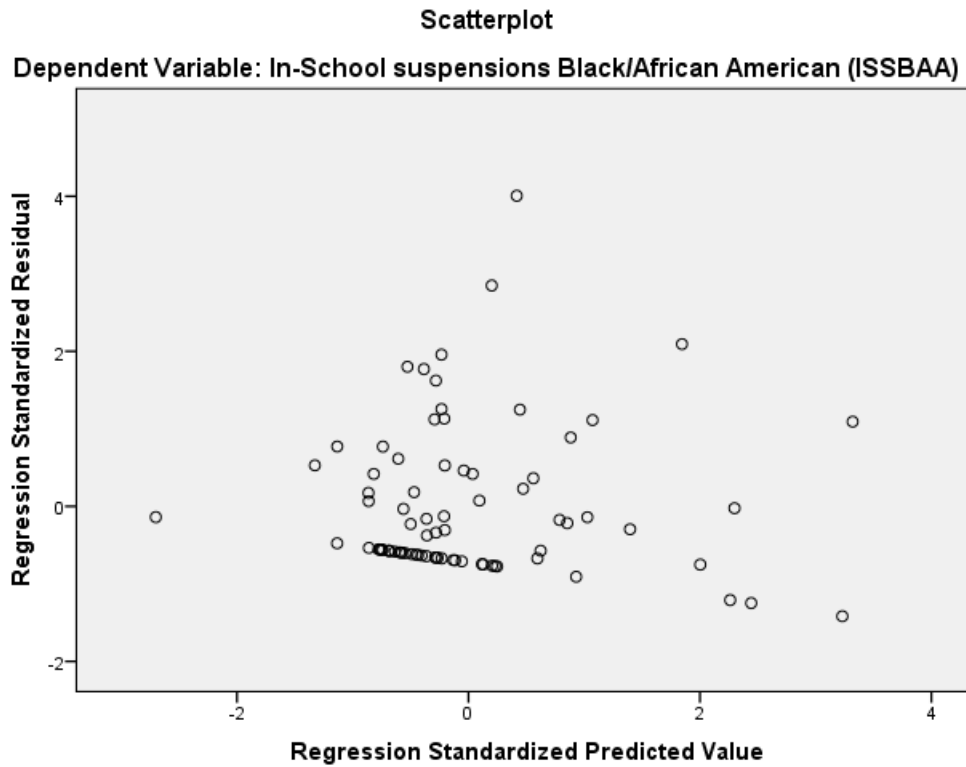


Figure 8

Scatter Plot of Standardized Residuals Versus Standardized Predicted Values- RQ3 (DV: Out-of-School Suspension)



Kurtosis and skewness statistics were calculated to evaluate normality. According to Hair et al. (2010) and Bryne (2010), data are considered normal if skewness is between -2 and +2 and kurtosis is between -7 and +7. All skewness and kurtosis values fell within these acceptable ranges. Additionally, histograms of regression residuals indicated an approximate normal distribution (see Figures 9 and Figure 10).

Figure 9

Histogram of Regression Residuals- RQ3 (DV: Out-of-School Suspensions)

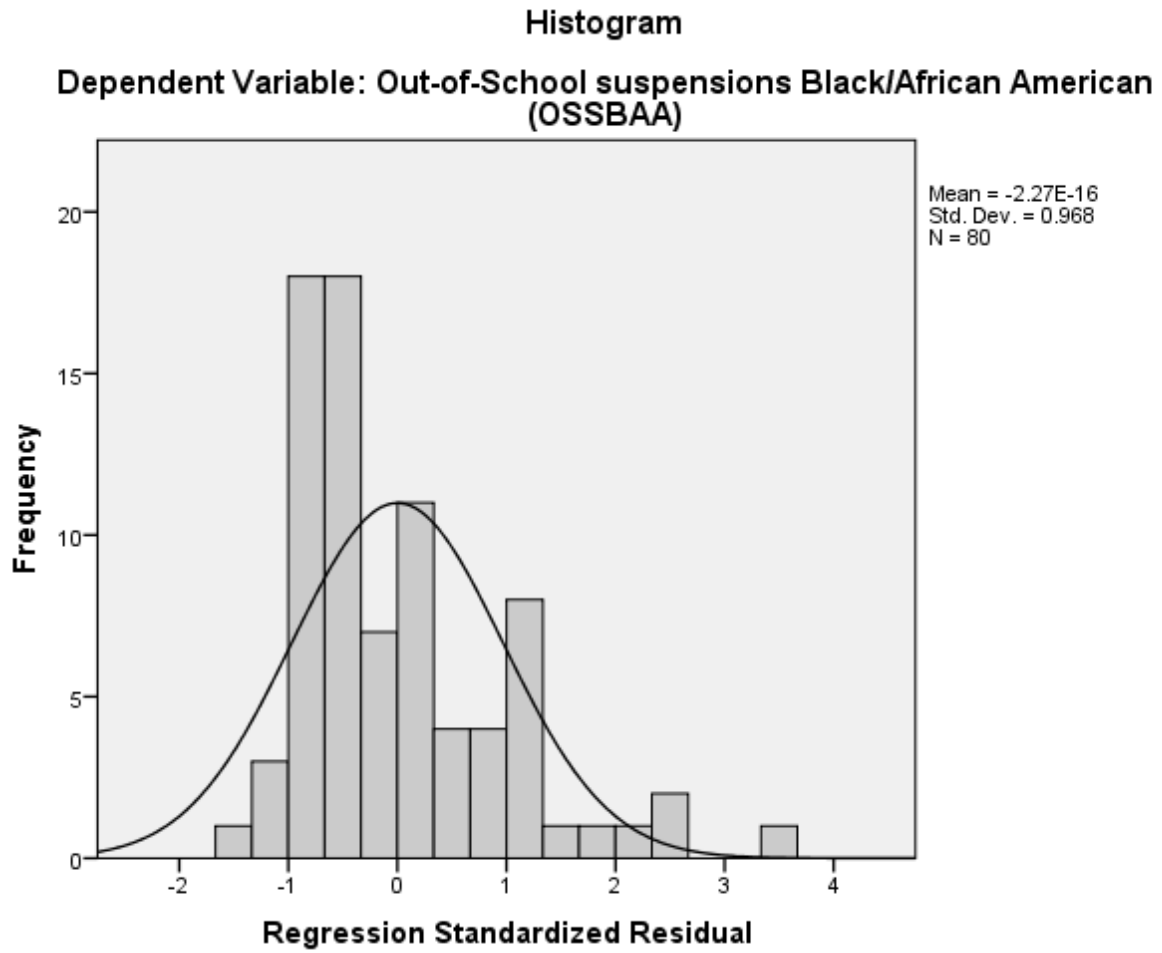
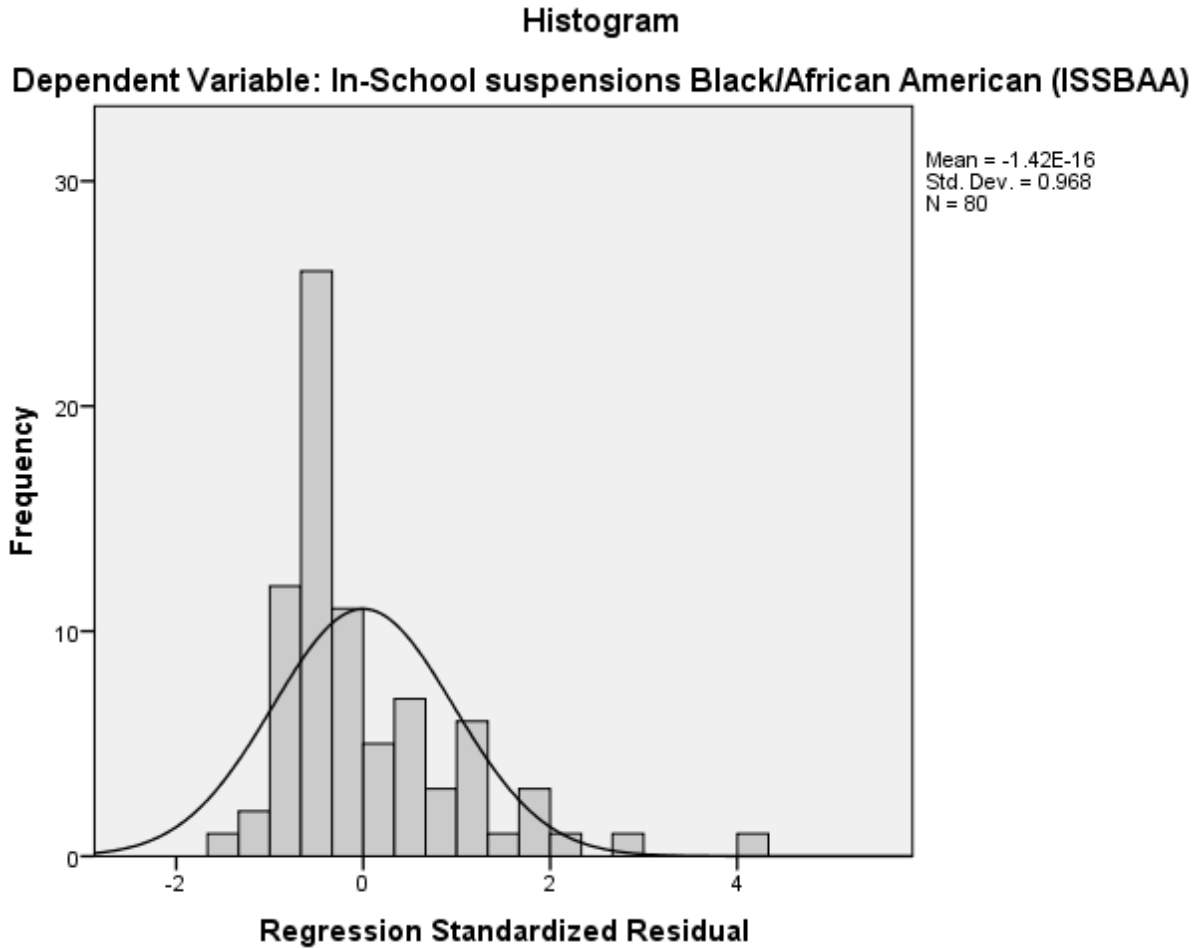


Figure 10

Histogram of Regression Residuals- RQ3 (DV: In-School Suspensions)



To determine if there was multicollinearity between any two variables, the VIF were computed for each variable (Field, 2018). Acceptable VIFs are less than 10 (Field, 2018). There were no issues with multicollinearity, as VIFS were below 10. Additionally, there were no outliers, as all standardized scores were within -3 to +3 standard deviations (see Table 7).

Results of Multiple Regression (RQ3)

The overall model for the dependent variable, Out-of-School suspensions Black/African American, was not statistically significant, $F(5, 79) = 2.199, p = .063$. The model explained 7.1% of the variance in predicting Out-of-School suspensions Black/African American (adj. $R^2 = .071$). None of the predictors were statistically significant ($p > .05$). Table 7 includes this information.

Table 7

*Regression Coefficients for RQ 3 (DV: Out-of-School Suspensions Black/African American)**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Collinearity Statistics
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β			VIF
(Constant)	-11.690	127.662		-.092	.927	
Personnel Race American Indian or Alaskan Native (PRAIAN)	-6.777	10.351	-.096	-.655	.515	1.815
Personnel Race Black/African American (PRBAA)	.765	1.430	.198	.535	.594	11.596
Personnel Race Hispanic or Latino (PRHL)	1.598	1.511	.299	1.057	.294	6.821
Personnel Race Multiracial (PRM)	1.006	7.405	.016	.136	.892	1.160
Personnel Race White (PRW)	.246	1.295	.104	.190	.850	25.633

Note. * $F(5, 79) = 2.199, p = .063$; adj. $R^2 = .071$.

The overall model for the second dependent variable, In-school Suspensions Black/African American, was not statistically significant, $F(5, 79) = 0.734, p = .600$. The model explained only 1.7% of the variance in predicting In-school Suspensions Black/African American (adj. $R^2 = .017$). None of the predictors were statistically significant ($p > .05$). Table 8 includes this information.

Table 8*Regression Coefficients for RQ 3 (DV: In-School Suspensions Black/African American)**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Collinearity Statistics VIF
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>			
(Constant)	32.325	109.943		.294	.770	
Personnel Race American Indian or Alaskan Native (PRAIAN)	-6.031	8.914	-.103	-.676	.501	1.815
Personnel Race Black/African American (PRBAA)	-.056	1.231	-.018	-.046	.964	11.596
Personnel Race Hispanic or Latino (PRHL)	.372	1.302	.085	.286	.776	6.821
Personnel Race Multiracial (PRM)	4.495	6.377	.086	.705	.483	1.160
Personnel Race White (PRW)	-.216	1.115	-.111	-.193	.847	25.633

Note. * $F(5, 79) = 0.734, p = .600$; $F(5, 79) = 0.734, p = .600$, adj. $R^2 = .017$.

Conclusion

The findings of this quantitative correlational study aimed to investigate the relationship between racial demographics within a school's student and personnel populations and occurrences of suspensions faced by Black female students in grades 9 through 12. Archival data from the NYSED website were used to address three research questions:

1. To what extent is there a statistical difference in suspension rates for Black girls compared to other racial groups in high school grades 9-12 between school districts?
2. To what extent is there a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of a school and the suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12?

3. To what extent is there a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of the school personnel and the suspension rates of Black girls in high school grades 9-12 compared to other racial groups of high school girls?

Results of descriptive statistics conducted to address the first research question were that Black girls had the third highest percentage of out-of-school and in-school suspensions compared to the other racial groups. The MLR models used to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of a school and suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9-12 found student race to be statistically significant in both models. Lastly, the MLR models used to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of school personnel and suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9-12 found no predictors to be statistically significant.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter describes and explains the findings of this quantitative correlational study. This quantitative correlational study investigated the relationship of racial demographics within a school's student and personnel populations with the occurrences of suspensions faced by Black female students in grades 9 through 12. This chapter includes the summary of the findings, overall results, discussion, implications, recommendations for future research, conclusion, and personal reflection.

Summary of the Findings

Using archival data from the NYSED, this study addressed the following three research questions:

1. To what extent is there a statistical difference in suspension rates for Black girls compared to other racial groups in high school grades 9-12 between school districts?
2. To what extent is there a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of a school and the suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12?
3. To what extent is there a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of the school personnel and the suspension rates of Black girls in high school grades 9-12 compared to other racial groups of high school girls?

Results of descriptive statistics conducted to address the first research question were that Black/African American girls had the third highest out of school suspensions ($M = 20.70\%$, $SD = 25.00\%$). Out of school suspensions were highest for Whites ($M = 36.84\%$, $SD = 33.51\%$). This was followed by Hispanic ($M = 31.49\%$, $SD = 25.42$); Asian ($M = 5.91\%$, $SD = 12.85\%$); Multiracial ($M = 3.09\%$, $SD = 8.94\%$); and Indian or Alaskan Native ($M = 0.73\%$, $SD = 5.07\%$). Regarding in-school suspensions, Black/African Americans were the third highest in in-school

suspensions ($M = 14.97\%$, $SD = 20.58\%$). Hispanics had the greatest percentage ($M = 34.39\%$, $SD = 27.26\%$). This was followed by White ($M = 32.67\%$, $SD = 32.30\%$); Asian ($M = 5.46\%$, $SD = 12.43\%$); Multiracial ($M = 2.55\%$, $SD = 6.18\%$); and Indian or Alaskan Native ($M = 0.64\%$, $SD = 4.15\%$).

Results of the MLR conducted to address the second research question revealed that Student Race Black/African American was a statistically significant predictor of Out-of-School suspensions Black/African American ($B = 1.598$, $p < .001$). A 1% increase in Student Race Black/African American results in a mean increase in Out-of-School suspensions Black/African American by 1.598%. Additionally, student race Black/African American was a significant predictor of out-of-school suspensions Black/African American ($B = 1.179$, $p < .001$). A 1% increase in Student Race Black/African American results in a mean increase in in-school suspensions Black/African American by 1.179%. No other predictors were statistically significant. Results of multiple regression conducted to address the third research question revealed that none of the predictors were statistically significant.

Overall Results

The calculations of this study found that White girls were 48.51% of the sample and had the highest mean out-of-school suspension percentage at 36.84% along with the second highest mean in-school suspension percentage at 32.67%. For White girls, neither in-school or out-of-school suspension percentages were disproportionate with their population in this study.

The calculations of this study found Black/African American girls were 8.39% of the sample, but the mean in-school suspension percentage was 14.97% and mean out-of-school suspension percentage was 20.7%. Additionally, Hispanic or Latino girls made up 27.9% of the population of this study and were also disproportionately suspended, with a mean in-school

suspension percentage of 34.39% and a mean out-of-school suspension percentage of 31.49%.

Although Black and Hispanic or Latino girls are being suspended disproportionately, the disparity for Black girls was larger. The findings from the descriptive statistics continue to show the same issues that have been found nationally for Black girls.

MLR models were used for RQ2. RQ2 sought to understand to what extent was there a statistically significant relationship between the racial demographics of a school and the suspension rates of Black girls in grades 9 – 12. The findings for RQ2 only found a significant relationship between race and out-of-school suspension rates of Black girls with Black/African American. Race was found to be a 38.9% predictor for out-of-school suspensions. The results from the out-of-school suspension MLR model showed the highest positive coefficient for Black/African American. This means if the population of Black girls increases 1% in a school the mean percentage of out-of-school suspensions for Black girls increases by 1.598%. Multiracial girls were second highest with a positive coefficient, but with a 1% increase in student population would yield a .62% mean increase in out-of-school suspensions; third highest was Hispanics or Latino girls with a 1% increase in population yielding a .095% increase in mean out-of-suspensions.

The MLR model used for in-school suspension found a significant relationship between race and in-school suspension rates of Black girls with Black/African American. Race was found to be a 20.5% predictor for in-school suspensions. The results from the in-school suspension MLR model showed the highest positive coefficient for Black/African American. This means if the population of Black girls increases 1% in a school the mean percentage of out-of-school suspensions for Black girls increases by 1.179%. Second highest was White girls with a 1% increase in student population that would yield an .115% mean increase of in-school suspensions.

An interesting find is the third highest is Hispanic or Latino girls with a negative coefficient. If the Hispanic or Latino population increase by 1% in a school the in-school suspension rate would decrease by .033%.

Additionally, this quantitative correlational study found race to be a 38.9% predictor of out-of-school suspensions and a 20.5% predictor of in-school suspensions for Black girls. This means that there were 61.1% of other predictors that contribute to out-of-school suspensions and 79.5% of other predictors that contribute to in-school suspensions for Black girls. The findings of this study are concerning.

Based on these findings, a large percentage of the reason Black girls were being disproportionately suspended was based on their race. When beginning this study, there was a belief that race matching of school personnel and students would help reduce suspensions. Race matching is the practice of assigning students to teachers of the same race. This study did not show that. This study showed personnel did not have a significant relationship with the mean in-school and mean out-of-school percentages of Black girls. While the research on race matching and discipline is growing, there is a lack of research specifically focused on Black girls. This makes it difficult to draw conclusions about the impact of race matching on the disciplinary experiences of Black girls.

Discussion & Implications

The findings of this quantitative correlational study show Black girl's 14th Amendment rights continue to be violated. The 14th Amendment guarantees equal protection under the law and due process. With race being a significant predictor of in-school and out-of-school suspension rates, Black girls attend schools where their race plays a role in the disciplinary measures assigned to them. With race being a predictor, will Black girls have an opportunity to

exercise their due process to a colorblind audience? Interest convergence and colorblindness are two concepts that work together to uphold racial inequality. Colorblindness denies the existence of the problem, while interest convergence limits the scope of solutions to those that benefit people in power. Disciplinary policies and procedures are discriminatory when they result in contrasting outcomes based on race.

Additionally, The Dignity For All Students Act was signed into New York Law in 2010 and took effect in 2012. The Act states New York State is supposed to provide students in public schools an environment free of discrimination and harassment. Although New York amended this act to be more inclusive by including the Crown Act, Black girls are not being treated with dignity. With race being a predictor, how can Black girls on Long Island be protected under the Dignity For All Students Act?

The disproportionate suspension of Black girls in schools is a multilayered problem rooted in colorblind policies and contradicted by the BFT framework. A colorblind approach to school discipline often ignores the racial disparities in suspension rates. Colorblindness assumes that all students are treated equally regardless of race, and therefore, fails to address the causes of the overrepresentation of Black girls in suspensions. This can lead to a lack of culturally relevant support systems and disciplinary measures that are tailored to their needs.

Examining disproportionate school suspensions of Black girls through the lens of BFT allows for discussion from a perspective that highlights the intersection of race, gender, and class and how these identities contribute to forms of discrimination and oppression faced by Black girls. Using the BFT lens, the adultification of Black girls is not just an isolated event but a manifestation of historical and systemic biases that devalue Black femininity. Black girls are often seen as more mature and less innocent than their peers, leading to expectations that they

should behave with the same composure and responsibility of adults. Adulthood results in harsher disciplinary measures for behaviors that would be considered typical for children of other races. Adulthood bias reduces the empathy that educators and administrators feel towards Black girls. When seen as more mature, Black girls are less likely to receive the compassion, understanding, and support that their peers of other races might receive for similar behaviors. Lack of empathy can result in punitive responses rather than supportive interventions, contributing to higher suspension rates for Black girls.

Additionally, BFT shows the connection of how stereotypes, such as the angry Black woman, the jezebel, and sapphire contribute to the perception and treatment of Black girls. These stereotypes frame Black girls as inherently aggressive, hypersexual, or defiant, which influences how educators and administrators interpret their actions. When Black girls display behavior that deviates from what is perceived to be normal, it is often seen through this biased lens, resulting in disproportionate suspensions. This reflects a society's tendency to monitor and control Black female bodies, extending from slavery through contemporary times.

BFT also explores the intersectionality of discrimination. Black girls do not experience racism and sexism in isolation; rather, these forms of oppression are interwoven and compound their marginalization. The school system fails to recognize and address these intersecting oppressions. This leads to policies and practices that are void of racial and cultural differences of students. These policies and practices can negatively impact Black girls with disproportionate exclusionary discipline. For example, subjective disciplinary categories of disrespect or disobedience can negatively impact Black girls because the school official may possess implicit biases that view their assertiveness as a threat rather than typical student behavior.

In the context of school discipline, interest convergence suggests that reforms beneficial to Black girls are only implemented when they also serve the interests of the stakeholders that hold power in the educational system. Interest convergence helps explain the reason reforms aimed at reducing disproportionate suspensions might be slow or inadequate. Initiatives to address this issue often face resistance unless the initiative benefits all students. Examples include improving overall school climate or reducing dropout rates. Interest convergence implies that while policies might change at a surface level to appear more equitable, the systemic biases that disproportionately impact Black girls remain unaddressed. When prioritizing the interests of the dominant group and ignoring racial differences, these concepts work together to maintain the existing power structures that disadvantage Black girls.

New York state is aware of the ineffectiveness of school suspensions and how this disciplinary action disproportionately negatively impacts Black students. Currently, there is an active bill, NY, S1040B, that attempts to address this problem. Some of things proposed in the bill are for school districts to provide multitiered levels of support to address student behavior, a collaborative approach when adopting new district codes of conduct for students, reducing the number of days for school suspensions, and considering age when assigning suspensions for students.

Limitations

A significant limitation of this correlation quantitative study is that the study only uses high schools with grades 9 – 12 in Long Island, NY. This sample does not consider the possibility that Black girls attending high schools outside Long Island, NY may face disproportionate school suspension rates. There is also a possibility that Black girls below high

school age encounter similar experiences. Although this is a quantitative study, the study was unable to infer causation.

Additionally, there is a lack of qualitative data from both students and school personnel. The study did not examine the reason for school suspensions for the different races of girls. Without qualitative data, there are challenges to having a comprehensive understanding of the subject. Even with these limitations, the study aimed to offer quantitative understandings that can promote further discussion about the disproportionate number of school suspensions Black girls face.

Recommendations For Future Research

Future research on the disproportionate school suspensions of Black girls should focus on several key areas to better understand and address this issue are:

1. **Intersectionality:** Future research will continue to investigate the intersection of race, gender, and other identities such as socioeconomic status, disability, and sexual orientation of girls. This study only explored race and gender. Studying how intersecting identities are related to Black girls and school suspensions will continue to aid in addressing this concern.
2. **Implicit Bias and School Personnel:** Future research is needed with implicit bias and school personnel. School personnel include but are not limited to teachers, school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and school administrators. School personnel interact with students daily. School personnel play an important role in creating school culture and issuing school suspensions. Further exploration in this area would provide insight on the influence of stereotypes and adultification bias on disciplinary decisions.
3. **Restorative Justice Practices:** Evaluating the implementation and outcomes of restorative justice practices in schools with Black girls. Restorative practices were implemented in

multiple schools but there is not much literature about how effective restorative practices are with Black girls in reducing suspensions and improving school culture. Research should examine both the short-term and long-term outcomes of these practices with Black girls.

4. **Policy Analysis:** More research on school district's code of conduct document. School districts use the policies in this document as a guide to inform school personnel and school administrators on the decisions made for disciplinary infractions from students. Examining code of conduct documents will show if cultural sensitivity and bias exist in the document. Additionally, this research would show if policies within a school district contribute to suspension rates of Black girls.
5. **Student and Family Perspectives:** Including the experiences and opinions of Black girls and their families. This qualitative research would show common experiences from Black girls and their families experiences with school discipline. This research can provide a deeper understanding of the personal impacts of school suspensions on Black girls and their families.
6. **School Environment and Support Systems:** Investigating the role of school environments and support systems, such as counseling services, progressive discipline, and mentorship programs. This research would provide a deeper understanding of a multitiered approach to discipline and how this approach impacts the suspension rates of Black girls.

Conclusion

This study provides a detailed explanation of the findings from a quantitative correlational study about the relationship between racial demographics within a school's student and personnel populations and the occurrences of suspensions faced by Black female students in grades 9 through 12. Using archival data from NYSED, the study aimed to answer three research

questions about the statistical differences in suspension rates among racial groups, the relationship between school racial demographics and suspension rates for Black girls, and the impact of school personnel demographics on these suspension rates.

The findings revealed that Black/African American girls had the third highest rates of both out-of-school and in-school suspensions among different racial groups reported to New York State. MLR models showed that the racial demographics of the student population were significant predictors of suspension rates for Black girls. An increase in 1% of Black students in a school correlated with a significant increase in both out-of-school and in-school suspension rates for Black girls. However, the racial demographics of school personnel was not statistically significant.

The discussion highlights the disproportionate suspension rates faced by Black and Hispanic girls, with Black girls experiencing a larger disparity. The results show race is a significant factor in predicting suspension rates for Black girls. Also, suggesting a violation of Black girl's 14th Amendment rights that guarantee equal protection and due process under the law. The study shows Black girls are disproportionately suspended based on their race, which raises concerns about the fairness and equity of school disciplinary practices.

The study's findings are consistent with the principles of BFT, which emphasizes the intersectionality of race, gender, and class in understanding the discrimination and oppression faced by Black girls. The concept of adultification bias, where Black girls are perceived as more mature and less innocent, leads to harsher disciplinary measures.

For future research, the study suggests several key areas of focus. These include exploring the intersectionality of race, gender, and other identities such as socioeconomic status and disability, examining implicit biases among school personnel, evaluating the effectiveness of

restorative justice practices, analyzing school disciplinary policies for cultural sensitivity and bias, and incorporating the perspectives of Black girls and their families to gain a deeper understanding of the personal impacts of suspensions. Additionally, investigating the role of school environments and support systems, like counseling services and mentorship programs, could provide valuable insights into how a multitiered approach to discipline affects suspension rates for Black girls.

In conclusion, this study highlighted the urgent need to address the disproportionate suspension rates of Black girls through a tiered approach. This involves understanding the complex relationship of intersecting identities, addressing implicit biases, evaluating restorative justice practices, analyzing school policies, and incorporating the voices of Black girls and their families. This approach will ensure that educators and policymakers can work towards creating more equitable and supportive school environments for Black girls.

Personal Reflection

This study was a journey. Being a Black female educator from and employed on Long Island, I was curious about suspensions of Black Girls on Long Island. During my childhood on Long Island, suspensions of students was frequent and I thought it was normal. As a student, I probably thought some of the students deserved to be suspended and never looked at schools suspensions as harmful in any way.

As an educator, I see the world through a different lens. I wrote this dissertation out of concern for Black girls. When I see my Black female students, I see myself. I understand when they hurt and are silenced, but I continue to see their endless opportunities. School suspensions and exclusionary discipline make it challenging for them to see their endless. I work tirelessly, in search of equitable opportunities for my students to reach their full potential. The suspension

rates for Black girls continues to rise and addressing this concern is slow and steady. Hopefully, my study will inform and guide local school districts about school suspensions as it pertains to Black girls. With collaboration and meaningful dialogue, I am hopeful change will come.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) STATUS



LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY

TO: Ursula Moorer

FROM: LIU Institutional Review Board

DATE: July 08, 2024

PROJECT TITLE: The Exclusion of Black Girls: A Quantitative Study

ACTION: Determination of Not Human Subjects Research

Based on your answers to the Human Subjects Research Determination form, your project does not meet the definition of research involving human subjects according to 45 CFR 46.102. Therefore, this project does not require IRB review or oversight. **However, if the project is amended or changed so that it fits the federal definition of human subjects research, the investigators must submit an IRB application for review.**