INEQUITIES IN THE NUMBER OF DAYS ASSIGNED TO AN EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCE AS A FUNCTION OF THE ETHNICITY / RACE OF TEXAS MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS: A MULTIYEAR, STATEWIDE INVESTIGATION

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Abstract

In this investigation, the extent to which differences in days assigned to in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension for Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black, Hispanic, and White girls in Texas for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years was examined. Inferential statistical procedures revealed statistically significant differences in all four school years and at all three grade levels. In all school years and at each grade level, Black girls were assigned to statistically significantly more days of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension than were Hispanic girls and White girls. A clear stair-step effect was present. Black girls were assigned statistically significantly more days to each consequence, followed by Hispanic girls, and then by White girls.

INTRODUCTION

The United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2014) data snapshot on school discipline reported that "boys receive more than two out of three suspensions" and that "Black girls are suspended at higher rates (12%) than girls of any other race or ethnicity" (para 3). The disproportionate suspensions of girls by ethnicity/race was corroborated in a recent report by the National Women's Law Center (2017) in which Black girls, in every state, were 5.5 times more likely to be suspended than were White girls and Hispanic girls. Additionally, in their report, Black girls received more days assigned to both in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension than boys and other ethnic/racial groups of students. With respect to inequalities in exclusionary discipline and girls of color, a paucity of research has been documented. The information that is available has only recently been published.

In partnership with the Columbia Law School Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies, the African American Policy Forum (2014) released a study in which a review of national data from Boston and New York confirmed the presence of discipline disproportionality for Black girls. According to their report, *Black Girls Matter: Pushed Out, Overpoliced, and Underprotected*, Black girls are most at risk of being assigned to a disciplinary action and are, on average, suspended six times more than White girls (Crenshaw, Ocen, & Nanda, 2015). During the 2011-2012 school year, Black girls in New York City and Boston schools were 10 and 11 times more likely to receive an in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension than White girls, respectively. During the 2014-2015 school year, Black girls in the Texas major urban cities of Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, and Austin schools were, on average, almost seven times more likely to receive an in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension than White girls (National Women's Law Center, 2017).

As disparities continue to be documented in reports for Black girls, Cavanaugh (2009) sought to determine the extent to which social factors, like family structure and parental involvement, could predict the likelihood of middle school Black girls being assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence. Of the known social factors, seven were determined to be statistically significant: observed violence at school, gang membership, school suspension, attitude toward violence, grade level, drug use, and active parental monitoring were predictors of a student more likely to be assigned to an exclusionary consequence. Cavanaugh (2009) indicated that the student group with the most predictors was Black girls. A complex and intricate relationship was revealed between disparities in exclusionary discipline assignment and ethnicity/race, a finding later corroborated by Lunenburg (2013). In a similar study, Harper (2015) documented such predictors to have damaging, lasting effects on Black males. With respect to the effects of these predictors and Black girls, Cavanaugh (2009) urged administrators to implement safeguards for decreasing the amount of violence students and, in particular, Black girls are exposed to on campus and to create parental involvement plans that are more engaging, collaborative, and relevant to the cultural bond between Black girls and their parents.

Additionally, Wun (2014) examined the implications of discipline disparities on the social and emotional development of a select group of Black girls at a secondary suburban school in California. After conducting 12 months of participant observations and interviewing 15 Black girls with exclusionary discipline records during the 2013-2014 school year, Wun (2014) determined that Black girls were most susceptible to formal and informal "racialized and gendered forms of discipline and punishment" (p. 2). With respect to formal discipline consequences, Black girls constitute 9% of the total student enrollment despite 26% of Black girls having an official

exclusionary discipline consequence on their record. With respect to informal discipline consequences, Black girls were exposed to higher rates of cognitive biases and anti-Black racism from teachers and administrators. Like Lunenburg (2012), Wun (2014) contended that social and contextual implications have as much of an effect on exclusionary discipline assignment as does the behavioral infraction itself. As such, future researchers ought to focus on recognizing such biases as a problem to be corrected and not ignored.

To expand upon the school discipline literature for Black girls, Blake, Butler, Lewis, and Darensbourg (2010) analyzed the types of behavioral infractions being committed by Black girls and if their assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence was disproportionately different from White and Hispanic girls. Unique to this investigation was their examination of the relationship between exclusionary discipline participation and Black girls, independent and separate from Black boys. The specific types of misbehavior in which White, Hispanic, and Black girls differed were analyzed. Blake et al. (2010) documented that Black girls were overrepresented in all behavioral infractions and mirrored the same overrepresentation patterns that have been extensively documented for Black boys (e.g., Henkel, Slate, & Martinez-Garcia, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2012, 2014). Concerning exclusionary discipline consequences and Hispanic girls, Black girls were twice as likely to receive an in-school suspension and were slightly overrepresented in out-of-school suspensions. Regarding exclusionary discipline consequences and White girls, Black girls were four times as likely to receive an in-school suspension and were twice as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension.

In their published article, Slate, Gray, and Jones (2016) examined the extent to which inequities were revealed in the assignment of an in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement to Black, Hispanic, and White girls in grades 4 through 11 in the state of Texas. Of the grade levels examined, Black girls were assigned to a statistically significantly higher percentage of out-of-school suspensions than were White girls in all eight grades. Of the eight grades examined, grade 6 and grade 9 yielded the highest percentage of out-of-school suspensions for Texas Black girls. A clear lack of equity was determined to be present in exclusionary discipline assignments for Black girls, particularly in grade 6 and grade 9. These years are important because they are regarded as pivotal years of school transition for elementary and middle school students, respectively. Slate et al. (2016) recommended that school administrators perform routine checks for fidelity with regard to campus discipline practices and Black girls and to implement more robust Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems to support Black girls during their grade 6 transition to middle school and grade 9 transition to high school.

Statement of the Problem

Inequities in the assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence for middle school boys has been established as a function of student ethnicity/race (e.g., Barnes & Slate, 2016; Coleman & Slate, 2016; Eckford & Slate, 2016; White & Slate, 2018). Only recently have researchers (e.g., Henkel et al., 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2012, 2014) started to investigate and document similar overrepresentation patterns in discipline for Black girls. Currently, researchers have yet to publish a study on whether the ethnicity/race of girls is related to more days serving out a discipline consequence. Since disparities exist in discipline assignment for Black and Hispanic students (Ryan & Goodram, 2013), examining the number of days girls are assigned to each consequence is needed. To this end, the extent to which inequities might also exist in the time

Hispanic and Black girls are assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence will be determined. Such information is essential and should drive the decision making of school administrators to create fair and equitable behavioral management systems for students.

Significance of the Study

In this study, the extent to which inequities existed in the number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension) based on the ethnicity/race of middle school girls was examined for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. Additionally, the degree to which differences were present in the number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence were addressed for Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black, Hispanic, and White girls. Because instructional time is naturally linked to academic achievement, disproportionality in the number of days assigned to in-school or out-of-school suspension decreases the likelihood of success for these excluded girls. As a result, the findings of this study may benefit administrators seeking to reform outdated and ineffective discipline practices on their campus.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the extent to which differences were present in the number of days Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension) based on their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, and White). A second purpose was to determine the degree to which trends existed in the relationship between the number of days girls were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence and their ethnicity/race. By conducting these analyses, the degree to which inequities were present in the numbers of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence based on the ethnicity/race of Texas middle school girls was established.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this empirical investigation: (a) For Grade 6 girls who were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension), what is the effect of their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, and White) on the number of days they received each of these consequences?; (b) For Grade 7 girls who were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence, what is the effect of their ethnicity/race on the number of days they received each of these consequences?; (c) For Grade 8 girls who were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence, what is the effect of their ethnicity/race on the number of days they received each of these consequences?; (d) For Grade 6 girls, what trend is present in the relationship between their ethnicity/race and number of days they were assigned to the two exclusionary discipline consequences?; (e) For Grade 7 girls, what trend is present in the relationship between their ethnicity/race and number of days they were assigned to the two exclusionary discipline consequences?; and (f) For Grade 8 girls, what trend is present in the relationship between their ethnicity/race and number of days they were assigned to the two exclusionary discipline consequences? The first three research questions were examined

for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and the 2015-2016 school years whereas the last three research questions involved comparisons of data across the four school years.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Used in this study was a causal comparative research design. Examined in a causal comparative method is the "relationship between one or more categorical independent variables and one or more quantitative dependent variables" (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 44). Analyzed were statewide archival data previously obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System. Thus, the independent and dependent variables had already interacted and could not be changed. For these reasons, a causal comparative research design was used (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The data included Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 8 girls by their ethnicity/race, assignment to the two exclusionary discipline consequences, and the number of days received for that assigned exclusionary discipline consequence. As such, the independent variable of ethnicity/race for girls consisted of three groups: (a) Black, (b) Hispanic, and (c) White. For each school year (i.e., 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016), the dependent variable was the number of days assigned to any of the two exclusionary discipline consequences.

Participants

Participants in this study were Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black, Hispanic, and White girls in Texas who received an exclusionary discipline consequence (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension) in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. With respect to total in-school suspension assignments, the Grade 6 sample was 82,915 girls, of which 22,044 were Black, 33,454 were Hispanic, and 14,417 were White; the Grade 7 sample was 99,686 girls, of which 25,078 were Black, 57,052 were Hispanic, and 17,556 were White; and the Grade 8 sample was 102,971 girls, of which 25,203 were Black, 57,836 were Hispanic, and 19,932 were White. With respect to total out-of-school suspension assignments, the Grade 6 sample consisted of 36,309 girls, of which 12,965 were Black, 20,269 were Hispanic, and 2,445 were White; the Grade 7 sample was 48,592 girls, of which 15,138 were Black, 28,495w ere Hispanic, and 4,959 were White; and the Grade 8 sample was 52,560 girls, of which 16,824 were Black, 29,537 were Hispanic, and 4,899 were White.

Instrumentation and Procedures

The Texas Education Code §37.001 (2002) contains the rules and procedures for administering an exclusionary discipline consequence. In-school suspension is established under Texas Education Code §37.002 and is a consequence issued by an administrator that removes a student from their assigned classroom. Assignment to this consequence may not exceed 10 school days. Out-of-school suspension is established under Texas Education Code §37.005 and is a more punitive consequence issued by an administrator that temporarily removes a student from their

assigned campus for at least one school day. Assignment to this consequence may not exceed 3 consecutive school days.

For each school year, discipline data are submitted by school districts to the Public Education Information Management System. Data were obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System through a Public Information Request form for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. Then, data were imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software program. Once imported, the data were analyzed separately for Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 8 girls by the status of their ethnicity/race. Minimal errors in the data are assumed to be present given that school districts send their discipline data directly to the Texas Education Agency via standardized computer files.

RESULTS

Examined in this investigation was the degree to which the ethnicity/race of girls was related to being assigned more days to an exclusionary discipline consequence. In-school suspension and out-of-school suspension data were analyzed for Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls for the 2012 through the 2016 school years. Conducted were separate statistical analyses for each exclusionary discipline consequence, at each grade level, and by each school year. Checks for normality of data and for homogeneity of variance were performed prior to conducting inferential statistical procedures. Despite not meeting the underlying assumptions of a parametric Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Field (2009) contends that, due to the robustness of this procedure, these violations can be withstood. Results begin with Grade 6 for the 2012-2013 school year and through the end of the 2015-2016 school year and are listed by ascending order of punishment severity (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension) for Black, Hispanic, and White girls. Then, results are repeated for Grade 7 and Grade 8 girls.

Results for In-School Suspension and Grade 6 Girls

Regarding the 2012-2013 school year for the extent to which differences were present in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension as a function of ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, and White) for Grade 6 girls, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 21131) = 56.61$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .005$. The effect size for this finding was below small (Cohen, 1998). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed statistically significant differences in two of the three ethnic/racial groups. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned an average of 0.94 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 White girls and an average of 0.74 more days than Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Black and Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension for a similar number of days. Presented in Table 1 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for the Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension for Grade 6 Girls as a Function of Their Ethnicity/Race in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	*n*	*M*	*SD*
2012-2013			
Black	5,696	4.64	5.43
Hispanic	11,738	3.89	4.70
White	3,700	3.70	4.53
2013-2014			
Black	6,503	4.75	5.46
Hispanic	14,799	4.28	5.15
White	4,524	3.82	4.30
2014-2015			
Black	4,944	4.20	4.79
Hispanic	9,926	3.70	4.42
White	3,126	3.31	3.82
2015-2016			
Black	4,901	4.10	4.85
Hispanic	9,991	3.71	4.44
White	3,067	3.23	3.57

Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, the parametric ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 19408) = 47.42$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .005$, in the number of days Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension based on their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding was below small (Cohen, 1998). Scheffe` post hoc tests revealed that all three ethnic/racial groups of girls had a statistically significant different number of days assigned to this consequence. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned an average of one day more, 1.01, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 White girls and 0.51 more days than Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned an average of 0.50 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are delineated in Table 1.

With respect to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $F(2, 17993) = 42.13$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .005$, in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grade 6 girls as a function of their ethnicity/race. A below small effect size was yielded for this finding (Cohen, 1998). Scheffe` post hoc tests revealed the presence of a statistically significant difference between all pairwise comparisons. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned an average of 0.90 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 White girls and an average of 0.50 more days than were Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned an average of 0.39 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 White girls. Contained in Table 1 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis in the 2014-2015 school year.

Regarding the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was present, $F(2, 17956) = 36.64$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .004$, in the number of days spent in in-school suspension for Grade 6 girls based on their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding was below small

(Cohen, 1998). Scheffe` post hoc comparisons revealed that all pairwise comparisons were statistically significantly different. On average, Grade 6 Black girls were assigned 0.87 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 White girls and an average of 0.48 more days than were Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned an average of 0.48 more days to this consequence than were Grade 6 White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are contained in Table 1.

Results for In-School Suspension and Grade 7 Girls

With respect to the 2012-2013 school year for the extent to which differences were present in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension as a function of the ethnicity/race of Grade 7 girls, the parametric ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 27346) = 41.57$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .005$. This finding represented a below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). Statistically significant differences were revealed between all three ethnic/racial groups. As delineated in Table 2, Grade 7 Black girls were assigned an average of 0.82 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 7 White girls and an average of 0.61 more days than Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.22 more days than were Grade 7 White girls.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for the Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension for Grade 7 Girls as a Function of Their Ethnicity/Race in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	*n*	*M*	*SD*
2012-2013			
Black	6,763	4.97	5.75
Hispanic	15,745	4.36	5.23
White	4,841	4.15	5.06
2013-2014			
Black	6,503	4.75	5.46
Hispanic	14,799	4.28	5.15
White	4,524	3.82	4.30
2014-2015			
Black	6,051	4.71	5.64
Hispanic	13,496	4.19	5.25
White	4,150	3.83	4.37
2015-2016			
Black	5,761	4.72	5.83
Hispanic	13,012	4.18	5.04
White	4,041	3.78	4.42

Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $F(2, 25823) = 45.47$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .004$, in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grade 7 girls as a function of their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this difference was below small (Cohen, 1998). All pairwise comparisons were statistically significantly different. As revealed in Table 2, Grade 7 Black girls were assigned, on average, 0.93 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 7 White girls and 0.47 more days than Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.46 more days than were Grade 7 White girls.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 23694) = 37.56$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .003$. This finding was a below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). A statistically significant difference was yielded between all pairwise comparisons. As contained in Table 2, Grade 7 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.88 more days than Grade 7 White girls and an average of 0.51 more days than Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.36 more days than were Grade 7 White girls.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was present, $F(2, 22811) = 41.74$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .004$, a below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). A statistically significantly difference was yielded between all pairwise comparisons. As presented in Table 2, Grade 7 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.94 more days than Grade 7 White girls and an average of 0.54 more days than Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned, on average, 0.39 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 7 White girls.

Results for In-School Suspension and Grade 8 Girls

Concerning the 2012-2013 school year, the parametric ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 27846) = 31.40$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .002$, a below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). Pairwise comparisons revealed a statistically significant difference in two of the three ethnic/racial group pairings. Grade 8 Black girls were assigned an average of 0.59 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 8 White girls and an average of 0.52 more days than were Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to this consequence. Presented in Table 3 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for the Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension for Grade 8 Girls as a Function of Their Ethnicity/Race in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	*n*	*M*	*SD*
2012-2013			
Black	6,944	4.65	5.33
Hispanic	15,398	4.12	4.88
White	5,507	4.06	4.74
2013-2014			
Black	6,520	4.58	5.31
Hispanic	14,914	4.10	4.98
White	5,073	3.94	4.73
2014-2015			
Black	5,995	4.37	5.12
Hispanic	14,318	4.03	4.91
White	4,909	3.83	4.64
2015-2016			
Black	5,744	4.36	5.23
Hispanic	13,206	3.81	4.54
White	4,443	3.64	4.31

With respect to the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present, $F(2, 26504) = 28.38$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .002$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). Pairwise comparisons yielded statistically significant differences between two of the three ethnic/racial groups. Grade 8 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.64 more days than were Grade 8 White girls and an average of 0.48 more days than were Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls and Grade 8 White girls were assigned, on average, a similar number of days to this consequence. Contained in Table 3 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Regarding the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present, $F(2, 25219) = 17.99$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .001$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). All pairwise comparisons yielded statistically significant differences. Grade 8 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.55 more days than were Grade 8 White girls and an average of 0.34 more days than were Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned an average of 0.21 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 8 White girls. Delineated in Table 3 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $F(2, 23390) = 36.69$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .003$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). Pairwise comparisons revealed statistically significant differences in all ethnic/racial groups except one. Grade 8 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.72 more days than were Grade 8 White girls and an average of 0.55 more days than were Grade 8 Hispanic

girls. Grade 8 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to this consequence. Table 3 reveals the descriptive statistics for this school year.

Results for Out-of-School Suspension and Grade 6 Girls

Regarding the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $F(2, 9677) = 33.32$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .007$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). Statistically significant differences were present in all pairwise comparisons except one. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned 0.61 more days, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 6 White girls and 0.60 more days than were Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to an out-of-school suspension. Table 4 delineates the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for the Number of Days Assigned to an Out-of-School Suspension for Grade 6 Girls as a Function of Their Ethnicity/Race in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	*n*	*M*	*SD*
2012-2013			
Black	3,317	3.95	3.84
Hispanic	5,546	3.35	3.19
White	817	3.34	3.35
2013-2014			
Black	3,428	4.15	4.31
Hispanic	5,211	3.60	3.58
White	846	3.11	3.58
2014-2015			
Black	3,059	3.93	4.12
Hispanic	4,648	3.41	3.43
White	704	3.13	3.98
2015-2016			
Black	3,161	3.88	3.84
Hispanic	4,864	3.38	3.42
White	708	3.23	3.07

Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $F(2, 9482) = 34.51$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .007$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). Statistically significant differences were present in all pairwise comparisons. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned 1.05 more days, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 6 White girls and 0.56 more days than were Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned an average of 0.49 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 6 White girls. Table 4 reveals the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

With respect to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $F(2, 8408) = 23.53$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .006$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). Statistically significant differences were present in all pairwise comparisons except one. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned 0.81 more days, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 6 White girls and 0.52 more days than were Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to an out-of-school suspension. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are delineated in Table 4.

Regarding the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $F(2, 8730) = 21.89$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .005$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). All pairwise comparisons were statistically significantly different except in one. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned 0.64 more days, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 6 White girls and 0.50 more days than were Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to an out-of-school suspension. Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for this school year.

Results for Out-of-School Suspension and Grade 7 Girls

With respect to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $F(2, 12918) = 53.31$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .008$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). All pairwise comparisons revealed statistically significant differences. Grade 7 Black girls were assigned, on average, 1.07 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 7 White girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned 0.63 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 7 White girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned 0.45 more days to an out-of-school suspension than Grade 7 White girls. Table 5 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for the Number of Days Assigned to an Out-of-School Suspension for Grade 7 Girls as a Function of Their Ethnicity/Race in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	*n*	*M*	*SD*
2012-2013			
Black	3,317	3.95	3.84
Hispanic	7,409	3.72	3.74
White	1,381	3.27	3.00
2013-2014			
Black	4,225	4.65	4.93
Hispanic	7,497	3.84	4.13
White	1,176	3.47	3.39
2014-2015			
Black	3,766	4.47	4.83
Hispanic	6,699	3.81	4.05
White	1,171	3.18	2.96
2015-2016			
Black	3,830	4.51	4.55
Hispanic	6,890	3.80	3.86
White	1,231	3.33	2.86

Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $F(2, 12895) = 58.79$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .009$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). All pairwise comparisons were statistically significantly different. Grade 7 Black girls were assigned an average of 1.17 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 7 White girls and an average of 0.81 more days than Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned 0.36 more days to an out-of-school suspension than White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are revealed in Table 5.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $F(2, 11633) = 51.12$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .009$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). Statistically significant differences were present in all pairwise comparisons. Grade 7 Black girls were assigned an average of 1.29 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 7 White girls and an average of 0.65 more days than Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned an average of 0.64 more days to an out-of-school suspension than White girls. Table 5 delineates the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was present, $F(2, 12719) = 40.35$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .006$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). Statistically significant differences were present in all pairwise comparisons. Grade 7 Black girls were assigned an average of 1.18 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 7 White girls and an average of 0.71 more days than Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned 0.47 more days to an out-of-school suspension than White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 5.

Results for Out-of-School Suspension and Grade 8 Girls

Regarding the 2012-2103 school year, a statistically significant difference was present, $F(2, 13452) = 42.95$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .006$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). Statistically significant differences were present in all pairwise comparisons. As revealed in Table 6, Grade 8 Black girls were assigned an average of 0.94 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 8 White girls and an average of 0.47 more days than Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned an average of 0.46 more days to an out-of-school suspension than White girls.

Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present, $F(2, 13556) = 44.58$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .007$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). Statistically significant differences were present in all pairwise comparisons. As delineated in Table 6, Grade 8 Black girls were assigned an average of 1.07 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 8 White girls and an average of 0.46 more days than Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned an average of 0.61 more days to an out-of-school suspension than White girls.

With respect to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present, $F(2, 12821) = 81.01$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .012$, small effect size (Cohen, 1998). Statistically significant differences were present in all pairwise comparisons. As revealed in Table 6, Grade 8 Black girls were assigned an average of 1.41 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 8 White girls and an average of 0.86 more days than Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned an average of 0.55 more days to an out-of-school suspension than White girls.

Regarding the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was present, $F(2, 12719) = 40.53$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .006$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1998). Statistically significant differences were present in all pairwise comparisons, with one exception. Grade 8 Black girls were assigned an average of 0.87 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 8 White girls and an average of 0.63 more days than Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Black and Hispanic girls were assigned a similar number of days to an out-of-school suspension. The descriptive statistics for this analysis are contained in Table 6.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for the Number of Days Assigned to an Out-of-School Suspension for Grade 8 Girls as a Function of Their Ethnicity/Race in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	*n*	*M*	*SD*
2012-2013			
Black	4,419	4.14	4.08
Hispanic	7,386	3.68	3.70
White	1,650	3.21	2.85
2013-2014			
Black	4,310	4.35	4.46
Hispanic	7,630	3.89	3.94
White	1,619	3.28	3.21
2014-2015			
Black	4,015	4.62	5.25
Hispanic	7,318	3.76	3.78
White	1,491	3.21	3.07
2015-2016			
Black	4,080	4.39	4.36
Hispanic	7,203	3.76	3.91
White	1,439	3.52	3.75

DISCUSSION

Addressed in this investigation was the extent to which inequities existed in the number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence as a function of ethnicity/race for Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black, Hispanic, and White girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. Also analyzed was the degree to which trends were present across all four school years.

Across all four school years, ethnicity/race was statistically significantly related to the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grade 6 girls. With one exception, Black girls were assigned the highest number of days in this consequence, followed by Hispanic girls, and then by White girls. The one exception was that Grade 6 Black girls and Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned a similar number of days in the 2012-2013 school year. The results of the statistical analyses for this consequence are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7

Summary of Results for the Number of Days Assigned to an In-school Suspension for Grades 6-8 Girls as a Function of Their Ethnicity/Race in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

Grade Level and School Year	Partial Eta Squared	Effect Size Range	Highest Number of Days
Grade 6			
2012-2013	.005	Below Small	Black
2013-2014	.005	Below Small	Black
2014-2015	.005	Below Small	Black
2015-2016	.004	Below Small	Black
Grade 7			
2012-2013	.003	Below Small	Black
2013-2014	.004	Below Small	Black
2014-2015	.003	Below Small	Black
2015-2016	.004	Below Small	Black
Grade 8			
2012-2013	.002	Below Small	Black
2013-2014	.002	Below Small	Black
2014-2015	.001	Below Small	Black
2015-2016	.003	Below Small	Black

Across each school year, the ethnicity/race of Grade 7 girls was statistically significantly related to the number of days they were assigned to an in-school suspension. In all analyses for all four school years, Grade 7 Black girls were assigned to the highest number of days, followed by Hispanic girls, and then by White girls. From these findings, a clear stair-step effect was revealed, a result that was congruent with Slate et al. (2016). Black girls always had the highest average number of days assigned to an-school suspension. Hispanic girls always had the second highest average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension, and White girls always had the lowest average number of days assigned to this consequence. Table 7 delineates the summary results for the statistical analyses of this consequence.

Across all four school years, the ethnicity/race of Grade 8 girls was statistically significantly related to the number of days they were assigned to an in-school suspension in only one school year. Analysis of the 2014-2015 school year revealed Grade 8 Black girls were assigned to the highest number of days, followed by Hispanic girls, and then by White girls. In all other school year analyses, Grade 8 Black girls were assigned to statistically significant more days of in-school suspension than Grade 8 White girls but were assigned a similar number of days to Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Table 7 reveals the summary results of the statistical analyses for this consequence.

With respect to all four school years, the ethnicity/race of Grade 6 girls was statistically significantly related to the number of days they were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in only one school year. In the 2013-2014 school year, Grade 6 Black girls were assigned to the highest number of days in this consequence, followed by Hispanic girls, and then by White girls. Across all other school years for this consequence, Grade 6 Black girls were assigned a statistically

significantly higher number of days compared to Grade 6 White girls but were assigned a similar number of days compared to Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Revealed in Table 8 are the summary results for the statistical analyses of this consequence.

Table 8

Summary of Results for the Number of Days Assigned to an Out-of-school Suspension for Grades 6-8 Girls as a Function of Their Ethnicity/Race in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

Grade Level and School Year	Partial Eta Squared	Effect Size Range	Highest Number of Days
Grade 6			
2012-2013	.007	Below Small	Black
2013-2014	.007	Below Small	Black
2014-2015	.006	Below Small	Black
2015-2016	.005	Below Small	Black
Grade 7			
2012-2013	.008	Below Small	Black
2013-2014	.009	Below Small	Black
2014-2015	.009	Below Small	Black
2015-2016	.009	Below Small	Black
Grade 8			
2012-2013	.006	Below Small	Black
2013-2014	.007	Below Small	Black
2014-2015	.012	Small	Black
2015-2016	.006	Below Small	Black

Concerning all four school years, the ethnicity/race of Grade 7 girls was statistically significantly related to the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension. With respect to all analyses, Black girls were assigned to the highest number of days, followed by Hispanic girls, and then by White girls. Contained in Table 8 the summary results for the statistical analyses of this consequence.

With respect to all four school years, the ethnicity/race Grade 8 girls was statistically significantly related to the number of days they were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in all school years, with one exception. Regarding the analysis of the 2015-2016 school year, Black girls were assigned the highest number of days compared to White girls but were assigned a similar number of days compared to Hispanic girls. Table 8 delineates the summary results for the statistical analyses of this consequence.

Connections with Existing Literature

Revealed in this multiyear, statewide investigation were results congruent with the current findings from a growing body of researchers (e.g., Crenshaw et al., 2015; Henkel et al., 2015; Slate et al., 2016) who ascertained the existence of statistically significant relationships between student ethnicity/race and assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence for girls. Results were also comparable with additional researchers (Hilberth & Slate, 2012, 2014) in which middle school

student ethnicity/race was a statistically significant factor in the disparate assignments of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension. In this empirical investigation, in all four school years and at all three grade levels, Grades 6, 7, and 8 Texas Black girls were assigned the highest number of days of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension.

Implications for Policy and for Practice

Several implications for policy and for practice can be made based on the evidence revealed in this study. First, school leaders are urged to analyze current discipline data to determine whether girls, as a result of their ethnicity/race, are overrepresented in their assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence. If disparities for girls are discovered, the degree to which ethnic/racial factors are related to more time spent in a discipline consequence can be ascertained. As such, the aim of campus administrators should be to reform any disciplinary policies that negatively influence the academic achievement select girls. Second, campus officials are encouraged to streamline the teaching of social and emotional learning skills into a standards-based curriculum. The explicit teaching of interpersonal skills with learning objectives helps girls from diverse backgrounds make meaningful connections between socially acceptable behavior and academic achievement. A final implication would be for campus principals to focus their efforts on increasing the interdisciplinary collaboration among grade level teachers who teach the same groups of students. Designing a master schedule in which students and teachers are intentionally grouped by common demographic characteristics can close generational gaps between girls and male teachers from different ethnic/racial backgrounds.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this empirical investigation, the relationship between student ethnicity/race and the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences for girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8 was examined. Given the ramifications of the findings of this study, several recommendations for future research are warranted. First, researchers are encouraged to extend this study to Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls based on their economic status. Researchers have yet to establish if the results in this investigation are generalizable to other student demographic characteristics (e.g., girls who receive special education services, girls who are at-risk, girls who are English Language Learners). A second recommendation is for researchers to replicate this study in other Texas grade levels. Extending this study will confirm whether the findings contained herein are similar for girls across elementary or high school grade levels. Because the focus of this study was on the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by the ethnicity/race of girls, a final recommendation would be for researchers to extend this investigation to Disciplinary Education Alternative Program placements and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements. Extending this study to the most punitive forms of discipline will reveal if results from this study are similar across all exclusionary consequences for Texas middle school girls.

CONCLUSION

In this empirical investigation, the extent to which inequities were revealed in the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences by the ethnicity/race of Texas middle school girls was analyzed. Obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education

Information Management System were statewide data on all Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black, Hispanic, and White girls for the 2012 through the 2016 school years. Inferential statistical analyses yielded the presence of statistically significant differences in the average number of days assigned to in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension based on the ethnicity/race of girls. In all three grades across all four school years, Black girls were assigned to the statistically significant highest number of days in an in-school suspension and an out-of-school suspension than were White girls. With respect to the 2014-2015 school year for in-school suspension, Black girls were assigned to a statistically significant higher number of days in this consequence, followed by Hispanic girls, then by White girls. Results were repeated in the 2103-2014 school year but for out-of-school suspension. From these findings, inequities in the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences based on the ethnicity/race of Texas middle school girls were established.

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