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Campus Behavior Coordinators' Perspectives of Student Discipline among Females in Middle School

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Tamara K. Jordan

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2018

Abstract

Campus Behavior Coordinators' Perspectives of Student Discipline among

Females in Middle School

by

Tamara K. Jordan

MS, Amberton University, 2005

BS, University of North Texas, 1996

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human and Social Services

Walden University

May 2018

Abstract

Student discipline issues can impact student achievement and disrupt the learning process in the school setting. Behavioral issues among female students have become prevalent in public schools, and disciplinary rates of African American female students are disproportionately high. School administrators have the responsibility to manage student discipline on their school campuses while ensuring a positive and safe learning environment for all students. Previous researchers have focused on student discipline of male students; there have been limited studies on the perspectives of school administrators on disciplinary practices for female students. The purpose of this study was to gain the perspectives of campus behavior coordinators (CBCs), school administrators designated by law to effectively manage student discipline on Texas public school campuses; specifically regarding female students. Social learning and labeling theories framed this generic qualitative study. Purposive sampling and discipline scenarios were used to collect in person data from 8 CBCs at 6 junior high schools in a public school district in Texas. Data content analysis entailed identifying emerging codes and themes from audiotaped and transcribed interviews. The findings of the study led to 6 themes identified; relationships with students, student behavioral supports, traditional discipline practices, mandatory discipline practices, discipline concerns for female students, and school climate. The impact for social change will inform discipline practices of school administrators for female students; bring awareness of the state mandate and its implementation by school administrators, determine best practices to address student discipline, and explore behavioral supports for female students.

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Dedication

First and foremost, I would like to give this accomplishment to the glory and honor of God, who has kept me throughout this amazing journey. “I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me.” (Philippians 4:13, KJV).

I dedicate this study to my daughters, Talore and Taryn, who are my heart and soul. Always know that you can accomplish your goals and dreams as long as you believe and keep God first. To my husband, Harold, who has put up with me unconditionally, was patient with me during my educational journey, and who kept me humored when I was down. And last but not least, to my mother Gail, who has been my rock and true spiritual motivator as I soared to reach this goal. You have always been my inspiration and thank you for all the prayers. Love you all and may God continue to bless you.

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I want to express a special thanks to the public school district and to all the participants for being a part of this study. Without your willingness to participate and provide such valuable information through your voices, there would not be an opportunity to bring awareness of this important topic. My sincere thanks for your dedication to all public school children and working tirelessly as administrators to educate, encourage positive social skills, and instill greatness in our future leaders.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Student discipline in public schools is a continuous problem for many school administrators, teachers, and other school personnel (Erdogan et al., 2010). Furthermore, delinquent behavior of middle/junior high school students is a concern, and youth have an increased risk of being involved in aggressive and delinquent acts during adolescence (Bettencourt & Farrell, 2013). In the past, student discipline and misbehaviors in the middle school setting have been prevalent among male students; however, female students below the age of 18 represent the fastest growing juvenile delinquent population in the United States, with delinquent behaviors beginning in middle childhood (Pechorro, Goncalves, Maroco, Nunes, & Jesus, 2014). Barrett, Ju, Katsiyannis, and Zhang (2015) suggested future research efforts should focus on female juvenile delinquency and student discipline in the school setting. It is important for school administrators to address student discipline in the school setting effectively; student misbehaviors can potentially lead to future juvenile delinquency and involvement in the juvenile justice system, especially juvenile re-incarceration (Ryan, Williams, & Courtney, 2013).

Background of the Problem

In addition to the concern regarding female student discipline in public middle school, involvement in the juvenile justice system and discipline in the public school setting has been disproportionate among African American female students (Fabelo et al., 2011). Barrett et al. (2015) studied a sample of delinquent female students between the ages of 5 to 19 from a state juvenile justice agency in the United States who were charged

with committing criminal offenses and revealed that 18,007 (51.3%) were African American female students who received the highest number of referrals to the juvenile justice system compared to 16,607 (47.3%) of Caucasian American female students. Similarly, Fabelo et al. (2011) found that, in Texas, 70% of African American female students were removed from the classroom for disciplinary violations, disproportionate compared to 58% of Hispanic female students and 37% of Caucasian American female students. In the school setting, socioeconomic factors may increase the likelihood that African American female students will receive suspension and expulsion at a disproportionate rate compared to other female students (Fabelo et al., 2011).

Statement of the Problem

In the scope of their duties, school administrators are required to manage discipline of all students as they maintain safe and civil schools, while ensuring the learning environment is not interrupted (Kritsonis, 2015). However, this can be challenging, and with delinquency rising in general, public school administrators are consistently searching for and implementing various methods to address student discipline (Kritsonis, 2015). To help remedy the growing student discipline challenges that occur on school campuses, some states have created mandates to address the problem. For example, the Texas State Legislature implemented a newly adopted state mandate for all Texas public schools to designate a school administrator, called a campus behavior coordinator (CBC), to primarily handle all discipline-related concerns that occur on public school campuses. This was adopted into law in June 2015. Prior to this mandate, assistant principals were responsible for student discipline management on

public school campuses. When a teacher removes a student from the classroom, CBCs are responsible for ensuring discipline management techniques are applied consistent with the student code of conduct, in order to improve the student's behavior, prior to the student being sent back to the classroom environment (Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator Act, 2015; Texas Education Code [TEC] § 37.0012, 2018).

Additionally, CBCs are required to thoroughly investigate the nature of the behavior to consider a student's intent, whether the student acted in possible self-defense, the student's disciplinary history, and possible mental disability or linkage of the student's behavior to their disability (Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator Act, 2015; Texas Education Code [TEC] § 37.0012, 2018). Due to an increase in disciplinary involvement among African American students in the school setting, special attention should be given to the discipline consequences assigned at the sole discretion of designated school employees. Because CBCs are responsible for effectively managing student discipline on their campuses and ensuring a positive learning environment, this study examined how these administrators manage student discipline in this new role. In efforts to address student discipline in middle school and potentially reduce future juvenile delinquency, I have found limited studies regarding student discipline management practices of school administrators for female students in the middle/junior high school setting. There is a significant need for more research regarding student discipline of female students.

Although research regarding female juvenile delinquency in the public school setting and society illuminated significant findings, I have found no research that

examined the perspectives of CBCs in the public middle school setting regarding discipline of female students, including African American females. Given such, further research is warranted that could examine potential discipline of female students in public middle schools as experienced, perceived, and managed by the CBCs in this new discipline management role, and this study aimed to address the documented problem of an increase in female students with discipline issues, and the disproportionate juvenile delinquency involvement of African American girls in the school setting and the juvenile justice system. This study aimed to gain CBCs experiences with discipline management of female students overall, and specific discipline scenarios presented situations involving African American females.

Research Question

RQ: What are the perspectives of CBCs regarding the role of student discipline management in regard to female middle school students?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to understand and examine student discipline management practices of CBCs among female students in the public middle/junior high school setting. This study allowed information to be gathered on how CBCs in the discipline management role address student discipline among females, including African American females. Specifically, the study examined how CBCs assigned discipline consequences, addressed potential academic concerns, provided possible reasons for the discipline challenges, identified the importance of creating a positive school environment, and identified preventative measures and supports that are

implemented or recommended in the public middle/junior high school setting for the benefit of female students.

Theoretical Framework

According to social learning theory, people learn through their observations and interactions with others (Chavis, 2012). In this study, social learning theory allowed detailed examinations into the perspectives of how CBCs address student discipline among female students and determined the methods that CBCs use to encourage, model, and teach positive behaviors in the school setting. Children and adolescents are very impressionable, and many juveniles are exposed to negative behaviors within their neighborhood environments, which can lead to school discipline issues (Barrett et al., 2015). In addition to negative behaviors, social learning theory posits that people can learn positive behaviors by observing the desired behaviors of influential people (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014). School administrators have the capacity to serve as role models for students and can provide positive examples of behavior within the scope of their duties, including discipline management. Another component of social learning theory is that behavior is taught; therefore, learning expectations must be taught and practiced (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014; Chavis, 2012). School administrators have the opportunity to teach students desired behaviors that are expected in the school setting, in an effort to reduce student discipline challenges and create a positive learning environment (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014). Social learning theory allowed further exploration of how school administrators can positively or negatively influence student behavior.

Labeling theory experts theorize that people place negative connotations or associations on others according to the behaviors of others (Glass, 2014). The labeling theory was also an important theory to consider as school administrators address student discipline. Incorporating the labeling theory allowed examination of how CBCs define, label, and classify behaviors as they address student discipline of female students in middle school (Glass, 2014).

Negative labeling can stigmatize individuals and potentially push people away from conventional society (Restivo & Lanier, 2015). According to this theory, when negative labels are assigned to individuals, they are more likely to be involved in negative behaviors (Glass, 2014; Restivo & Lanier, 2015). African American students and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are likely to receive negative labels for their behavior from school officials (Glass, 2014). As school administrators address student discipline, it is important to remain cognizant of labeling and its effect on students with behavioral issues, which can potentially cause long-term damage (Glass, 2014). The labeling theory allowed further examination of how school administrators may react to student behavior based upon their own personal stereotypes, biases, and opinions. Thus, with the use of social learning and labeling theories in this study, the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of CBCs were considered as they manage student discipline among female students, in an effort to create and maintain an overall positive learning environment. The social and learning theories are further discussed in Chapter 2.

Operational Definitions

Campus behavior coordinator (CBC): Per the TEC, a campus behavior coordinator is defined as the principal of the campus, or another administrator selected by the principal. Texas public school campuses must serve as the CBC to manage student discipline and provide behavioral supports to students (Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator Act, 2015; Texas Education Code [TEC] § 37.0012, 2018).

Consequence: A punishment assigned to a student for misbehavior or engagement in inappropriate conduct as defined by school policies (Blake, Keith, Luo, Le, & Salter, 2017).

Corporal punishment: Per the TEC, the “deliberate infliction of physical pain by hitting, paddling, spanking, slapping, or any other physical force used as a means of discipline” (Texas Education Code [TEC] § 37.0011, 2018, p. 411).

Disciplinary alternative educational programs (DAEP): An alternate educational setting, not within the normal school setting, for students who misbehave or engage in inappropriate conduct as defined by school policies (Texas Education Code [TEC] § 37.008, 2018).

Discretionary offense: Discipline offense that may be decided upon by a local decision maker, and are defined in the local student code of conduct for each school district (Texas Education Code [TEC] § 37.001, 2018).

Exclusionary discipline: Involves disciplinary practices that place the student outside of the regular learning environment (i.e., ISS, OSS; Shabazian, 2015).

In-school suspension (ISS): Disciplinary consequence that involves temporary removal of a student to a location within the school environment, but outside of the regular classroom setting (Shabazian, 2015).

Juvenile justice alternative education program (JJAEP): Per the TEC, a JJAEP must be developed by the juvenile board for counties with a population of greater than 125,000. Students who exhibit serious misbehaviors as defined by law and local school districts are expelled to the JJAEP (Texas Education Code [TEC] § 37.011, 2018).

Mandatory offense: Discipline offense, as prescribed by law and local school district policies that carries an obligated or required consequence, and are defined in the local student code of conduct for each school district (Texas Education Code [TEC] § 37.001, 2018).

Out-of-school suspension (OSS): Disciplinary consequence that involves temporary removal of a student away from the school and classroom environment (Shabazian, 2015).

Referral/office referral: Disciplinary form or record of student misbehavior documented by a teacher or administrator (Blake et al., 2011).

Student code of conduct: Public school districts implement codes of conduct that outline specific offenses and detail the consequences for addressing these behaviors (Mallett, 2016).

Texas Education Agency (TEA): The TEA is a branch of the state government for the state of Texas that is responsible for overseeing public education.

Texas Education Code (TEC): Student discipline and school safety guidelines are developed by the TEA through the TEC. Specifically, Chapter 37 of the TEC establishes the statutes related to student discipline, law, and order in public schools.

Nature of the Study

A generic design is a type of qualitative inquiry that examines the subjective opinions of participants (Kahlke 2014). As a researcher with prior knowledge of the field, I wanted to gain further understanding into the perspectives of the CBCs by obtaining their true experiences with student discipline. This generic qualitative study provided a deep, rich, and detailed look into the behavioral management practices of CBCs with the intent to obtain their attitudes, beliefs, and self-reflections on the topic. The generic design was selected and best suited for this study because there are no rigid boundaries associated with this design. This design allowed for flexibility, unlike other qualitative designs; this flexibility allowed use of various discipline scenarios as an interview technique with the participants to gain their perspectives on discipline practices for female students. The data obtained was analyzed through content analysis via hand coding to determine emergent themes and patterns.

Assumptions

As researchers conduct their studies, they automatically have assumptions and must remain aware of them throughout the study. Researchers must ensure assumptions do not impact the results of their study. For this study, I examined the perspectives of CBCs regarding student discipline management practices of female students. My assumptions of this study were as follows: CBCs would be open, honest, and provide in-

depth perceptions of how they personally manage discipline on their respective campuses; they may have their own unique discipline methods or practices and have knowledge of the requirements designated in S.B. 107; and they may select their discipline management practices based on previous experiences.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study entailed gaining perspectives, insights, and firsthand experiences of CBCs as they manage student discipline of female students on public middle/junior high school campuses. In regard to delimitations, there are some aspects of student discipline that may need to be examined further in future research studies that are not addressed in this study. Although more research is needed in regard to African American females and student discipline, this study was informative regarding female students in general. One delimitation is this study did not specifically address student discipline for African American females only. A second delimitation is that this study did not address male students in regards to discipline management practices of CBCs, which could potentially inform how CBCs address student discipline among male and female students. Another delimitation is that only middle/junior high school students were examined, excluding discipline management practices of CBCs among elementary and high school students. Also, the study captured the experiences and perspectives of CBCs, but did not address the experiences of other school personnel, such as classroom teachers or school counselors. Addressing the perspectives of other public school personnel may be effective, as they may have considerable knowledge of student misbehaviors and discipline management techniques in the public school setting. Finally,

qualitative analysis is the methodology for this study, as rich descriptive responses of the CBCs were obtained, but quantitative analysis may also be beneficial for statistical data regarding student discipline and behavioral management.

Limitations

Qualitative studies allow for the examination of perspectives, experiences, and personal feedback from human participants (Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015). I interviewed CBCs to gather their feedback. Initially, I assumed that interviews conducted in the school setting might limit accessibility, privacy, and adequate time to conduct the interviews. However, this was not a limitation. Participant honesty is a limitation; as personal experiences of the subjects cannot be verified, researchers rely on the trustworthiness of the participants (Maxwell, 2012). Another limitation was the sample size of the participants was not large, and due to the number of participants, there was a lack of generalizability to a larger population of participants.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study may inform public school districts, administrators, teachers, parents, and community members regarding pertinent issues, concerns, and resources to understand student discipline of females in the middle/junior high school setting. This information can potentially decrease student discipline issues in the school setting and juvenile justice system and determine if there is a significant concern for African American female students related to student discipline and delinquency. This study explores how CBCs address, manage, and perceive potential student discipline within this role, and possibly provides implications for improving discipline management

practices of CBCs and other school administrators. In addressing student discipline, school administrators have the responsibility to effectively work with students in order to reduce discipline issues that may lead to future delinquency (Barrett et al., 2015). Ultimately, this study was important because behavioral and academic issues within the school setting are highly linked to future delinquency, which can evolve in young adulthood. Juvenile delinquency in the school setting impedes academic learning and has a negative effect on the physical and psychosocial well being of exposed youth (Daly et al., 2016). Therefore, examining the perspectives of CBCs regarding student discipline of female middle/junior high school students has potentially emphasized the perceptions and actions of administrators in this role.

Summary

The efficacy with which school administrators manage student discipline has a major impact on student academic success, behaviors, and overall school climate. With the prevalence of student discipline issues in today's public schools, it is important to examine how state mandates, similar to designation of CBCs on public school campuses, affect discipline management practices of these school administrators. In this generic qualitative study, the perspectives of CBCs in their roles as disciplinarians were examined. Chapter 2 presents the review of the literature regarding various components of student discipline, search methods, and the theoretical frameworks. Chapter 3 focuses on research design, participants, methodology, and data collection/analysis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of CBCs with regard to student discipline management on their respective middle/junior high school campuses. I examined school administrator discipline management practices for female middle/junior high school students. Many studies have addressed male delinquency, as well as delinquency among African American males in and out of the school setting. The prevalence of female delinquency warrants further study into gender-related differences associated with juvenile delinquency (Espinosa, Sorensen, & Lopez, 2013). Examining juvenile delinquency and student discipline among female and male students must be equally urgent. Although studies exist on female juvenile delinquency and student discipline, I have found no studies that fully examine the female juvenile delinquency and student discipline practices among administrators in the school setting, specifically CBCs. The theoretical frameworks of social learning and labeling are significant in this study to examine school administrator influence while addressing student discipline.

School administrators are responsible for leading a successful school campus and ensuring a positive learning environment (Glass, 2014). With increasing discipline issues on school campus, discipline management is challenging for administrators, particularly at the middle school level (Lehman, 2016). Managing student discipline requires efficacy, dedication, and consistency (Williams, 2012). In the scope of their duties, school administrators are required to manage discipline of all students. With the new Texas state mandate in effect, an administrator on each public school campus must be

designated as the CBC. Examination of this new CBC role is critical to how Texas school districts implement this mandate and incorporate more behavioral supports versus less traditional exclusionary discipline practices for the benefit of all students. The main requirements of the CBCs are not only to effectively manage discipline, but also to provide behavior management and supports to students with discipline challenges (TEC, 2018). Ultimately, the method and efficacy with which CBCs manage student discipline will significantly affect student academics, behavioral outcomes, and school climate. I sought to understand how CBCs manage student discipline among female middle school students, including the use of traditional disciplinary practices and behavioral management practices for female students.

Student discipline is a familiar topic, and a significant amount of literature is available on the subject. The topic of managing student behavior has been in existence as long as schools have been in place. Public school administrators have tried many discipline tactics and strategies to manage student behavior. School administrators continue to seek methods for improving student behavior in the school setting. Researchers agree that there is an increase for African American students receiving harsh discipline consequences (Blake et al., 2017; Gold & Richards, 2012; Mizel et al., 2016; Smolkowski, Girvan, McIntosh, Nese, & Horner, 2016).

Limited information is available on how school administrators address and manage student discipline for female students in the middle school setting. In addition, because the role of CBC is new, I have not found studies on the role of the new mandate and its effect on student discipline, academia, and the school environment. In the

literature review, I covered the history and linkage between delinquency and student discipline, traditional student discipline practices, discipline policies, student discipline state requirements and guidelines, student discipline reform, behavioral management practices, and student discipline of female students in the middle/junior high school setting.

Literature Review Search Strategy

I explored the current and relevant literature related to the topic. Perspectives of school administrators in the school setting can include a wide range of subjects, topics, and concerns. Student discipline is a broad concept; therefore, I primarily focused on the following areas: Student discipline related to administrator perceptions, school climate, middle school students, female students, African American female students, student discipline practices and policies, student discipline history/reform, student discipline resources, and behavioral management programs. All of these areas are pertinent to examining how school administrators perceive and manage student discipline. I addressed the administrative role of CBCs as a student disciplinarian in relation to each area.

I used various search engines to research the topic, including many Walden University databases. I performed searches for peer-reviewed literature published within the past 5 years using all search engines within the Walden Library online. I searched human services databases, such as PsycINFO, SocINDEX, and PsycARTICLES. I also searched multidisciplinary Walden databases, including LexisNexis Academic and ProQuest Central, ERIC, and Education Source. I explored criminal justice databases,

such as Criminal Justice Database, Oxford Criminology Bibliographies, and SAGEJournal. I examined a few of the health sciences databases, which provided imperative information on student behavior, including ProQuest Health & Medical Collection, and MEDLINE. My literature review search also included Google Scholar and Texas legal statutes relating to school discipline. Furthermore, I searched and examined Walden dissertations relevant to the topic.

I used various word searches to ensure saturation of the topic, which included single terms and different combinations of the following terms: *Administrators, adolescence, adolescent behavior, African American female juvenile delinquency, African American juvenile delinquency, Bandura, Bandura's social learning theory, behavior management, campus behavior coordinator (CBC), female juvenile delinquency, discipline, discipline practices, female student discipline, general qualitative study/method, generic qualitative study/method, junior high school, juvenile delinquency, labeling theory, middle school, middle school administration, middle school principals, middle school students, Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS), pre-adolescence, pre-adolescence behavior, principals, principal perceptions, qualitative research method, Response to Intervention (RtI), restorative discipline/justice, Senate Bill (S.B.) 107, school administrators, school administrator perceptions, school climate, school law, school principals, social learning theory, student behavior, student discipline, student discipline laws/policies, Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), Texas Education Agency (TEA), and Texas Education Code (TEC).*

Theoretical Framework

The focus of this study was school administrator perceptions regarding the role of CBCs as disciplinarians of female students in the middle/junior high school setting. The theoretical framework of this study was based on social learning theory and the labeling theory for examining school administrators' perspectives. These theories were applicable to this study because discipline scenarios were used to determine how school administrators address discipline situations based on their actions, attitudes, beliefs, and discipline management practices. How administrators react to discipline situations can affect the learning environment positively or negatively.

Social learning and labeling theories have been popular and commonly used to examine negative and deviant behavior (Shoenberger, Heckert, & Heckert, 2015). Thus, it is important to explore the behaviors and attitudes of administrators in the school setting, because they can significantly affect student behavior. In this study, both theories allowed insight into how CBCs manage student discipline among female students as they influence, demonstrate, and model behavior to encourage a supportive and positive learning environment.

According to Akers (as cited in Koon-Magnin, Bowers, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, and Arata, 2016), the social learning theory extends differential association theory where people are influenced by positive behaviors of others by observational learning and instrumental learning. Bandura's theory on social learning suggests that people can learn new behaviors by observing other people (Chavis, 2012). Traditionally, the social learning theory has been used in many studies for determining specific external factors

that may influence juvenile delinquency, or student behavior (e.g., neighborhood, home environment). Social learning theories have been used to examine learning and behavior in the school setting, including deviance and student misbehaviors (Miller & Morris, 2014). From a different perspective, I used the social learning theory to focus on how school administrators, CBCs, influence student behavior in the school setting as they manage discipline.

School administrators can serve as role models for students and can provide positive examples of behavior within the scope of their duties. The school environment is important for examining behaviors because it is where students learn to interact with peers, teachers, and administrators. With regard to adult observation and interaction with children, Lineweaver, Roy, and Horth (2017) examined how children perceive and form stereotypes of adults based on cognitive development and social learning. The authors revealed that children are likely to form their thinking skills and their beliefs based on their personal social experiences with adults (Lineweaver et al, 2017). Similarly, social modeling is crucial in the school environment because it is where social learning occurs on a regular basis (Soh, 2017). Because behavior is learned, administrators and teachers can demonstrate positive behaviors and display respectable attitudes when interacting with students, even students with challenging behaviors. Social learning theories are based on the idea that people mimic others and conform to the norms of the particular group (Haynie, Soller, & Williams, 2014). Adults, especially in the learning environment, are expected to possess professionalism in expressing behavior, maintaining appropriate decorum, and representing themselves as good role models to

expect reciprocal behavior of students. In addition, for the success of most behavior management programs require administrators to exhibit positive and desired behaviors for students to model (Evanovich & Scott, 2016), which is discussed later.

Social learning theorists have also studied the importance of peer relationships on student behavior (Fox, 2017). Students are influenced through their interactions with their peers in the school environment. According to Fox (2017), although students may be prone to delinquency within their living environments or neighborhoods, if students do not have the opportunity to associate with other delinquent youth in the school setting, they are more likely to engage with conforming peer groups. Administrators are responsible for ensuring that students with similar disruptive behaviors do not have the opportunity to engage, to maintain a safe and positive learning environment, and students should be encouraged to socialize with positive peer groups (Williams, 2012).

Another theory that was adequate for this study is the labeling theory, because the influence of CBC administrators is imperative to how they view, perceive, and react to student discipline among females. Labeling theory is one of the fundamentals of the social learning theory, in which social and/or environmental pressures cause deviant behavior, and a negative label in society condemns the behavior (Shoenberger et al., 2015). Thus, the labeling and social learning theories are not mutually exclusive, and I detail how both theories work in tandem regarding administrator influence. The labeling theory has existed for many years and has affected the field of criminology and social sciences (Kavish, Mullins, & Soto, 2014). Various researchers have influenced the labeling theory. Becker's (1963) classic labeling theory purported that "labels influence

the perceptions of both the individual and other members of society” (Gold & Richards, 2012, p. 144).

Juvenile delinquency has received ample attention from labeling theorists. According to Gold and Richards (2012), Becker’s perspective on the labeling theory derives from the theory of relativity regarding the act of deviance. Becker stated, “The mere labeling of someone as “deviant” ultimately reinforces that behavior in the person labeled” and further proclaimed, “The individual labeled a criminal becomes a criminal” (Gold & Richards, 2012, p. 145). Labeling theory examines how reactions to the deviant behavior by society may lead to further delinquent acts. But, even before Becker’s theory on labeling, Mead’s (1934) work revealed that human development and the idea of self-concept begins during childhood (Kavish et al., 2014). The idea of self-concept is negative, particularly for adolescents whom are labeled as “delinquent” or “criminal” (Restivo & Lanier, 2015, p. 119). Based on past research on labeling, the effects of labeling can profoundly affect the development and self-concept of individuals. The labeling of juveniles involved in the criminal justice system can be detrimental and foster a more delinquent self-identity (Restivo & Lanier, 2015). Furthermore, labeling theory examines how reactions to the deviant behavior by society may lead to future delinquent acts (Lee, Menard, & Bouffard, 2014). Social institutions like schools have a great influence on youth, and labeling within these institutions do not have positive outcomes for youth.

In previous studies, researchers have revealed that labels have been placed on youth who exhibit behaviors that are not compliant with society and social norms

(Restivo & Lanier, 2015). The labeling theory is important to consider as school administrators address student discipline (Glass, 2014). Unfortunately, profiling of students has become a covert and overt practice in the school setting (Slee, 2015). Students who are labeled for their misbehaviors by teachers, administrators, and peers are stigmatized; may result in exclusion or expulsion from the conventional school setting (Restivo & Lanier, 2015). In the school environment, some students are readily recognized and labeled as disruptive, defiant, at-risk, mal-adjusted, difficult, and disobedient (Slee, 2015). African American students and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds tend to receive more negative labels for their behavior by school officials (Glass, 2014). Labeling is a concept that school administrators may or may not be aware that they are accustomed, which can result in forming biases. Explicit and implicit biases can come into play as administrators address discipline among African American students (Smolkowski et al., 2016). Explicit biases are those that are made with awareness, are controlled, and deliberate (Lansu, Cillessen, & Bukowski, 2013). Implicit biases are not deliberate, and are usually automatic responses; usually regarding race or gender (Lansu et al, 2013). Adult behaviors have a profound impact on youth behavior, and more studies should be conducted to examine behavior of school administrators and staff, as little information is available on self-regulation of behavior among specific groups, i.e., administrators, teachers (Jakesova, Gavora, & Kalenda, 2016). In this study, the social learning and labeling theories allowed a look into how CBC's have the potential to positively or negatively affect the school-learning environment based upon their own behaviors and student discipline management

practices. The next section, Review of the Literature, details thorough research and relevant information pertaining to the topic.

Review of the Literature

Student Discipline: Linkage with Juvenile Delinquency

Juvenile delinquency and offending are considered a major social problem and a public health concern, especially that of juvenile re-incarceration (Ryan et al., 2013; Sukyirun, 2016). In 2015, it was reported by law enforcement agencies in the United States that arrests for juveniles younger than 18 years totaled 921,600 and 29% were females (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), 2017).

Espinosa et al. (2013) argued that the juvenile crime rate has generally declined, with the exception of females. Females' involvement in the juvenile justice system continues to grow (Paraschiv, 2013). But, involvement in the juvenile justice system and the law is not always the best solution for many of the behavioral issues of today's youth (Espinosa et al., 2013). The underlying causes of behavior must be examined and addressed to be most effective in keeping youth out of the juvenile justice system. When delinquent behavior is not effectively addressed and behavior is not managed, delinquency can become a problem in many areas of society. Juvenile delinquency is a social dynamic that can be present in many facets of society, including the school setting (Mathys, 2017).

There is a positive linkage between juvenile delinquency and student discipline; delinquent behaviors of juveniles may invade the school setting (Lucero, Barrett, & Jensen, 2015). Students that are involved in delinquent behaviors away from school are likely to be involved in some form of misbehavior in the school setting. Experts argue

that juvenile delinquency and misbehaviors that occur outside of the school environment can ultimately become a part of the school environment (Monahan, VanDerhei, Bechtold, & Cauffman, 2014). In addition, Kim (2016) purported the importance of studying the effects of juvenile delinquency in the neighborhood and school settings, as delinquent behavior is likely to be present in both environments. Disruptive student behaviors that invade the school environment wreak havoc on the learning environment and affects academic success.

Recently, the need to study juvenile delinquency on a multi-level context has become critical as experts realize that delinquency affects various social contexts (Kim, 2016). Understanding how multiple and various social constructs simultaneously play a role in affecting juvenile behavior is crucial to understand how juvenile delinquency should be addressed. Researchers offer many theories for high crime rates and delinquency among juveniles. Exposure to criminal and delinquent behaviors in neighborhoods has negative effects on children and adolescents. The lack of a defined and supportive social structure in disadvantaged neighborhoods is the reason that many researchers argue children engage in delinquent behaviors (Kim, 2016). Many researchers propose that neighborhood exposure to crime and violence may be a cause of delinquency for some youth, but there are various other causes that may be linked to delinquency.

As stated by Beaver, there may be multifaceted reasons why youth engage in delinquent behaviors, such as anti-social behaviors, certain risk factors, peer factors, and social and community factors (Farrington, Gaffney, Ttofi, 2017; Sukyirun, 2016). The

anti-social behaviors can consist of emotional problems, low mental function, and hyperactive behaviors (Sukyirun, 2016). Risk factors include family situations, family violence, parenting practices, divorce, and family structure (Farrington et al., 2017). Student relationships with peers can affect behavior that includes, interaction with deviant peers, rejection from a group, and not belonging. The social and community factor also plays a role in possible juvenile delinquency, such as not having a positive school relationship, low academic skills, and having a poor family (Sukyirun, 2016).

Juveniles are involved in various social constructs that can possibly influence or affect behavior; therefore, school administrators should be aware that student discipline issues may be caused by various reasons, and student support should be provided on a case-by-case basis to effectively manage behavior. The supports that are provided to students in the school setting may also help decrease juvenile delinquency outside of the school setting for these students, and promote less negative behaviors in society, and ultimately reduce involvement in the juvenile justice system, and decrease recidivism rates. Regarding juvenile delinquency, there are alarming statistics that reveal the urgency for student discipline interventions at the middle school level (Espinoza et al., 2015), which is discussed in the section below.

Student Discipline: Middle/Junior High School Setting

Student discipline in public schools is a continuous problem for many school administrators, teachers, and other school personnel (Erdogan et al., 2010). Delinquent behavior of middle school students is prevalent and youth have an increased risk of being involved in aggressive and delinquent acts during adolescence (Bettencourt & Farrell,

2013). In regards to student discipline management, middle school students are very impressionable during the pre-adolescent years, and discipline issues tend to be a concern for school administrators during this stage of development (Kim, 2016). As stated by Eccles, middle school students are in need of positive support from adults during these crucial years (Martinez, McMahon, & Tregor, 2016). Adolescence and middle school is a critical time in the lives of students, and during this time students transition from elementary school to middle school in efforts to prepare them for high school. In addition, school belonging becomes a critical time during middle school as students begin to feel accepted, respected, and supported (Lucero et al., 2015). During this pivotal developmental stage of adolescence is when behavior is likely to be indicative of rule-breaking, and even involvement of the legal system (Espinosa et al., 2013).

Typically middle schools serve students between ages 11-15, and most middle or junior high schools generally have grade configurations of 6th - 8th grades (Kim, Schwartz, Cappella, & Seidman, 2014). Research results show that during this transition time students may experience academic and socio-emotional challenges (Benner & Wang, 2014). There are so many challenges students face during this stage of life, which may be associated with student discipline concerns in the school setting (Cotter & Smokowski, 2016).

Many U.S. states realize the importance and critical nature of the middle school level; resources and supports have been created for middle school educators, administrators, and students. For example, the state of Texas has an association called the Texas Middle School Association (TMSA), a non-profit organization since 1975

dedicated to providing resources and services to administrators, educators, students, and parents (TMSA, 2014). TMSA offers resources such as professional development opportunities, seminars, annual conferences, and conduct onsite school visits for additional supports (TMSA, 2014).

On the national level, there are organizations like the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), an organization founded in 1916 to connect and encourage, principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders through advocacy, research, and education (NASSP, 2016). The NASSP also provides student support by offering various student leadership organizations, honor societies, and other student activities and supports (NASSP, 2016). Middle school administrators may have many challenges with ensuring a positive school environment, but assistance and resources are available to assist with student academic and behavioral success. It is in the best interest of school administrators to become knowledgeable of the various resources and supports that are formulated to help support all middle school students. Although, female students may need behavioral supports specifically tailored to their needs, and the following section details student discipline of female students.

Student Discipline: Female Students

Juvenile delinquency has been a concern for many years, and previous studies have primarily focused on delinquency among males (White & Miller, 2015). But, researchers have argued that juvenile delinquency among female students has increased and deserves further attention (Barrett et al., 2015; Espinosa et al., 2013; Pechorro et al., 2014). Prevalence of female juvenile delinquency has produced concerning statistical

data that supports a drastic increase. During 2000 to 2009 female arrest rates were higher than male arrests rates in the areas of simple assault, larceny, and disorderly conduct (Barrett et al., 2015). Even prior to 2000, the American Bar Association & National Bar Association, as cited by Pechorro et al., (2014) reported female juvenile delinquency increased by 83% from 1988 to 1997. Researchers in the field show that there is a linkage among female juvenile delinquency, the age of female delinquents, and the context of the delinquency (Barrett et al., 2015). Additionally, females below the age of 18 represent the fastest growing juvenile delinquent population with a 27% total arrest rate, with antisocial behaviors beginning in middle childhood (Pechorro et al., 2014).

Although male students in middle school have high disciplinary rates, female student discipline concerns at the middle school level have increased. Researchers continue to study and examine female delinquency in society and the school setting, and have noted there is a gender gap between male and female delinquency (Koon-Magnum et al., 2016). A study conducted by Cavanaugh (2009) examined the predictors of suspendable offenses among 229 female middle school students. The researcher revealed that the behaviors of the female students were highly influenced by the behavior of their peers, through observation by differential association; a theory by Akers suggests that people associate with others as reinforcement of their behaviors (Cavanaugh, 2009).

Additionally, female students learn self-concept mechanisms by interacting with others (Espinosa et al., 2013). The female gender is more focused on interpersonal relationships, sensitivity, and kindness; and more likely to internalize feelings, unlike males who are more apt to externalize behaviors (Cotter & Smokowski, 2016). Thus, it

can be concluded that female students tend to learn by observation, interaction, and modeling of others, and are encouraged by forming positive relationships with adults and peers in the school setting. This positive student engagement can be very beneficial as female students proceed through high school and beyond. Behavioral supports and resources provided early on in middle and high school setting could potentially reduce future delinquency into young adulthood (Barrett et al., 2015). This section has revealed impactful information on female student discipline; now we move on to examine the research on student discipline of African American female students.

Student Discipline: African American Female Students

In the school setting, researchers continue to show that student discipline is disproportionate among Black or African American students. For example, researchers Martinez et al. (2015) examined school office disciplinary referrals (ODRs) and revealed that there is an overrepresentation of ODRs among African American students in high-poverty urban school districts, resulting in more exclusionary discipline practices for these students. This disparity in discipline procedures among Black students is a major reason for the achievement gap between Black and White students (Hilberth & Slate, 2012). Unfortunately, the student discipline of Black students causes absenteeism from the learning environment due to excessive suspensions or expulsions, which leads to decreased learning opportunities compared to other races (Hilberth & Slate, 2012). Researchers show that there has been an inadequate amount of research regarding African American females in the school setting (Blake et al., 2011). Not only are the

statistics high for female juvenile delinquency in general, but also delinquency of African American females has shown an incline (Blake et al., 2017).

The question remains, what factors play into the social system of the school setting that explains why African American females are subjected to disproportionate discipline? (Blake et al., 2017). Researchers have attempted to answer this question; for example, African American girls that grow up in disadvantaged neighborhoods have more exposure to violence, and as a result may be more likely to manifest similar behaviors in the school setting (Kruger et al., 2016). However, exposure to a negative environment does not automatically determine that African American females will be more disruptive in school, compared to other females.

Disproportionality of student discipline is prevalent for all Black females that begin in elementary through high school, regardless of their living environment (Blake et al., 2011). A study conducted by Blake et al. (2011) revealed that Black female students were overrepresented in the number of discipline referrals that they receive compared to White and Hispanic students. The behaviors that Black female students received referrals, as a result of this study, were defiance, improper dress, and fighting (Blake et al., 2011). Defiance was the most cited discipline offense, and an important finding in this study revealed that teachers and administrators may assign more referrals to Black female students due to their non-conforming behaviors and they “seemed to defy traditional standards of femininity,” (Blake et al., 2011, p. 100). Blake (2011) details that Black female students may be subjected to subconscious stereotyping by teachers and administrators as having aggressive tendencies and violent behaviors, which may lead to

unwarranted discipline consequences. It is important for teachers and administrators to be aware that potential ethnic/racial discrimination is a significant issue for minority students (Dotterer & Lowe, 2015). Disciplinary consequences must be applied equally and fairly among all students, without prejudices, stereotyping, and negative labeling of students (Restivo & Lanier, 2015). Applying discipline consequences that are equitable is one required responsibility of school administrators; other roles and perceptions of school administrators are discussed below.

Student Discipline: Administrator Role & Perceptions

In the scope of their duties, school administrators are required to manage student discipline of all students as they maintain safe and civil schools, while ensuring the learning environment is not interrupted (Kritsonis, 2015). In most public school districts, assistant or vice principals serve in the capacity of administrators responsible for student discipline on their campuses (Buckmaster, 2016). As stated by Petersen, traditionally, managing student discipline has been the role of the assistant principal (Williams, 2012). School administrators who serve as disciplinarians must ensure they are equipped to handle aggressive and defiant students (Williams, 2012). However, student discipline management can be a challenge with delinquency rising in general, as public school administrators are consistently searching for and implementing various methods to address student discipline (Kritsonis, 2015). Also, Mason stated that the public generally view assistant principals as the “police officers” of the school (Williams, 2012).

Recent studies show that researchers are interested in how administrators use their authority, discretion, and judgment in managing student discipline on public school

campuses (Findlay, 2014; Williams, 2012). A study conducted by Williams (2012) indicated that administrators use their authority for managing student discipline by incorporating state mandates and laws, legislation, school policies and regulations. Policies like zero-tolerance, which is discussed later in this paper, place an emphasis on rule following and less community reinforced education (Buckmaster, 2016). Zero-tolerance policies do not allow administrators to utilize discretion to address student discipline, and implement best practices that would benefit students (Buckmaster, 2016). Findlay (2014) conducted a study that examined Canadian principals to understand their use of discretion in decision-making regarding discipline management. The researcher in this study revealed that principal discretion is based on various components, such as their “own value systems; their perceptions, preferences, and assumptions; and also external influences, such as context and circumstances, expectations of parents or other stakeholders, and resources, such as time” (Findlay, 2014, p. 499).

In efforts to address student discipline in middle school and potentially reduce future juvenile delinquency, I have found limited studies regarding student discipline management practices of school administrators for female students in the middle school setting (Barrett et al., 2015). Also, little research is available regarding administrator’s discretion in making decisions regarding student discipline (Findlay, 2014). School administrators may have some discretion in regards to student discipline, but there are policies and procedures that must be followed in regards to specific disciplinary requirements, as discussed in the next section.

Student Discipline: Policies and Procedures

School administrators have the responsibility of managing student discipline while adhering to state, local, and school district policies. In the past, policy-making involving discipline has not always been a collaborative practice (Longstreth, Brady, & Kay, 2013), and sense-making policies involves the community, parents, students, and school officials (Stern, 2016). When policies and procedures are not made with the best interest of children in mind, then many policies that are implemented do not accomplish the desired outcomes (Longstreth et al., 2013). Unfortunately, administrators can subjectively enforce interpretation and usage of policies, and policies tend to be regulated at the discretion of administrators; especially depending upon how the well the policy is explained, perceived, and understood (Stern, 2016). For example, as mentioned earlier, disproportionality of assigning discipline offenses and consequences to certain students by administrators is an ongoing issue that wanes further attention. In efforts to assist public school districts and administrators with regulation of policies relating to student discipline, the state of Texas has provided many resources and supports. The sections below contain practices of various policy-making bodies and processes that are intended to provide guidance and support to administrators responsible for discipline management on public school campuses.

Texas Education Agency (TEA)/Texas Education Code (TEC)

Many states have education policies and laws that govern different areas of public school education, including student discipline. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is a branch of the state government for the state of Texas that is responsible for overseeing

public education (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2017). Fifteen members of the State Board of Education whom are elected for four-year terms oversee the TEA. TEA is responsible for the oversight of public primary and secondary education in more than 1000 public and charter schools in Texas, which includes student safety (TEA, 2017). Student discipline and school safety guidelines are developed by TEA through the TEC (TEA, 2017). Specifically, Chapter 37 of the TEC establishes the statutes related to student discipline, law and order in public schools (TEA, 2017). The individual school districts in Texas are allowed to write their own specific discipline policies based on the legal requirements set in place via statues (TEA, 2017). Also, TEA has developed specific guidelines delineated in the TEC, Chapter 37 – Discipline: Law and Order Unit, which is offered to Texas public schools to support their efforts in maintaining safe and secure campuses, as follows:

- Provides leadership to school districts with information needed to create local disciplinary policies in line with Chapter 37 the TEC.
- Provides a central point of contact within TEA for agency staff, parents, students, public and private agencies, and others seeking clarification concerning discipline, law, and order under the TEC.
- Provides assistance in recording PEIMS 425 Records Data from all school districts relating to disciplinary actions required by TEC Chapter 37 and Federal Law.
- Works with the Texas Juvenile Justice Department and other agencies on school safety.

- Provides Texas school districts many discipline resources, including discipline data products, discipline decisions, meal access for In-School Suspension (ISS) students, Texas School Safety Center, and Safe Schools Resources (TEA, 2017).

Keeping abreast of changing and evolving discipline policies, procedures, and guidelines can be a daunting task for administrators, but organizations like the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), offer the latest development of policies that are adopted into law, and governed by the TEC. TASB ensures that new laws are available to school districts and administrators. More information on TASB is explained in the section below.

Texas Association of School Boards (TASB)/School Board Members

Another resource provided to Texas school administrators, Board Members, and school district employees is the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB). TASB is a voluntary, nonprofit, statewide educational association that serves and represents local Texas school districts and was established in 1949 with two main goals: To share information through publications and training to help Texas board members serve their communities more effectively, and to speak with a unified voice to decision makers to chart the best future for Texas public schools.

TASB services all 1,030 Texas school districts, more than 7,000 board members, and serves over 4.9 million Texas students (TASB, Inc., 2017). TASB also provides a policy maintenance service that compiles all the policies for each Texas school district. This policy service is resourceful and user-friendly for Board Members, school

administrators, parents, and the community. TASB organizes the policies into 4 sections including Legal, Local, Regulations, and Exhibits (TASB, Inc., 2017):

- The Board of Trustees does not adopt legal policies. These policies provide a snapshot of the law and other legal context. Legal policies apply to all the public school districts throughout Texas, and are automatically updated by TASB and reflected on the TASB Online Policy Manual.
- Local policies represent local designations and are adopted by each district's respective Board of Trustees. Local policies are generally preceded by Legal policies, unless the law is silent in that area.
- Regulations are optional and designated by local school districts that consist of administrative guidelines or procedures to supplement their local policies, and do not require adoption by the Board of Trustees.
- Exhibits are documents that contain forms, notices used by the respective school district. Some Exhibits are promulgated by legal authority, and are not adopted by the Board of Trustees.

Public school districts usually have a link on their websites to the TASB's Policy Manual online, which allows easy access to the school district's policies, including student discipline policies. TASB policies are organized into seven sections, devoted to a separate area of governance, as outlined in policy AE (TASB, Inc., 2017):

A - Basic District Foundations, B - Local Governance, C - Business and Support Services, D -Personnel, E - Instruction, F –Students, G - Community and Governmental Relations

The specific policy section relating to student discipline is found under Section F-Students. In this policy section relating to students, administrators have access to current laws and policies regarding disciplinary procedures and local policies adopted by the Board of Trustees, for each local school district. It is important that administrators follow the laws and policies when addressing discipline issues and assigning discipline consequences. Administrators are also responsible for ensuring their employees in the school setting are aware of the discipline policies and know how to access them. Students and parents should also become familiar with school district's policies and be aware of student behavioral expectations. Also, through TASB's policy services, the model student code of conduct is a resource that TASB develops as a guide for other school districts to utilize for their own localized student code of conduct. More information on the student code is found in the section below. Overall, TASB provides a plethora of services and resources that are available for school district administrators, employees, and Board Members. TASB provides policy models and guidelines, but it is the responsibility of each local public school district to adopt local discipline policies.

Local Discipline Policies

School administrators may become overwhelmed with various policies, guidelines, statutes, and regulations that are required. Although policies and procedures are implemented for school districts to provide guidance for administrators and employees, there is much controversy over what the discipline policies should entail and their effectiveness (Mayworm, Sharkley, Hunnicut, & Schiedel, 2016). Effectiveness of the policies should come into consideration as school districts determine the behaviors

that need to be addressed. This is a concern because researchers argue that past discipline policies have not been successful in changing student behavior, which can be attributed the lack of stakeholder input and the lack of stakeholder involvement in the policy development process (Longstreth et al., 2013).

Executing an effective policy development process or system is crucial for administrators (Mayworm et al., 2016). After the policy development criteria has been established, school districts and administrators must determine the format to display the policies, i.e., hard copies, online, etc. Whichever method of policy notification is selected, school districts are responsible for ensuring accessibility to the policies. In Texas, through the TASB services mentioned above, student discipline policies are accessible via school districts' websites. School district administrators and other school district employees must be knowledgeable, know how to access, and abide by school policies. In order to provide order and safety on school campuses, there are a myriad of policies that school districts have adopted, or are required to have in place according to law. For example, Board Policy FO (Local) is a policy that drives and addresses the requirements for the student code of conduct and the school board adoption process of the student code. It also provides that the student code should be made available and accessible for all district employees, students, and parents. School administrators are required to follow the student code of conduct and other district policies as they manage discipline on their campuses. Although state laws mandate some discipline policies, others are put in place by local school districts to help manage discipline. To determine the effectiveness of localized discipline policies, school officials should examine the data

and analyze how students are impacted by these policies. Student codes of conduct are local policies that govern discipline procedures in many public schools, discussed below.

Student Codes of Conduct

Many public school districts adopt student codes of conduct for safety purposes, and the adoption requirement can be state mandated. Student codes of conduct in U.S. public schools are mandated by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (Fenning et al, 2012). School administrators are required to follow the requirements established in student codes of conduct as they manage student discipline on campuses. Student codes of conduct are a set of rules and guidelines that are expected of students while they are on the school campus, or at a school-related event (Fenning et al., 2012; Mallett, 2016). Public school districts implement student codes of conduct that outline specific offenses and detail the consequences for addressing (Mallett, 2016). Unfortunately, most of the consequences within the student codes of conduct are punitive in nature, with a myriad of exclusionary consequences for consisting of suspensions, expulsions, and other consequences that may involve the juvenile court system (Irby, 2013). In regard to addressing student behaviors, student codes of conduct should focus on supporting students with rehabilitation efforts and providing them with resources in order to re-direct misbehaviors (Mallett, 2016). Prior to adopting student codes of conduct it is critical for educators to consider whether current discipline practices impede or support academic success for their students (Irby, 2013).

The adoption processes for student codes of conduct are different per state. In Texas, law requires that student codes of conduct are reviewed and/or adopted annually.

Per Chapter 37 of the TEC, an independent school district board of trustees shall adopt a student code of conduct that must be posted at each campus, and be available for review at the office of the campus principal (TEC, 2018). Student codes are required to be easily accessible at the school campus by students, parents, and the public. In the state of Texas, there are specific requirements that must be established in the student code as follows:

1. Specify the circumstances in which students may be removed from the classroom, campus, disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP), or school bus;
2. Specify conditions in which a principal or other school administrator may send a student to DAEP;
3. Outline conditions for students to be suspended or expelled;
4. Specify that prior to suspension, removal to a DAEP, expulsion, or placement in a juvenile justice alternative education program (JJAEP), whether or not the decision concerns a mandatory or discretionary offense; that consideration must be given to:
 - a. Self-defense;
 - b. Intent or lack of intent by the student at the time of the offense;
 - c. Student's disciplinary record/history;
 - d. Disability that substantially impairs student's ability to acknowledge the wrongfulness of the conduct;
5. Provide specific guidelines for setting the length of a term of:

- a. A removal; and
 - b. An expulsion;
6. Address the guidelines for notification of a student's parent or guardian of a violation of the student code of conduct that involves a suspension, removal to a DAEP, or expulsion;
 7. Prohibit bullying, harassment, and making hit lists and ensure the districts support this requirement;
 8. Provide for students at each grade levels, methods and options for:
 - a. Managing students in the classroom and on school property;
 - b. Disciplining students; and
 - c. Preventing and intervening in student discipline problems, including bullying, harassment, and making hit lists (TEC, 2018).

Student codes of conduct are mandated by many states in effort to set a standard for behavioral expectations of students in the school setting. To address undesirable or negative behaviors of students, administrators must follow policy in assigning discipline consequences for offenses defined in the student code. Although, specific criteria is set for managing discipline via student codes, state mandates, and policies; the efficacy and fairness in which administrators apply these standards among all students should be the emphasis. Many student codes of conduct entail traditional student discipline practices, which are discussed in the next section.

Student Discipline: Traditional Practices

For many years, school district administrators have relied on traditional student discipline practices to address misbehaviors. Most of these discipline practices have been punitive and punishment oriented, and not focused on effectively changing student behavior. However, policy makers and school administrators are becoming aware that these traditional practices are ineffective in managing student behavior and are not conducive to positive learning environment. Discipline reform practices are currently underway, and as of May 2015, at least 22 states and the District of Columbia have revised policies and laws to decrease the use of exclusionary discipline practices and incorporate supportive behavior management practices (Steinberg & Lacoë, 2017). The emphasis behind discipline reform is to allow students to remain in the school setting and provide them with behavioral supports to help change behavior. At the government level student discipline reform is also in the forefront; the Obama administration put forth several initiatives to reduce suspensions and implement other discipline strategies (Steinberg & Lacoë, 2017). As student discipline reform policies seek to limit the use of exclusionary practices, it is important to examine some of the traditional disciplinary consequences that are still being utilized in today's public schools, as described below.

Suspensions/Removals/Expulsions

Suspensions have traditionally been one of the most popularly utilized consequences assigned by school administrators (Shabazian, 2015). Currently, many school districts and administrators use suspension as a solid disciplinary practice. An interesting study conducted by Fenning et al. (2012) where the researchers analyzed

discipline policies of 120 high-schools from six different states, including Texas. The findings of this study concluded that all six states implemented discipline policies that include suspensions for various discipline infractions (Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014), including minor tardies and truancy-related infractions (Fenning et al., 2012).

With the wide usage of exclusionary discipline practices and policies in many states, students are not involved in the learning process when they are not physically present in the classroom (Shabazian, 2015). Exclusionary practices such as ISS and OSS physically remove students that are considered distractions or misbehave in the regular classroom setting. Removing students from the classroom poses many harmful effects. First, students are deprived of educational opportunities that are available only in the classroom setting. Academically, students who receive suspensions tend to perform on a lower level than students that remain in the classroom. Secondly, many parents work during the day, often times leaving students unattended for many hours, so a safety concern is present. Thirdly, there is irrefutable data by many researchers regarding disparities and disproportionality of African American students being suspended more often than other students. According to Haight, Gibson, Kayama, Marshall, & Wilson (2014) racial disproportionality of out-of-school suspensions not only affects adolescents and parents, but also public school institutions. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) 2014 argued Black students are suspended at a rate of 3 times more than White students (Curran, 2016). A further breakdown of African American student suspensions, as reported by the U.S. Department of Education 2014, details African American students only account for 16% of the student population, but receive more than 33% out-of-school

suspensions, 42% multiple out-of-school suspensions, and 34% expulsions (Gagnon, Gurel, & Barber, 2017).

The pervasiveness of disproportionality among African American students is a major concern and attempts have been made to address the issue. One mandate that was enacted is the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) that required states to examine their policies to ensure students are treated fairly in regards to race, ethnicity, and disciplinary action (Robinson, 2016). As a result of IDEA, schools must regularly review and collect discipline data for students, and provide the necessary interventions and support for over identified students (Robinson, 2016). Also, IDEA provides that at-risk and students with disabilities have access to required assistance prior to being identified under the umbrella of special education (Hurlbut & Tunks, 2016). The enactment of mandates like IDEA, can be effective on school campuses to help reduce the over usage of exclusionary consequences of ISS and OSS if applied effectively by administrators (Robinson, 2016).

As previously mentioned, the state of Texas allows local school districts to utilize consequences of ISS and OSS, which is governed by the TEC, Chapter 37. Section 37.005 of the TEC specifically states, “The principal or other appropriate administrator may suspend a student who engages in conduct identified in the student code of conduct adopted under Section 37.001 as conduct for which a student may be suspended.” (p. 415). Further, a suspension may not exceed three school days. Texas school districts may elect to suspend students, and must provide the offenses that eligible for suspension

in their student codes of conduct. In addition to suspensions, corporal punishment is a commonly used discipline practice in many school districts.

Corporal Punishment

The use of corporal punishment has been a traditional discipline tactic for many years in the United States (Evans, Simons, & Simons, 2012). School administrators often use physical punishment in attempts to correct misbehaviors of students (Atiles, Gresham, & Washburn, 2017). Corporal punishment has origins deeply rooted in religion and culture (Atiles, Gresham, & Washburn, 2017); and from the early years to the 1950's strict and harsh punishment was used as a conventional form of child rearing (Kish & Newcombie, 2015). Researchers have shown that especially among African American parents, corporal punishment has been popular disciplinary technique (Evans et al., 2012). This strong belief in parental use of physical punishment to control behavior of children soon became a popular practice in public schools (Atiles et al., 2017).

Corporal punishment laws vary by state, and per Farrall (as cited by Atiles, Gresham, & Washburn, 2017), in the U.S. corporal punishment is legal in 19 of the 50 states. Also, the Center of Effective Discipline (2014) verifies the corporal punishment statistic (Gagnon et al., 2017). The state of Texas is one of the 19 states that allow corporal punishment in school districts as provided by the TEC, Chapter 37 (TEC, 2018). Per the TEC (2018), corporal punishment is defined as the “deliberate infliction of physical pain by hitting, paddling, spanking, slapping, or any other physical force used as a means of discipline” (p. 411). Although corporal punishment is allowed in Texas, it is the decision of the local school district whether to incorporate corporal punishment as a

discipline consequence. Currently, the state of Texas allows local school districts to utilize local corporal punishment. If a school district decides to incorporate corporal punishment in its discipline policies, then a school district “may use corporal punishment unless a student’s parent, guardian, or other person having lawful control over the student has previously provided a written, signed statement prohibiting the use of corporal punishment as a method of student discipline” (TEC, 2018, p. 411). Additionally, each school year the parent must provide a written separate statement and provide to the board of trustees to prohibit the use of corporal punishment for their student (TEC, 2018).

School districts in Texas have the option whether or not to allow corporal punishment, dependent upon the respective local district’s policy (TEC, 2018). Although states like Texas can legally implement corporal punishment as a method to manage student discipline, there has been much controversy regarding corporal punishment. In recent years, many countries like Europe, Canada, Australia, and South Africa have banned corporal punishment and cannot be legally used as a disciplinary consequence (Cheruvath & Tripathi, 2015). But, does legally banning corporal punishment actually restrict administrators and other school staff from using this type of physical discipline consequence? In a study conducted by Cheruvath & Tripathi (2015) the authors found that even though corporal punishment is banned in India, teachers afflicted various type of physical punishment toward students. In most school settings where corporal punishment is legal, the principal is primarily responsible to assign and carry out this student discipline consequence (Atiles, Gresham, & Washburn, 2017). As the researchers indicate, corporal punishment may not be an effective discipline practice for

administrators to impact a positive change on student behavior. In fact, corporal punishment is often considered a zero-tolerance practice that is punitive in nature. The below section provides more detail on zero-tolerance.

Zero-Tolerance

Exclusionary discipline practices are considered zero-tolerance policies, such as suspensions and expulsions, and are utilized more today than non-exclusionary discipline practices (Curran, 2016). School administrators tend to focus on quickly assigning disciplinary consequences, instead of how to help manage student behavior (Lehman 2016). However, as stated by Skiba and Knesting, some researchers argue all zero-tolerance policies are not intended to be merely punitive, but to incorporate an element of safety and security in schools (Curran, 2016). For example, zero-tolerance policies have really gained popularity with the rise of violent acts in schools, especially those involving weapons (Vidal-Castro, 2016).

The Gun Control Act, or the Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA) of 1994 became an intense law in efforts to reduce the opportunity for shootings and firearm weapons in the school setting (Curran, 2016; Vidal-Castro, 2016). In fact, as a result of gun violations in schools, zero-tolerance mandates may be implemented for schools that receive federal funding, and students must be expelled for up to a full year regardless of past behavior history or intent (Curran, 2016). The 2012 Sandy Hook school shootings in Connecticut was one of the worst and infamous massacres at an elementary school that really brought attention to vulnerability to violence in the school setting (Madfis, 2017; Vidal-Castro, 2016). Prior to the Sandy Hook tragedy, in 1999 Columbine High School experienced a

similar shooting event orchestrated by 2 senior students that claimed the lives of 12 students and 1 teacher; after this massacre Columbine High School implemented zero-tolerance policies, but has since converted to restorative practices discipline management (Buckmaster, 2016). Gun control and weapons policies at many public school districts were reviewed and tightened due to the recent violent school and university shootings that have occurred in the last few years. In fact, in the study conducted by Madfis (2017), the author revealed that most school shootings are well planned and are not just random acts of violence.

In attempts to obtain critical information on the effectiveness of zero-tolerance policies in schools, the American Psychology Association (APA) performed an extensive study in 2008, and according to Lehman (2016), the results were astounding. Zero-tolerance policies were negatively associated with student discipline and the involvement of the juvenile justice system (Lehman, 2016). Additionally, the APA (2008) determined that zero-tolerance policies do not effectively support adolescent development. Researchers further argue that even though zero-tolerance policies are intended for all students equally, regardless of race, administrators are subject to use their own discretion in assigning these offenses to students (Curran, 2016).

Implicit bias and stereotypes toward minority students are the guiding factors that lead administrators to discrimination with the usage of zero-tolerance policies, as Black students tend to receive harsher punishments (Curran, 2016). Administrators should be able to challenge their biases that may lead to disproportionate discipline practices (Lehman, 2016). The state of Texas is known for implementing zero-tolerance policies

to address discipline issues (Berlowitz, Frye & Jette, 2017). But, even in Texas, zero-tolerance policies came under scrutiny with H.B. 603, adopted into law in May 2005 (Molsbee, 2008). Under this mandate, administrators must consider a student's intent, self-defense, disciplinary history, and student's disabilities prior to expelling a student (Molsbee, 2008). This mandate allows administrator discretion, and encourages administrators to weigh the circumstances, prior to automatically assigning a discipline consequence. Many researchers agree that zero-tolerance practices by administrators can lead to the school-to-prison pipeline conceptualization (Wilson, 2014), discussed in the following section.

School-to-Prison Pipeline

As we have examined zero-tolerance policies, it is important to discuss other ramifications of these policies in the school setting. School administrators utilize zero-tolerance policies to manage student discipline as a quick method to addressing student misbehaviors, which have proven to be ineffective. Zero-tolerance policies include exclusionary discipline practices like in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions and expulsions that can lead to a school-to-prison pipeline conceptualization (Wilson, 2014). School-to-prison pipeline is the result of implementing zero-tolerance policies that are linked to student involvement in the juvenile justice or criminal justice system (Berlowitz, Frye, & Jette, 2017). Further, school-to-prison pipeline represents criminalization of students that misbehave in the school setting (Wilson, 2014).

Criminalization in the school setting comes into play when students are assigned major consequences for minor offenses, and the result is punitive action resulting in

exclusionary discipline practices or referral to law enforcement agencies (Allen & White-Smith, 2014). Once students become a part of the criminal justice system, they have negative outcomes in the educational setting and in society. Researchers postulate that students whom are referred to criminal justice agencies for school discipline issues tend to experience higher dropout rates (Cramer, Gonzalez, & Pellegrini-Lafont, 2014), and dropping out of school is a positive indicator of incarceration (Berlowitz, Frye, & Jette, 2017).

Another instance of school-to-prison pipeline is evidenced with the presence of police, security resource officers (SRO's) and other security professionals in public schools. Policing in schools is becoming a very popular concept that is being implemented in schools all over the country, especially in middle and high school settings. According to Lynch, Gainey & Chappell (2016), schools increase the presence of SRO's to address students that are considered dangerous.

Violent offenses that may deem necessary for involvement of campus policies officers would entail incidents of assault on other students or staff, rioting, gun/weapon violations, and other offenses that could potentially result in a dangerous situation in the school setting (Swartz, Osborne, Dawson-Edwards, & Higgins, 2016). Unfortunately, many students are referred for police involvement on minor offenses that are not violent in nature, and can be usually be handled administratively. For example, minor offenses like classroom disruptions, failure to comply, or profanity are offenses that typically would not involve law enforcement intervention (Berlowitz, 2017). School

administrators have the discretion to determine the appropriate situations in which to seek police involvement.

Another issue that many researchers argue that is prevalent with the school-to-prison pipeline is the disproportionate number of African American students affected by this concept (Mallett, 2016). It has previously been established that African American students receive more exclusionary discipline consequences that removes them from the classroom setting (Berlowitz, 2017). Therefore, administrators are responsible for ensuring fair and equal treatment of all students regarding discipline management, including implementing interventions to help reduce the school-to-prison dynamic. Ensuring fair and equal treatment of students will help administrators foster a positive school climate.

Student Discipline: School Climate/Environment

In order for public school districts to ensure a positive learning environment, school administrators, staff, students, parents, and community members must establish a collaborative effort. This collaboration of a school community is essential for the success of students in the learning environment. A community is defined as an interacting population of various kinds of individuals in a common location, linked by common interests and policies. This community connection is needed for students when there is a need for behavioral and academic resources and supports (Huang et al., 2015).

Various measures of school climate have a positive linkage to student misbehaviors and linkage (Kim, 2016). In fact, some researchers argue that student disruptive behaviors occur as the result of the school structure and culture (Slee,

2015). Payne conducted a study in 2008 relating to school discipline, and he revealed schools with a strong and organized communal system did not have high student delinquency outcomes (Kim, 2016). According to Cohen et al., as cited by Huang et al. (2015) there is no official universal definition of school climate, but it is often defined as the “quality and character of school life” and is “based on patterns of people’s experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures,” (p. 843). Since the 1980’s popularity of the middle school model, researchers have indicated the need for positive and effective learning environments, particularly in the middle school setting (Zoller Booth et al., 2014). Within the school environment there are many factors that can influence or hinder a positive school environment. Also, Fiaschetti & Slate (2014) support that at-risk students tend to thrive in the school environment and have school connectedness when they believe adults are interested in them and their learning. There are negative outcomes for students in schools that do not foster a positive school climate (Slee, 2015). Some of the ways that school environments and students can be influenced are discussed in the following sections.

Administrator Influence

Adults set the standard for students and are responsible for leading by example. Students are very impressionable and they learn how adults react to situations, and mimic adult behavior. In the school environment, school administrators and educators are in the position of authority to help teach behavioral expectations to students. For example, most classroom teachers have a decorum or standard of conduct that is expected of

students. A mere posting of the rules on a bulletin board is not sufficient; teachers and administrators must ensure student awareness and understanding of the rules, and adults must exhibit model behavior as they manage difficult situations. Some might argue that students should be taught at home how to behave in the school setting. But, being efficiently taught in the home environment is not always the scenario for students. In fact, researchers Gottfredson (2001) and Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argued that the school setting has replaced the family and serves as a major socialization institute that can (a) monitor students, (b) recognize deviant behaviors, and (c) provide clear and well established discipline procedures and authority (Kim, 2016, p. 1198).

Researchers show that many students are exposed to living in environments and communities that may be underprivileged, and may not provide the appropriate parental guidance. Thus, administrators should not have the perception that students come into the learning environment as completely formed individuals with “certain fixed personality traits, intelligences, or behaviors “ (Millei & Petersen, 2015, p. 24). Discipline in the school setting has previously served as the *locos parentis*, which translates to “in place of the parents” (Molsbee, 2008). With this mode of thinking, students were sent to school and were expected to receive some form of punishment, usually corporal, as discipline consequences (Molsbee, 2008). Therefore, to contribute to student learning of important rules and norms that are expected in the learning environment, administrators must be willing to assist students with this critical development (Kim, 2016).

Teaching behavioral expectations is one of the most important goals that are required of the new CBC role, which is reviewed in this study. As administrators manage

discipline, it is imperative that they are fair and consistent with rules. School rules, policies, and procedures must be reasonable, consistent, and clear in the school setting, which will help reduce discipline problems (Kim, 2016). Researchers show that more school engagement has a positive linkage to decreased student discipline related issues. Therefore, administrators should encourage student engagement because students are more active in their schools have a positive attachment to the school environment (Bender, 2012). This school engagement can help foster a positive school climate. Students who do not feel supported or connected in the school environment may experience disengagement in learning and being a part of the school environment. Higher dropout rates can result in student disengagement, and students who drop out of school are likely to be involved in juvenile delinquency (Neely & Griffin-Williams, 2013). Therefore, the administrator and student relationship is important to student success. Administrators are not the only authority; teachers have great impact and influence on students, as discussed below.

Teacher Influence

The majority of student discipline issues occur in the classroom setting. Therefore, teachers are likely the first points of contact with students that misbehave. Although this study does not focus on teacher perceptions of discipline management, it is important to preface the effect of student discipline issues that occur in the classroom has an affect on the school climate. Additionally, administrator support has a profound effect on the success of teachers and their ability to focus on academic achievement of students. Administrative support of teachers is a requirement of public schools in efforts

to ensure the environment is focused on learning and academic success. When teachers need additional support, school administrators are responsible for providing adequate support to assist classroom teachers with managing classroom behaviors. Additionally, the role of effective educational leadership involves influencing and motivating staff members by exuding positive behaviors, and promoting self-efficacy for employees (Mehdinezhad & Mansouri, 2016).

Public schools may experience a high turnover rate or even teacher shortages, due to the lack of administrative support regarding student discipline and behavior management (Kraft, Marinell & Shen-Wei Yee, 2016). In fact, schools that have high discipline rates tend to have low employee morale, decreased camaraderie, and can have a negative impact on the school environment (Jong et al., 2014). Teachers are often overwhelmed after exhausting all of their resources in attempts to address student discipline issues in their classrooms, to no avail (Millei & Petersen, 2015). Per McKinney, Campbell-Whately, and Kea, 50 percent of teachers in urban school districts experience burnout and leave the teaching profession within the first five years due to student behavioral management difficulties (Millei & Petersen, 2015). Although, some researchers argue that teachers are required to effectively engage students in the learning process, which will reduce classroom disruptive behaviors (Millei & Petersen, 2015).

A study was conducted of teachers' perceptions of student problem behaviors in Zimbabwe where the researchers found that teacher engagement, teaching method, as well as the school climate, had a major impact on student behavior (Chitiyo et al., 2014). Also, researchers in this study found that the majority of teachers believed that

school-related factors were a major cause for student misbehaviors over home-related factors (Chitiyo et al., 2014). Therefore, teacher engagement and involvement is important in the classroom setting. Social bonding of students and teachers is important in the school setting; it gives students a sense of confidence that can foster a high level of educational achievement (Benner & Wang, 2014). Additionally, students with strong teacher-student bonds are more connected with school, are involved in more extracurricular activities, and have fewer discipline infractions (Lucero et al., 2015). In forming positive social bonds with students, it is important for teachers to realize that their “coercive and supportive behaviors” can impact how students view the student-teacher relationship (Jong et al., 2013, p. 295). When teachers’ form positive bonds with students, they are less reactive when addressing discipline issues. For example, studies show when disruptive students anger teachers, teachers tend to utilize more punitive and harsh consequences (Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013). Harsh punishments are not effective and can potentially harm the student-teacher relationship.

Unfortunately, there are times when the student-teacher relationship cannot be repaired, and student misbehaviors continue in the school setting. Some of the common misbehaviors that occur in classroom setting include fighting, bullying, violence, truancy, sexual behaviors, and drug-related offenses (Chitiyo et al., 2014). Even teachers with a well-managed classroom can occasionally have students that require student discipline interventions (Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013). In this regard, teachers may request a student with consistent disciplinary issues in the classroom, be physically removed from that particular teacher’ classroom, if behavioral management interventions are

unsuccessful. The teacher removal process is spelled out in Chapter 37 of the TEC (TEA, 2017). Although this may be viewed as a good solution for the teacher to have a disruptive student transferred to another class, is it really a benefit to the student? This process seems to involve student juggling, instead of addressing the behavior. Teachers depend on the support from school administrators in regards to student discipline management, as the teacher's focus is centered on educating children in the learning environment. Adequate support from administrators and teachers will enable student success behaviorally and academically.

Student Success: Behavior & Academics

The ultimate goal for administrators is to provide a safe learning environment where academics are the main goal, and student success is the priority. In the school setting students are the customers, and their educational attainment and behavioral enrichment is in the hands of school professionals. Therefore, it is important for schools to be willing to nurture and promote student success.

There is no question that student behavior and academics go hand-in-hand; there is positive linkage. Thus, solid discipline practices and behavioral resources allow students to have ultimate academic performance (Baumann & Krskova, 2016).

Unfortunately, academic gains are not achieved equally among all students. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2011), ethnic and racial minorities are behind in academic achievement compared to non-minority students. One potential reason for low student achievement is that many public schools in low socioeconomic communities with a high number of minority students, may not have the necessary

resources, supports, tools, and staff in order to provide the appropriate instruction to students.

Thus, federal laws like the NCLB Act have been enacted in public schools in attempts to remedy the dilemma of low academic achievement for specific groups of students, like English as a Second Language (ESL) learners and economically disadvantaged students (Stern, 2016). Students that manifest behavioral issues do not perform well academically, and this can drastically affect the overall school climate (Baumann & Krskova, 2016). A positive school environment is a direct linkage to student outcomes (Zhang et al., 2016), and student educational success is achieved by behavioral engagement, which includes involvement in extracurricular activities, task behaviors, and attendance (Benner & Wang, 2014). Therefore, safe and orderly schools foster student achievement (Kraft et al., 2016).

School Safety

School safety is a major concern for many lawmakers, public school districts, school administrators, students, and parents. A challenge that exists for many school administrators is keeping their campuses as safe as possible. Some students do not feel physically or emotionally safe on their school campuses (Zhang et al., 2016). This can affect student learning in a major way. If students are fearful of being hurt, attacked, or subjected to other dangers at school, they are less likely to focus on academics. According to Zhang et al., (2016) feeling safe is a basic human need, and schools should be a safe place for students to learn. Also, some administrators and educators do not feel

safe in the school environment with more violent crimes being committed on school campuses.

As briefly discussed in the school-to-prison pipeline section, due to increased safety concerns, many public school districts have their own independent police department that employs district police and security officers (Mallett, 2016). Most of the police staff is usually assigned to a particular middle or high school campus, and the officers are based on the campus to assist with violent and dangerous situations that may arise. Unfortunately, with the rise in firearm violations and devastating school shootings, school districts have attempted to vamp up their safety and security measures (Schroeder, 2016). Administrators can benefit from having the availability of police staff on campus to help address student behavioral situations, such as fights, gang activity, drug use, performing student searches and seizures, inspecting firearms, or other prohibited weapons violations, and other situations that may occur (Zhang, 2016). Police presence on campuses can potentially deter students from making poor decisions that require intervention of police officers (Mallett, 2016). Along with police and security presence on school campuses, some public schools have implemented other safety measures like metal detectors, surveillance systems, and secured entry access (Jennings, Khey, Maskaly, & Donner, 2011).

Further, school surveillance systems have also been implemented as a method to deter students from misbehaviors as well as for investigative purposes (Jennings et al. 2011). According to Gastic and Johnson (2015), the use of metal detectors is not a popular intervention utilized by many administrators at the secondary level; middle and

high school campuses, but is the most controversial method. Unfortunately, with the increase of weapons being brought to campuses, metal detector usage proves beneficial for detecting illegal or prohibited weapons on the student's person or belongings (Jennings et al., 2011). Most procedures for metal detector scanning occur at the beginning of the school day upon students' entry into the building (Gastic & Johnson, 2015).

Regardless of the safety measures put into place by the local school district or campus administrator, these safety interventions should be implemented with the best interest of students in mind. Students should have a safe environment, free of danger and fear, in the school setting. But, the school setting is not effective if it is run like a prison or juvenile institution (Allen & White-Smith, 2014). School districts and administrators are responsible for the proper protocols to be set in place in order to create a safe learning environment for all students. As provided in the previous sections, there are various policies and procedures that administrators are subjected to as they manage student discipline. But the main goal of student discipline practices should be for the benefit of the student in regards to changing behavior. In the next section, behavior management programs are explored with the emphasis that school districts and administrators have various options to help support students with behavioral challenges.

Student Discipline: Behavior Management Programs

With more traditional discipline practices becoming less popular and effective in public schools, more school districts and administrators are turning to alternative solutions to help manage student discipline. Most behavioral management programs tend

to focus on the needs of the whole child; academic, behavioral, and social and emotional components are considered. Urban school districts may benefit more from the positive outcomes of implementing behavior management programs than non-urban schools, as urban schools tend to have more incidences of violence, mobility, and high staff turnover (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2012). Some of the behavioral management programs that are being implemented by school administrators are research-based while others are evidence-based programs. Research-based programs are those that professionals in the field have researched and studied, and deemed effective in changing student behavior. Evidence based programs are programs that have been studied, implemented and found to be successful in changing student behavior in the school setting.

Behavioral management programs are considered evidence based when they represent the gold standard along a continuum of what research supports as effective, and are likely to produce positive outcomes. Traditionally, discipline management programs have been implemented individually and implemented for either academics or behavior; however, this method does not prove effective (Eagle, Dowd-Eagle, Snyder, & Holtzman, 2015). The use of a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) is becoming popular in schools, and incorporates more than one single behavior management program (Eagle et al., 2015). MTSS is a systems approach that combines multiple programmatic concepts, and considers the linkage of academic, behavioral, and social-emotional aspects (Eagle et al., 2015). Selection of the appropriate research-based, evidence based, or MTSS program or programs should be determined based upon the needs of the school. However, the ultimate success of the selected program highly depends upon the

rigor in which the program is implemented and administered by schoolteachers, counselors, school administrators, and the school district as a whole.

Implementation of behavioral management programs requires efficacy and dedication by the school staff, involving buy-in. Buy-in can potentially be the most difficult part of successfully implementing a behavior management program with fidelity (Feuerborn, Wallace, & Tyre, 2016). The top-down effect in school districts is mandatory when program implementation begins, and must involve Board Members, top district officials, school administrators, counselors, teachers, and parents. Public school districts and administrators can have a major impact on and influence the effectiveness of behavioral management programs. When considering staff buy-in, school administrators must support the program's purpose by ensuring themselves and their staff are thoroughly trained on the selected program, ensure staff receive adequate support and resources, and ensure staff are knowledgeable of their expectations, as well as behavior expectations of the students.

Incorporating innovative programs can be very challenging, especially if administrators do not support teachers and staff with adequate training (Feuerborn et al., 2016). Further, the administration and staff must be fully aware of the expected outcomes of the selected program and how the program can potentially help decrease student disciplinary infractions and consequences, and ultimately improve the school environment. The important aspect of incorporating these programs is for school administrators to realize that student support should be the reason for implementing these

programs and the success of these programs should benefit students, which should be the number one priority for implementation of behavior management programs.

Additionally, the benefits of these programs may not be seen immediately; changing student behavior is not an easy task, and program implementation must be done with fidelity and not hurried. The goal of many behavior management programs is to positively change student behavior. Changing undesirable or problematic student behaviors stems from the principle of operant conditioning (Soh, 2017). Positively changing student and adult behavior is a systemic process that can occur over time. Model behavior of school administration and staff is critical and required in order to set the tone for expected student behavior.

In regards to the effectiveness and success of behavioral management programs, researchers in the field have concluded that these programs are very effective in reducing the number of disciplinary offenses and consequences, improving academic learning, and supporting a positive school climate. Many public schools choose to implement several behavioral management programs into their regime, and use the programs in tandem to complement each other providing more behavioral support. In the middle school setting behavioral management programs are very much needed and are becoming popular. Middle school administrators are becoming aware and are open to implementing behavioral programs to assist with positively changing school climates. Some of the behavioral management programs that are proving to be effective in the public school system including middle schools are briefly discussed below.

Response to Intervention (RtI)

RTI is an evidence-based intervention program that entails a multi-tiered approach designed to address academic and behavioral issues of students (Hurlbut & Tunks, 2016; Robinson, 2016). According to McCrary, Brown, Dyer-Sennette, & Morton (2017) and RTI Action Network (n.d.) there are three RTI levels of supports defined as Tiers I, II, and III, and each level increases with intensity of interventions and supports that are provided to students:

- Tier I – High-quality group intervention provided in classroom instruction.
This initial level of interventions is designed for all students to ensure students are learning and not falling behind. To ensure adequate monitoring, baseline targets monitor student academic and behavioral goals.
- Tier II – Targeted Interventions.
This level of intervention provides extra supports for students that are not making progress with Tier I supports. The interventions become more involved for a smaller group than in Tier I. Students who do not respond to Tier II supports move on to Tier III.
- Tier III – Intensive Individualized Interventions and Comprehensive Evaluation.
Students that do not respond positively to interventions during Tier I or II receive additional individualized interventions and supports through Tier III. During this level, further data analysis is provided to determine if specific learning needs are required. At this level, services through special education may be needed as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

(IDEA, 2004). A parent may request official special education testing at any time during the RtI process.

A positive element about RtI is that it supports students' academic and behavioral needs and continuously tracks progress. The program is only as effective as the team whom is responsible for monitoring student progress. Administrators are responsible for implementing a school-based leadership team (SBLT) that will be responsible for ensuring program implementation is successful, perform effective progress monitoring of the interventions, and be a part of and provide professional development to other employees. Also, the appropriate assessment methods must be in place for monitoring academic and behavioral supports. RTI teams of professionals within the school setting may be composed of teachers, administrators, and other central office staff that require imperative decision-making (Meyer & Behar-Horenstein, 2015). Also, school counselors play an important role with ensuring student success in RTI programs, particularly they are responsible for producing evidenced-based classroom interventions, individual or group counseling, progress monitoring, and effectively communication with parents (Sink, 2016).

In addition to collaborative teams in place, professional development and resources are important for implementation of RTI to be successful. According to a study conducted by Meyer & Behar-Horenstein (2015), the teachers' experiences were examined with RTI interventions implemented at an urban Title I funded school. The results of the study were compelling and revealed that the teachers felt they did not have the knowledge and skills to efficiently implement RTI, and they revealed that during the

RTI process they did not receive adequate support from administrators (Meyer & Behar-Horenstein, 2015). However, with proper implementation, resources, and supports RTI interventions can be effective for students. In regard to student behavior, researchers Kern and Wehby (2014) discovered that the outcome of their research study showed student behavior had changed substantially, and that a myriad of behavior problems were improved. A popular behavioral program that many administrators may use in addition to RtI is School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (SWPBIS).

School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (SWPBIS)

SWPBIS is a systems approach designed to support the culture and behavioral supports that are required for students to achieve socially and academically (Childs, Kincaid, George, & Gage, 2016). Per George, Kincaid, & Pollard-Sage (as cited by Childs et al., 2016), the primary features of SWPBIS include (a) capitalizing on the prevention of problem behavior, (b) teaching appropriate social behavior and skills, (c) acknowledging appropriate behavior, (d) using a multi-tiered approach to instruction/intervention that matches behavior support intensity to the student need, (e) using data-based problem solving, and (f) investing in systems that support evidence-based practices (p.89). The multi-tiered approach is also considered a major emphasis of SWPBIS, which consists of 3 tiers:

- Tier 1 represents a school-wide emphasis based on the needs of that particular school, which targets all students,
- Tier 2 consists of more refined and structured interventions that are required for non-responsive students, and

- Tier 3 incorporates individualized intensive and rigorous supports implemented for a smaller group of students that are non-responsive to interventions set out in Tier 1 and Tier 2 (Evanovich & Scott, 2016).

Programs like SWPBIS can be effective, but they are not successful with just the mere implementation; SWPBIS must be supported and implemented with fidelity by school principals (McIntosh, Kelm, & Delabra, 2015). The behaviors of the adults are the primary focus of SWPBIS and their influence is important to the success of the program for changing student behaviors (Evanovich & Scott, 2016). But, implementing programs like SWPBIS can be challenging for administrators if they do not have the support of the entire school staff, especially teachers (Feuerborn et al., 2016). Staff buy-in, follow-through, and consistency will contribute to the success of SWPBIS, which will assist students on a behavioral and academic level (McIntosh et al., 2015). Another behavioral program that supports student success, and requires administrator and teacher efficacy is Restorative Justice, as detailed in the next section.

Restorative Justice/Discipline

Restorative Justice (RJ), also known as Restorative Discipline (RD), used interchangeably throughout this section dependent upon the preference of the author, is a type of behavior management program that allow students to be involved in effective interaction and communication with peers in efforts to resolve differences. Restorative discipline offers a differentiated process that allows those that have created harm or affected by the harm to come together and decide how to rectify the harm by utilizing self-discipline (Mullet, 2014). Originally utilized in the criminal justice system, RD or

RJ has been used in the school setting to address student misbehaviors (Mayworm et al., 2016). The emphasis of RD is forming circles with the students in order them to work out differences among each other (Dubin, 2015). For example, if a few students get into a verbal altercation causing disrupt to the classroom setting, the teacher or administrator may recommend a restorative circle in lieu of disciplinary consequences for students to sit down and discuss their differences among peers. The practice of RD allows for a decrease in the number of discipline referrals and an opportunity for students to express their points of view (Mullet, 2014).

Some schools may offer stiffer penalties as allowed by the school district's code of conduct for major offenses that cannot be reasonably addressed with the restorative circles (Dubin, 2015). Ultimately, the goal of RD, per Stutzman Amstutz & Mullet, is to "give a voice and power to those harmed, heal or repair relationships, and encourage accountability by the wrongdoers," (Mullet, 2014, p. 158). In addition, the goal of RD is to change the whole school climate and not merely focus on the behavior of the student (The Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue, 2017). Restorative justice has been considered an important tool in reducing disproportionate and exclusionary student discipline consequences among African American students (Mayworm et al., 2016). Although RJ has promising outcomes, researchers show there is little knowledge about how administrators and teachers can receive effective training on the process for implementing RD (Mayworm et al., 2016). Administrators interested in incorporating RJ at their campuses should ensure staff is thoroughly trained and understand the intended goals of RJ, and ensure staff is provided ongoing professional

development to support behavior management programs like RJ. The benefit of programs like contain social and emotional components allow students to be aware of how their actions affect others.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Having effective social skills is a necessity for student success in the learning environment; therefore, many school districts are pursuing programs that focus on students' social and emotional well-being in efforts to reduce discipline infractions and improve overall student behavior (Moore McBride, Chung, & Robertson, 2016). Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is an evidence based model designed for improving educational learning environments by focusing on the whole child, which incorporates the social development of students and academia (Burroughs & Barkauskas, 2017). SEL is the process through which children and adolescents learn how to control emotions, follow directions and properly interact with their peers and adults (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). The definition of SEL is derived from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (Moore McBride et al., 2016). CASEL defines SEL as:

A process for helping children develops the fundamental skills for life effectiveness. SEL teaches the skills we all need to handle ourselves, our relationships and our work effectively and ethically. These skills include recognizing and managing our emotions, developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically. They are the skills that allow children to calm

themselves when angry, make friends, resolve conflicts respectfully, and make ethical and safe choices (Moore McBride et al., 2016, p. 371).

In the school setting, SEL programs alone will not prevent total disrupt in the school environment, but implementing SEL programs in addition to policies and procedures will promote healthier students and environments (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). When considering SEL programs, school administrators must realize that social, emotional, and academic skills are all related and have a profound impact on each other (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). In fact, academically, SEL programs have produced positive outcomes for reduced failing grades (Burroughs & Barkauskas, 2017; Moore McBride et al., 2016). Per Burroughs & Barkauskas (2017), researchers agree that students who were in SEL programs in primary, middle, and high school showed a significant academic improvement. In addition to improved academics, a study conducted by Moore McBride et al., (2016) examined an experimental SEL program among seventh grade middle school students, and the researchers found that middle school students participating in SEL programs may help to reduce disciplinary infractions.

Additionally, gender may play a role in receptivity and positive outcomes of SEL programmatic interventions for female students over male students, as female students may be more open and willing to participate and fully engage in SEL programs (Evans, 2017). A study conducted by Evans (2017) particularly examined gender in relation to the developmental process and pedagogy of 41 students aged 12 -14 and 8 staff members in SEL programs. The researcher determined that females responded favorably in regards to the display of emotionality and due to the ideal and belief of masculinity, male

students were not as open or receptive (Evans, 2017). But, the method and delivery of SEL programs by administrators and teachers is crucial in order to obtain positive outcomes for both female and male students. Through a differentiated group approach of SEL, the dynamic is intended for administrators and teachers to work with each individual child to engage and allow students to be successful (Dugas, 2017). The goal of this group approach of incorporating SEL components is an inclusive tactic to allow all students to feel they are important and contributing members of the group (Dugas, 2017). In efforts to gain success through any SEL program, administrators and teachers must ensure they are constantly supporting, motivating, and encouraging students with efficacy throughout the program (Dugas, 2017, Evans, 2017).

Researchers have determined that many administrators and teachers are on board with incorporating SEL into their daily classroom schedules (Dugas, 2017; Evans, 2017; Jones & Bouffard, 2012). In fact, 93% of teachers agree that SEL programs are essential for students in their school experiences (Dugas, 2017). A decline in classroom misbehaviors was one of the improvements that teachers reported as a result of school-based SEL interventions (Jones & Bouffard). Some of the other student discipline behaviors that may benefit from SEL interventions include fighting and victimizing peers (Moore McBride et al., 2016). According to Burroughs and Barkauskas (2017), positive peer relationships have a positive linkage among students with high social competence; they are able to evaluate their differences and solve problems with peers. In sum, there are many beneficial results of implementing SEL programs and interventions on school campuses. Some researchers argue that these programs are more effective if

they are implemented at the elementary school level, as it is considered a critical developmental stage (Burroughs & Barkauskas, 2017). Implementation at the high school level is not as popular for SEL programs, but according to Dugas (2017), 93% of high school teachers state SEL programming is essential in the school environment. For middle school campuses, most researchers agree these campuses benefit substantially from the positive outcomes of SEL programs that are intertwined with educational learning in the school setting. The concept of SEL programming is also found in other behavioral interventions programs, such as Mindfulness, which is described below.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a meditation intervention program that is designed for adults and children (Harpin, Rossi, Kim, & Swanson, 2016). The popularity of mindfulness techniques has recently grown in the last couple of decades with the prevalence of other behavioral intervention programs like SEL and PBIS (Harpin et al., 2016). In the school setting, adults and students may benefit from mindfulness techniques for teaching stress coping skills and calmness (Fulton, 2016; Harpin et al., 2016). Mindfulness practices involve “awareness and insight, and loving-kindness and compassion practices that foster compassion for both self and others” (Fulton, 2016, p. 361). Although the concept of mindfulness is derived from Buddhist origins, the practice of mindfulness does not involve specific religious associations and can be used by anyone regardless of religious preference (Fulton, 2016; Harpin et al., 2016). Researchers like Mendelson et al., have studied the effectiveness of mindfulness in schools, and the results are promising indicating students and teachers were receptive to mindfulness techniques (Falter,

2016). In this study, 12-week mindfulness interventions were implemented with 97 fourth graders attending an urban public school, and the researchers revealed that through mindful interventions positive reactions were the outcome of stressful social situations.

One challenge of incorporating mindfulness in the school environment is carving out time allotted for mindful interventions, which may not be included into the standard learning curriculum (Harpin et al., 2016). Academic time in the classroom is regimented and some educators fear that implementing such techniques may impede upon the instructional time. Teachers can find creative ways to incorporate mindfulness sessions in the classroom setting. For instance, a study conducted by Falter (2016) examined the various means in which music teachers can use mindful techniques in music education, with only minor alterations in their planning. One technique suggested in this study involved teachers using soothing music and students sitting with their eyes closed and incorporating yoga techniques (Falter, 2016) to help rowdy students get calm and re-focus on learning (Falter, 2016; Hartel, Anh Thu Nguyen, & Guzik, 2017). Yoga is a good example of a mindfulness activity that can be used in the school environment (Falter, 2016; Harpin et al., 2016). Also, there is a mindfulness component for teachers; when teachers are calm in disruptive situations, the children will sense that calmness (Harpin et al., 2016). This teaches children that even in difficult times to remain compassionate and relaxed.

Researchers agree that mindfulness techniques present more positive outcomes for students than traditional discipline consequences for misbehaviors. The long-term benefits of mindfulness interventions may be worth the time spent, and there are creative

ways in which teachers and administrators can incorporate simple reflection and relaxation techniques in the instructional time. Mindfulness implementation has an overall goal to teach students how to reflect, relax, and stay calm in stressful situations. This is a program that could potentially change the entire school's mindset, which will create a healthier learning environment for students, teachers, and administrators.

Summary

Chapter 2 contained a thorough review of the literature conducted and derived from many researchers, experts, and other sources. The above literature review contained various components of student discipline that were pertinent to this study. School administrators have a major responsibility to support an effective learning environment as they manage student discipline. An exhaustive search of the literature was performed and the results indicate there is a gap in literature related to student discipline of female students in middle/junior school, and African American female students in the middle/junior high school setting. Also, with the recent enactment of S.B. 107, currently there is no literature that I have found relating to CBCs, and their required role. The literature review examines the areas of student discipline that was essential in this study, which sought information on the roles, behaviors, influences, behavior management, and student discipline practices of CBCs. Chapter 3 examines the research methods that were used in the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

In Chapters 1 and 2, I discussed in detail many components of student discipline and behavior management practices of school administrators. Student discipline is a concern, especially in the middle school grades, and more research is needed to review student discipline of female students. In particular, the discipline of African American female students warrants further examination, as student discipline seem to be disproportionately higher for African American females than females of other races. The literature review revealed many factors that may affect the school learning environment, as well as decisions, attitudes, and behaviors of school administrators, which can positively or negatively impact students. The new role of CBCs is critical to how public schools respond to disciplinary issues and support student success. In my study, I sought to examine how school administrators and CBCs effectively and efficiently impose discipline as part of behavioral management of students.

Research Methodology

This study used a qualitative research methodology. The behaviors of administrators have a profound influence on students in the learning environment, and seeking their experiences and perspectives is essential for understanding student discipline and supporting student success. Since qualitative research allows for a thorough view of participants' perspectives on a specific topic, I believe this was the best methodology for this study. Quantitative research focuses on numerical data, and qualitative focuses on lived experiences of participants. The role of CBCs is fairly new

and this study provided informative insights regarding the dynamics of discipline management of females in the middle/junior high school setting.

Research Design

In this study, I used a qualitative methodology and the generic qualitative approach. The generic qualitative approach was used to examine how student discipline of female middle school students is addressed through the lens of CBCs. The generic qualitative approach is not restricted to specific criteria like that of other qualitative methodologies such as phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography. A generic qualitative study allows examination of “people’s attitudes, opinions, or beliefs about a particular issue or experience” (Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015, p. 76). All types of qualitative research seek to explore participants’ experiences, but according to Kahlke (2014), generic qualitative studies allow for flexibility of multiple methodologies to be used in order to gain a richer look into the lives of the participants. Due to the flexibility in the design, the generic qualitative approach was the best method to explore the perspectives and opinions of the CBCs regarding student discipline of female students. Generic qualitative designs require thorough engagement in the study (Kahlke, 2014). Face-to-face interview sessions using discipline scenarios with the participants in this study provided an opportunity to obtain rich, detailed, and descriptive data.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher in this study, I used reflexivity in regards to personal experiences in order to reduce bias. Because I have professional experience in working with CBCs at a public school district, I reduced this potential bias by not seeking

participants from the public school district in which I am currently employed; therefore, only participants with whom I have had no personal or professional relationships were included as participants in this study. Since the data was not be derived via backyard research, this decreased the chance for potential ethical issues and possible conflicts of interest. As an instrument in this study, my role required me to remain objective, avoid asking leading interview questions, remain open to participants' views, and actively engage participants throughout the data collection process. I aimed to gain the trust of the participants by ensuring they received complete information regarding the purpose of the study, providing informed consent forms, and making them aware that their information will remain confidential, and the findings of the study will be shared with them.

Participants of the Study

The participants in this study consisted of school administrators designated as CBCs on junior high school campuses employed through a local public school district. In this study, middle school and junior high school have the same meaning. Middle school is commonly referred to as the grade level between elementary and high school levels in the public education system (Kim et al., 2014). The specific terminology depends on the preference of each school district. The school district in which my study was conducted uses the term junior high school for students in seventh and eighth grades. Purposive sampling of a small group allows for in-depth understanding of the phenomena (Maxwell, 2012). The goal was to interview around 10 CBCs in a local public school district. Eight assistant principal administrators serving in the role of CBC in six junior

high school campuses were included in this study. Interviewing a reasonable number of participants allowed me to conduct interviews and adequately attain saturation with rich, detailed, and informative data.

The student enrollment for the local school district that participated in my study is approximately 39,000 for the 2016-17 school year. Approximately 10,000 (25%) students were identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) and 21,000 (54%) students were considered economically disadvantaged. Demographics of the students for the participating school district are approximately 39% Hispanic, 20% Black/African American, 29% White/Caucasian, 3% American, and 7% Indian. The school district is made up of 41 elementary schools, eight junior high schools, and five high schools.

Measures

My intent with this study was to gain the perspectives of CBCs. The interview discipline scenario questions were designed to elicit the following information regarding student discipline management practices of CBCs for middle/junior high female students; CBC perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of student discipline; CBC roles as disciplinarians on their school campuses; CBC influence and impact on the school climate; and CBC student support system for behavioral and academic success.

Research Question

RQ: What are the perspectives of CBCs regarding the role of student discipline management in regard to female middle school students?

Ethical Considerations/Participant Protection

Researchers conducting studies with human participants must always remain aware of ethical considerations and ensure their participants are not harmed in any way as a result of the study. Participants, specifically in qualitative studies where human participants are involved, should receive the utmost care, treatment, and consideration while participating in the study and thereafter. This study was comprised of school administrators designated as CBCs, and all of them were consenting adults over age 18 who willingly volunteered to participate. All participant information and data obtained through this study is properly secured in a small file safe under lock and key, and only I have access. The necessary permissions and consent for all the participants were obtained.

Procedures

To ensure the best interest of the participants are considered, the following steps were completed:

1. I obtained the necessary permissions and consents from the local public school district to conduct the study with district employees (CBCs). (Appendix A)
2. I contacted the prospective participants via e-mail at each junior high school in the public school district to introduce myself, thoroughly advise them of the purpose of the study, and discuss confidentiality, ethical guidelines, and participant protections. (Appendix B). For interested CBCs willing to participate in the study, I scheduled meeting dates, times, and locations to conduct interviews at the participants' convenience.

3. I met with the CBCs to conduct face-to-face interviews, introduced myself, and informed the participants of the need for and purpose of the study. Each interview session was held after school hours or during the school day, which was allowed by the school district, and at the convenience of each participant. The locations of the interviews were held on the respective school campus of each participant. Each participant read and signed the consent form agreeing to be a participant in the study. Prior to conducting the study, the participant consent form was approved by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), and is identified by approval number 10-26-17-0546836. (Appendix C).
4. I obtained the signed consent form from each participant, and each face-to-face interview session was recorded via digital audio recorder with each participant's consent. An interview protocol consisting of student discipline scenarios were used to gain perspectives of CBCs. (Appendix D).
5. Upon completion of each face-to-face interview session, I explained the next steps to the participants regarding data collection and analysis. All of the participants indicated they did not have any questions at the end of the interview sessions. A brief summary of the results will be e-mailed to the participants upon completion of this study and satisfaction of doctoral degree requirements.
6. Participant confidential information, recordings, interview protocols, and other data collected as a result of this study will remain in a secured filing cabinet at my place of residence for five years, as required by ethical research standards.

Data Collection

Data collection was primarily derived from face-to-face interviews of the participants. The sources of data collection were obtained via a detailed interview protocol using various student discipline scenarios that may arise in the school setting, interview notes, observation, and reflective journaling. A study conducted by Jaggi and Kliewer (2016) used revenge scenarios to gain the perspectives of youth aged ten to sixteen consisting of 30 boys and 20 girls, on their experiences of revenge as a means for self-justice in their urban community. These scenarios allowed the researchers to obtain personal information on different motives of retaliatory goals of the youth, which was informative for the school setting and community (Jaggi & Kliewer, 2016). Vignettes and scenarios are used to create a story that replicates similar situations that are likely to occur in a specific setting (Macedo, Khanlou, & Luis, 2015). Relatedly, in this study, scenarios allowed CBCs to respond to how they would specifically address a range of possible discipline situations that are likely to involve middle/junior high school female students. Qualitative research often involves sensitive issues, and the use of vignettes and scenarios capture participant responses without going into detail regarding actual events (Macedo, Khanlou, & Luis, 2015).

In this study, due to confidentiality requirements of student information, the use of scenarios was very beneficial, as the administrators were not required to divulge specific student discipline information. Social learning and labeling theories allowed CBCs to examine their own influences as they responded to certain discipline situations via the scenarios. With participant consent, interview sessions were recorded, and

additional notes were taken during each interview session to document important details. Also, reflective journaling was performed after each interview session to allow an opportunity to record important findings, including notes about the settings, participant demeanor, and other details obtained through observation.

Data Analysis

After data collection, I organized the observation notes, interview protocols, and reflective journal notes. The interview protocols were carefully and thoroughly read to grasp an understanding of the experiences of the CBCs. Deconstruction of the data via data content analysis was conducted, in which I determined themes and patterns derived from the interviews with the participants (Saldaña, 2011). The recorded interview sessions consisting of the interview protocol/student discipline scenarios were transcribed and analyzed using open hand coding. This method allowed for each interview protocol to be examined line-by-line to detect similarities in data and emerging codes. Additionally, I utilized the Microsoft Excel program to assist with organizing the data and data management. The qualitative write-up that is detailed in Chapter 4 Results, addresses the emerging findings of the data collected in an effort to efficiently answer the research question.

Verification of Findings

Qualitative studies require verification of findings, which help to ensure the results are replicable. The results of qualitative research do not produce statistical data as in quantitative studies. Therefore, verification is the golden rule in qualitative studies, and there are various techniques to ensure qualitative studies meet solid verification

requirements. The process includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Percy et al., 2015). Credibility of this study was confirmed by saturation. I was able to gain participation and conduct interviews of eight participants at a local public school. Saturation was obtained by the sixth participant as I started hearing similarities and overlap in the participant responses, but I wanted to guarantee saturation, so I accepted two more interested participants. Also, credibility was met with the rich and thick descriptions of the participants' experiences (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). The experiences of the CBCs were fully examined in detail in order to possibly inform the field. Transferability was accomplished in this study, as the results may be repeated with participants in similar roles in different school districts.

Dependability ensures accurate and consistent procedures are in place to allow for results that are quality and entails integrity (Houghton et al., 2013). In regards to confirmability, reflexivity was met and incorporated to ensure that the results of the study were not influenced by my possible biases and perceptions regarding the topic as a professional in the field (Darawsheh, 2014). Although, I work in the field, as a researcher I was aware of my own feelings entering in to this study, and consciously separated them from the experiences, thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of the participants.

Summary

The research methods that are described in Chapter 3 of this study are in line with a qualitative generic study. When working with human subjects, researchers must be aware of the necessary ethical guidelines for including participants in their studies for the

participants' protection. Finally, qualitative studies must follow certain standards in order to ensure validity is met. Qualitative researchers can provide valuable, detailed, and beneficial data to inform many fields through the experiences of others. Chapter 4 provides more detail of the methods that were utilized to collect and analyze the data obtained from the interviews.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Juvenile delinquency as a whole is a public health concern for many urban communities. Children are exposed to many factors like drugs, poverty, and crime in their living environments, which may negatively have an impact on their behaviors (Kim, 2016). As student discipline issues continue to rise in the school setting, managing students with behavioral and discipline issues tends to pose a difficult feat for many public school administrators. There are growing delinquencies and discipline issues for middle school/junior high students and female students (Paraschiv, 2013). Among the female students, African American students in particular have an increase in discipline issues (Blake et al., 2017). Many administrators resort to addressing discipline issues by assigning traditional punitive consequences. Consequences of punitive removals, such as ISS, OSS, and transferal to an alternative school setting do not assist students with changing behavior.

The state of Texas has mandated specific guidelines for behavioral management strategies to be implemented and designation of an administrator identified as a CBC to handle discipline on all public school campuses in Texas. Administrators are responsible for ensuring that discipline management procedures and practices are implemented to help assist students with behavior management. Adults, whether they are parents, teachers, or school administrators, can positively or negatively influence children. School administrators and staff are often tasked with changing student behavior in order to decrease discipline issues. The manner in which school administrators interact and

conduct themselves with students who have discipline issues may be crucial for changing student behavior. The focus of my study was to examine discipline management practices of CBCs in regards to female junior high students. Chapter 4 includes my research question, research setting, demographics of participants, data collection techniques, and data analysis.

Research Question

RQ: What are the perspectives of CBCs regarding the role of student discipline management in regard to female middle school students?

Research Setting

The local public school district granted me permission to meet at the junior high school campuses if desired. Interviews were held at a date, time, and location convenient for the participants. All participants desired for me to come to their campuses for the interviews. I traveled to each of the junior high campuses to conduct face-to-face interview sessions with the participants. All interviews took place in the participants' offices on each of their respective campuses. Participant offices were located within the main office near the front entrance of each school building. The majority of the interview sessions, excluding one, were held behind closed doors. Although one participant chose to leave the door open during the interview session, all interviews were free from major distractions and interruptions.

With the exception of two interview sessions held after regular school hours, all other interviews were conducted during the regular school day. For the interviews that were held during the regular school day, no major interruptions occurred. During the

interview sessions, most of the participants were seated behind their office desks, while I sat on the other side of the desks. One participant desired to be interviewed at a small table with two chairs within the office. The participant and I were seated across from each other. Overall, the interviews were conducted in a setting and environment conducive for the face-to-face participant interviews.

Participant Demographics

The participants in this study consisted of public junior high school administrators in an urban public school district who were designated as the CBCs assigned to handle student discipline on their campuses. Purposive sampling was appropriate in this study since I specifically sought CBCs in middle/junior high schools that were responsible for student discipline management. After acceptance of a local public school district to be a community partner, I was able to gain voluntary participation from eight participants of various ethnicities, ages, and years of experience. More details on the demographics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Age Range	Ethnicity	Gender	Years of Experience Number
1	35 – 44	Caucasian	Male	2 years – current position 2 years – total experience
2	55 – 64	Caucasian	Female	12 years – current position 12 years – total experience
3	25 – 34	Caucasian	Male	1 year – current position 5 years – total experience
4	35 – 44	African American	Female	2 years – current position 5 years – total experience

5	45 – 54	Caucasian	Female	10 years – current experience 12 years – total experience
6	35 – 44	African American	Female	5 years – current position 5 years – total experience
7	25 - 34	African American	Female	2 years – current position 3 years – total experience
8	45 – 54	Caucasian	Female	4 months – current position 4 years – total experience

(table continued)

Diversity of participants allowed for various perspectives and experiences that the participants brought to the study. The age ranges of the participants were 25–34, 35–44, 45–54, and 55–65 years. The participants included five Caucasian and three African American, and the experience of the participants ranged from four months to 12 years as assistant principals. All participants have obtained master degrees. The demographic questions were asked after the discipline scenarios, as part of the data collection process. To protect the identities of the participants, they were assigned pseudonyms of P1, P2, P3, etc.

Data Collection

The data collection process for this study began after I received official approval from Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) (approval number 10-26-17-0546836). Also, I have received certification and completed the Protecting Human Research Participants training course on March 22, 2015 from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research, Certification Number: 1728815. These approvals allowed me to contact participants and collect my data.

The original public school district I sought declined. I continued to apply to various public school districts and went through their internal IRB processes to gain partnership with at least one school district. After a couple of weeks, a local public school district agreed to be my community partner for the study. The Evaluation and Research department of the local school district approved my study. I was approved to contact school administrators at all 10 of their junior high schools through the end of January 2018.

Data was collected during the first two weeks of January 2018 from eight CBCs at six different campuses at public junior high schools in Texas. I emailed prospective participants to engage their interest in participating in the study. Email invitations for participant recruitment were sent to 17 potential participants at eight local junior high schools before the December 2017 Christmas holiday break for the school district. After the holiday break in January, I sent out a reminder email to the participants. I then received four email responses back from participants who were not interested in participating in the study. Four participants did not respond. I had one participant who expressed interest in participating, but after several attempts to set an interview time and appointment, the potential participant was too busy. Overall, I had eight willing participants who agreed to be a part of the study and interview sessions were scheduled and conducted with each participant.

At the beginning of the interview sessions, I read the participant consent forms to the participants and obtained their signatures. During the interview sessions, I read each of the discipline scenarios to the participants and they were asked to respond to the

questions objectively, honestly, and keeping in mind how their actions and decisions could potentially influence the outcome of the scenarios. I wanted the participants to deeply reflect on how they would react and respond if they experienced similar circumstances and provide their personal perspectives and viewpoints. The interview protocol consisted of 16 various student discipline scenarios on the following sections: Disciplinary Skills & Dispositions (6), Behavioral Management Support (3), School Climate (3), Student Academic Support (2), and Teacher & Staff Support (2). These different sections were determined as the result of the research and literature on this topic. After the scenarios were answered, the participants responded to the demographic questions (see Table I).

In order to adequately capture the responses, all interview sessions were audio recorded via EVISTR digital audio voice recorder with the participants' consent. The duration of the interview sessions lasted between 27:21 (minutes/seconds) and 1:26:12 (hour/minutes/seconds). The average participant interview duration was 41.07 (minutes/seconds). Participants were provided the time desired to respond to each scenario. As the interviewer, my goal was to be fully present, listen attentively, and allow participants to respond freely without interruption, or asking leading questions. I took field notes during the sessions to capture details of the interview sessions.

After each interview session, as mentioned previously, I documented my experiences by reflective journaling. Reflective journaling is a method that can ensure qualitative researchers implement reflectivity (Darawsheh, 2014). Reflectivity allows researchers to focus on their own personal feelings, observations, and insights on a

specific topic, which helps to decrease biases from being injected into the study. It is important for researchers who conduct qualitative studies to remain unbiased so that the results of the study will be untainted and reflect the true experiences of the participants. I used reflectivity as I conducted my data collection, which allowed analytical self-reflection to ensure my own thoughts, assumptions, and biases were not imposed in the study.

The generic qualitative approach and inquiry allowed me to utilize discipline scenarios to inquire about possible student discipline occurrences. During the interview sessions with the participants, I listened to the responses and I verified their statements summarized and repeated some of the responses in order for me to gain a clear understanding of the participants' experiences. This concept is known as member checking which can be done in many ways, such as during the interviews, after the interviews via phone with the participants, via email notification to the participants, or via follow-up meeting sessions with the participants.

I conducted member checking at the time of the interviews to have immediate accuracy of the participants' experiences. This process required the use of active and attentive listening on the interviewer's part in order to accurately relay the information back to the participant. Member checking on the spot during the interviews enabled me to immediately start reviewing the responses for emergent themes. Also, for convenience purposes and due to the rigorous schedules of the administrator participants, additional meetings of the participants were not required to review the information after transcriptions of the audio recordings were completed. Member checking also allowed

an opportunity for participants to further clarify or add to any important details of the their responses. Before I started the interview questioning, I verbally notified each participant that I would incorporate member checking throughout the interview process, and they consented.

Data Analysis

After data collection, I proceeded to organize all sources of data including interview field notes, protocols, observations, and reflective journaling. I made file folders for each participant and labeled the folders P1, P2, P3, etc. Each participant folder consisted of the signed participant consent form, the interview protocol, field notes from the interview session, and my reflective journaling notes. This organization of the physical documents allowed me to easily refer to this information during the data analysis process. After organization of the documents, I personally transcribed the audio-recorded interviews. It would have been faster to employ an outside source for this task, but I wanted to be fully immersed in the data to allow a deeper understanding of the participant experiences as I read and transcribed. Also, by transcribing my own interview protocols, I was able to depict codes and themes that were emergent through the data. The transcriptions were typed and as Microsoft Word documents and saved on my personal computer.

I created a Microsoft Excel workbook to help manage my data. I chose this route instead of utilizing a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis system (CAQDAS). CAQDAS are designed to assist with data management, not data analysis. Ultimately, researchers must dissect and analyze their own data. Microsoft Excel was a perfect tool

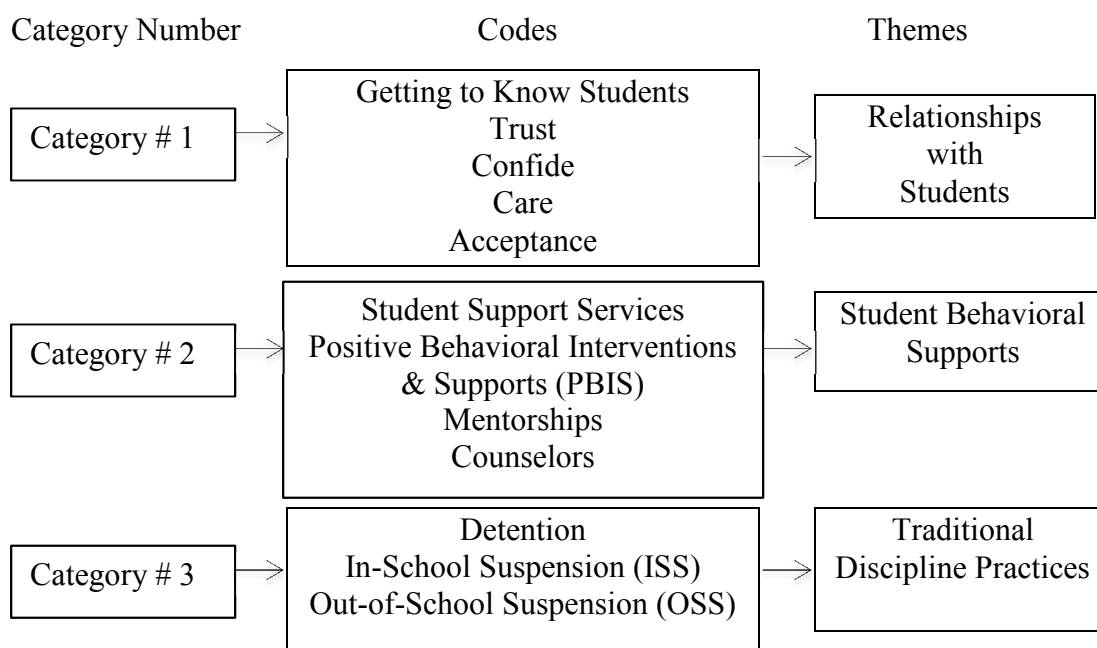
for my data management because the data was not overwhelming and it was very manageable without having to utilize a qualitative software program. The Microsoft Excel workbook was created with a separate spreadsheet for each discipline scenario. Then, I copied each participant's responses to the discipline scenarios from the transcriptions created in Microsoft Word and pasted on each sheet in Microsoft Excel. With this method, I was able to view all of the participants' responses for each discipline scenario on one spreadsheet. This organization of the data allowed me to easily depict codes, patterns, and themes for the discipline scenarios for the participants individually, and among the participants. I color-coded participant phrases and word patterns to help determine similarities and differences in the data.

Coding Process

A generic qualitative approach allowed for a broad understanding of participants' personal experiences. Since this approach is considered interpretative, the participants in my study were able to reflect how their own actions influence student behavior. This falls in line with the social learning and labeling theoretical frameworks in regard to how school administrators can positively or negatively affect student behavior in the school setting. I used content data analysis to identify the participants' deep experiences of the student discipline phenomenon. Content analysis was appropriate in the data analysis process because it allowed me to use open codes and themes that emerged from the participants' experiences. I conducted line-by-line hand coding to extract codes and themes of each scenario for each participant and across all the participants. With this process, I highlighted similarities, differences, and outliers in the data that may have been

missed through the transcribing process. The code-recode method in the transcription process and during the line-by-line hand coding allowed for double-checking of further codes that may emerge throughout the data analysis process (Houghton et al., 2013).

In qualitative studies, data analysis begins in the data collection phase and is ongoing until the researcher has determined no new information can be identified (Saldaña, 2011). After in-depth content analysis, open coding, and the code-recode process I determined no other codes, themes, or patterns were emergent from the data. The participants provided thoughtful, rich, and detailed responses to the discipline scenarios, which led to the identified codes. Then, I assigned categories to each set of codes and associated themes to easily connect and identify the data. The codes and themes are displayed in Figure 1.



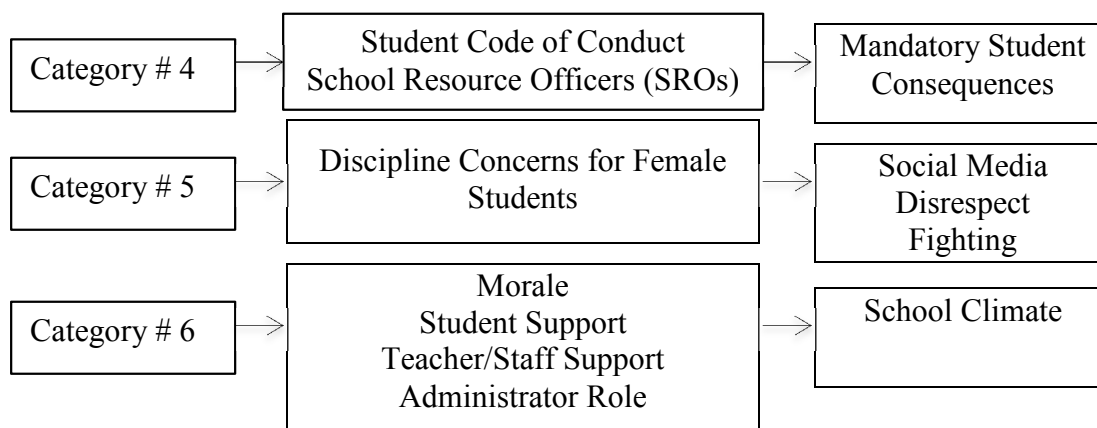


Figure 1. Categorical coding and thematic outcomes

The codes that emerged from the data were determined by the responses from the participants after listening to the audio recordings of the interviews, transcribing, and understanding the participants' experiences with the phenomenon. Examining the patterns and key words to find commonalities in the codes derived the thematic outcomes. Specific phrases, statements, and wording of the participants lead to these findings in the data.

Presentation of the Findings

Category #1 - Theme: Relationships with Students

When participants responded to scenarios regarding student discipline or negative behavior, most participants replied building and maintaining positive relationships with students are important and must be fostered in the school environment.

P1 commented, "I think that counseling and getting to know kids, and building relationships is probably one of the most important things you can do."

P2 followed that same line of thought regarding investigating a discipline situation in one of the scenarios, “Again it goes back to the relationships that you have with your students. Figure out what happened at home, ya know, maybe even talk to mom, or dad, or whoever is involved with her, grandma, whoever it is and try to figure out what is going on.”

In response to discipline scenario 9, P3 stated, “I always try to make sure they are trying to understand kids, trying to build those relationships.” In regards to having an adult in the school setting for students when they need support or guidance, P4 questioned “Is there any other entrusted adult this kid has in the building?” P4, further stated, “In junior high they got to have a connection where they feel valued.”

P5 explained in response to scenario 3, that depicts a school employee that made a derogatory statement about a Black student, “I would say they need to try and get to know their kids. You don’t know what their background is, you don’t know what’s going on at their homes, you don’t know what’s going on with their family, you don’t know what’s going on here at school, it’s try and get to know them, go to some of their activities, let them know that you care and give them a second change, everybody makes mistakes.”

Discipline scenario 8, detailed a situation where a female student was receiving counseling services from a counselor, and

P6 responded, “And hopes that you are building a relationship, because they want to build relationships and do all this, but are we actually getting to the guidance piece of what should be happening here. Then, talking to the student as well because the student

may say something like I don't trust her or I don't like her, or I told her this and she responded this way, and I didn't appreciate it. So, it may be a case where someone else needs to provide that guidance. Umm, I like to ask a kid who is the one adult on this campus that you feel like you can trust and go to. Because they know, they usually have someone that they talk to. They have at least one adult, for the most part. Most kids will have at least one adult that they can talk too that they like or they trust."

P7 responded to scenario 6 regarding a female student misbehaving and trying to leave the school ground, "...then again it's about the relationship rapport that you have with the students. For me I would definitely let her have her moment, as long as she doesn't get too out of pocket with it as far as being disrespectful or disruptive."

Further, P8 reported on scenario 12 addressing a female student whom brought a weapon to school. "We are missing the boat if we don't say if something is going on come to the office, and building relationships with all kids so they know they can come to us and tell us. So I believe that in my perfect world, with this scenario, Michelle would have known that she should come to someone."

Throughout the interviews with the participants, relationship building with the student was one of the most profound themes that emerged from the interviews. Even across the various discipline scenarios, the importance of student relationship appeared in the majority of the participants' responses. Also many of the participants mentioned the importance of fostering engaging relationships with female students with behavioral and discipline challenges.

Category #2 - Theme: Student Behavioral Supports

In lieu of assigning traditional discipline consequences and in line with the requirements of S.B. 107- Designation of a Campus Behavior Coordinator, many of the participants were in favor of implementing student support interventions to help re-direct behavior versus assigning punitive consequences first and foremost. This theme is supported by comments made during the participant interviews.

P1 stated that effective counseling might be helpful with the right person, "...One of the things with a counselor that I think is most important is a relationship, and if a counselor and student don't have a strong relationship it's hard to make improvement from that avenue. So, the first is to start looking around to see if anybody else was able to make positive end roads, and that's where we would go first." This relationship piece goes back to Category 1, addressing relationships with students. When responding to scenario 7 regarding a female student with ongoing discipline issues, P2 stated, "We also have Safety Net here to where we have a counselor to come in once a week; make sure she's (female student) referred to that, so she can work in a group setting. We also have communities in schools, hook her up with communities in schools, and try to find something that is going to click. Try to find something that she can get involved with, maybe that she is not involved in school maybe finding some way that she can connect to school, and kind of go from there."

In addition to providing counseling to female students with discipline issues, many Participants advised they would support mentorship for the students.

P3 replied...”my first step would be to find those teacher leaders within the schools, identify teacher mentors, identify community mentors that are willing to come and work with our kids.”

P4 added being a mentor as an administrator; “I try to look at this role as, with difficult teachers, difficult parents, difficult students. I try to be a coach, I try to mentor, I try to be a coach.” In addition, many of the participants stated that they would contact their Student Services Department for additional supports for students. For instance, in the scenario addressing a homeless female student who continuously sleeps in class,

P6 responded, “We have a homeless student, but then we also need to pull in Student Services, the District’s Student Services because they certainly have resources that we don’t have on the campus. So, it’s about calling Student Services and doing a staffing for this particular kid to figure out how to best serve her.”

P7 added in response to the same scenario, “Well, knowing that we know her situation, it would be where I would see what we could do, possibly get Priscilla some additional support. Student Services is also a good resource for us to see what we can do to help out her cause.”

For the female students with continuous discipline issues, some participants responded that behavioral management systems like PBIS have worked for them in the past and would recommend this program in some of the scenarios. On the scenario regarding implementation of the new role of CBC and instructing the staff on the S.B.

P2 replied, "I think we would go ahead and do that through our PBIS team Positive Behavior Intervention Support team. We have, on that we have our Ambassador Teams and so I think that would be a great way, in a small group setting to talk about any changes that need to happen. What it means to have the Campus Behavior Coordinator there, doesn't really change that much, it's just a title basically."

P5, in response to the discipline scenario regarding consequences of ISS and OSS are not working well for a female student and she continues to act out, stated, "I would probably call the parents and have a conference, then I would probably call, we have PBIS. I would call our PBIS, the person over it and go hey we have tried these things, they are not working do you have any other suggestions for us on what we can do because we always want to work with kids and their families before we have to send them anywhere. So, I would probably talk to the parents and go through our higher-ups in the district and go Hey we are having this issue."

Other participants stated various ways behavior and discipline techniques may be applied.

P5 stated, "And then I would take all that and try and implement some other things. We do Wednesday schools to where kids have to stay until 5:00 with one of us. We do peer mediation, detention, we've done community service if the parents are okay with that, which just you know raking the courtyard, restorative circles." In response to discipline scenario 4 regarding an African American student who will not comply with teacher and continues to disrupt the class setting,

P8 replied, “I would probably recommend our mentoring program that we are actually starting based on our African American female numbers where we have strong building leaders that are African American females that are leading this group. So, I would get her involved in a group like that.” Overall, the participants shared similar and different approaches they utilize to help support student behavior.

Category #3 - Theme: Traditional Discipline Practices

This theme addresses how administrators currently utilize the traditional discipline consequences of detention, ISS, and OSS to manage student discipline. As the research indicates many school administrators are using these exclusionary consequences in public schools today. Many of the participants in this study utilize a combination of behavioral management techniques and traditional practices to manage student discipline. P1 responded on student discipline scenario 7, and stated, “Well for me if I’ve got a student that is in my office that often, we’ve got a relationship so, we’re able to talk and I think at that point I’ve become more of a coach and a mentor, I hope to be, to where if ISS and OSS and those other things aren’t working it’s more positive reinforcement.”

Similarly, in response to scenario 1 where Peggy strikes Susie for name calling and teasing, P2 replied, “we would need to also make sure that Peggy would be OSS’d of course for striking Susie. Then, when she came back on campus, then we would do peer mediation with the two so that we could reach a resolution.” P3’s view on this is, “Often times when I use a traditional discipline action it more gives the teacher a break or giving the student. Like I just assigned OSS to a kid – it’s more to let things time die down for a few days. Then when they get back then we will put in some more different stuff like

mentorship things like that to get the kids involved.” P4 would take a data approach before implementing new intervention strategies in response to scenario 2, “First, I would check to see, one has that traditional method been effective? I want to look at data, discipline data trends. You know if ISS numbers have gone up and ISS is not working, if OSS numbers is still going up versus going down, then that method is not working.” In regards to scenario 7, where a female student is continuously disruptive in the school setting,

P5 shared, “But if it is a continuous pattern she probably would be OSS’d for a while, and then unfortunately, she might have to go to alternative school for persistent misbehavior.”

P6 responded to the scenario 2 regarding traditional discipline practices, “If the administrators are consistent with how they are assigning the discipline. What steps, are their any pre-steps, or is it just straight to ISS, OSS.” “Sometimes it’s easy to miss that counseling piece, or just to not implement that counseling piece.” Further, P7 stated, “Because a lot of times they (students) are okay with In-School Suspension, but they don’t want their lunch taken away from them, because lunch is the time to socialize, relax, and be free. It may be a situation where I assign more lunch detentions instead of the In-School Suspensions.”

Whereas, P8 replied to scenario 1, “For the striking of another student Peggy would be disciplined for a safety transgression for some kind of physical altercation. Probably depending on the severity of it, between ISS and OSS.”

There were various participant responses across discipline scenarios in regards to assigning traditional discipline, in addition to, or versus behavioral management interventions.

Category #4 - Theme: Mandatory Discipline Consequences

Category #3 provided traditional disciplinary consequences that are discretionary options for school administrators, per the student code of conduct. Serious student offenses warrant mandatory removals to alternative schools or other required discipline action. Mandatory consequences are also governed by the student code of conduct for the public school district where this study was conducted. Some of the participants responded on various scenarios regarding mandatory consequences.

In response to scenario 12, where a female student brings a pocketknife to school, P1 stated, “Well, unfortunately with a pocket knife, would be a prohibited item on campus. So depending on the size of the pocketknife could warrant criminal charges, so we’ll deal with that situation first. Also, deal with the counseling perspective of what kind of outlets she can have in order to avoid feeling like she needs to bring a knife to school.”

P4 responded to scenario 7, when faced with a disruptive female student, “I’m running out of options. I know ya’ll are use to weapons, drugs on campus being in alternative school, but you are about to turn into persistent misbehavior. Well nothing I’m doing is working, so if persistent misbehavior is going to continue for you... then maybe for you I need to send you to alternative school.” So, alternative school is still an option for students who commit non-serious offenses.

P5 revealed in response the knife scenario 7, “If it was an illegal knife, I would have to get the police involved...per our Code of Conduct. And I have had a student bring an illegal knife because they were scared of walking home, and we had to, and I hated to do it (send student to alternative school), but I was like sweetie I am so sorry. I have no choice in this matter. I have to get the police involved and you are going to be expelled for a year.”

Alternatively, P6 responded to the same scenario, “the pocketknife itself, even though it’s not allowed on campus, but it is not an illegal weapon, so the fact that she has the pocketknife, you would think that is the greatest concern. But, the greatest concern is she has intent to use the pocketknife, and so we would, that’s where that counseling piece comes into play again, so that’s where you want to really talk to Stacey to see what has been going on, what has been said, what has been done at this point.”

P7 added, “She was bringing the weapon as a means to attack. Whether she is defending herself or not, she is bringing a weapon instead of using her own hands. But, definitely following the Code of Conduct that would definitely be alternative school placement.”

Then, P8 replied regarding the same scenario, “She still made a bad choice, there is a consequence for bringing the pocket knife, whether it is In-School Suspension with the traditional method, then that is that. But, the investigation is going to continue, find out about the threats, and the fight, and consequences would happen for both kids, and I would do an extra push with educating the entire school population that if something is going on, come let us help you handle it.” “...And for the pocketknife it would be

discretionary In-School Suspension or Out-of-school Suspension that would not be a mandatory. We basically follow the state laws for discipline as far as removal from the classroom setting.” Some of the participants indicated that in regards to the serious offenses, school resource officers are utilized for safety purposes.

Category #5 - Theme: Discipline Concerns for Female Students

During the interview sessions with the participants, there were many discipline concerns that were mentioned for female student in the junior high setting. Some of the main discipline offenses that the participants revealed for female students were fighting, social media misuse/bullying, and general disrespect of authority.

P1 shared, “So just to know that not just the stealing, fighting, and bullying that I see there is some thing to grow from that you do on a regular basis. I think it’s just because a lot of times with a kid like that, that’s all they know and that’s all they know to get attention.”

P2 added, in response to scenario 1, regarding a female student teasing another, and leading to striking by the other female student, “So we would want to make sure that we are working with both girls, even talking with the group of friends, because we know that friends can stir things up, with social media out there as well that can keep things stirred up.”

P3 responded that there is an increase in student discipline and stated that, “I would think typically your white girls are typically more verbal and more emotionally abusive versus I would say your African American girls. And definitely your African American girls are more aggressive physically. Versus maybe your white girls are more

aggressive on words, or making things, getting a picture and crying, and making you look worse than you are. So things like that. And then I would say your Hispanics are somewhere in the middle on that.”

Also, for Scenario 1, P4 added, “I tell them like right now there are spaces that you cannot invade, (giggle), someone’s verbal space, their physical space, and I’d have to say digital space. Don’t bother them on social media, snap chat.” “Also, have to let my students know, especially my little girls, my junior high girls, I get what you’re doing.” P4 also suggested the importance of attitude among female student, “When you’re around here rolling your eyes just a little bit, being disrespectful just a little bit, you’re putting that seed in the ground. When it comes back up it’s not the same size as the seed you put in the ground. It’s big. That’s what your reaping now from every corner of the building. But, what if you showed just a little smile, a little niceness every now and then. How much bigger would happiness blossom up in your life”?

When asked what is the biggest challenge with female students,

P5 responded, “I would say the biggest things I deal with female students is gossip.” As far as race of female student and discipline, P5 stated, “I would say for Blacks and Hispanics it’s more at school. Like, so and so is saying this about you, and for the whites I think it’s more on social media, and it doesn’t seem to hit school as much.”

P6 stated, “Girls always get in trouble, they are full of drama at this age. Always something going on with girls so I can’t say that there has been an increase with the discipline between girls and boys. I think it’s pretty balanced. What I will that I have

noticed an increase in is, use to see, mainly the African American girls who were getting in trouble, but now, and Hispanic. I'll say African American and Hispanic girls, but I think the tide has kind of changed and no one is off limits, and we're seeing an increase in Caucasian females, an increase in Asian females, with these behaviors."

P7 replied about female student discipline challenges and race, "I think it's across the board, but I would say our minorities definitely have more of a challenge with it. Here the Hispanics out number everybody, so that just seems more prominent now because that is our highest representation. But, minorities for sure."

P8 stated there has been an increase in female discipline issues, "This year at this campus, it has been African American females. It has been mostly gross insubordination and disrespect and fighting, drama among themselves, among the group. Compared to last year if we looked at the numbers, yes, that is hands down the biggest growth."

Category #6 - Theme: School Climate

The overall climate of a school can affect student behavior, student academics, and teacher/staff morale can be positively and negatively impacted. Researchers have shown that school administrators can highly influence the school environment. The participants in this study were able to shed light on the school climate theme.

P1 responded to Scenario 16 regarding a seasoned teacher wanting to quit due to various discipline issues in her classroom. P1 stated, "You just become the motivator at that point and to make sure their still in it, that their heart is still in it, because it is a tough job, and there is nothing wrong with doing something else. Because not everyone is cut

out to do this all their lives. So I would just try to be a motivator to make sure that their heart is still in it.”

In regards to Scenario 14 where a student is homeless and needs support, P1 would also provide motivational support to students, “But, just knowing that Priscilla has support, I think that will help her be a little bit more motivated rather than try and shut down knowing that nobody really understands her.”

P2 shared that relationships and morale go hand-in-hand, “So you would need to make sure, you would go ahead and talk with the staff. Start getting a feel for how they feel. Start giving them the tools to start building the relationships with the kids. Then, figure out ways for help building morale. So just finding fun simple ways to kind of start building that sense of community. Giving them the tools that they need to help them start building communities in their classrooms, as well. Then talking about ways to do alternative types of discipline.”

P3 shared that celebrating even small accomplishments help boost morale, “I think number one you need to start finding celebrations. I think too often times we look at test scores as the end of the all. I do believe that test scores are important. I think the standardized testing is important, but at the same time if I’ve got a group of kids that’s getting 40% on a test well Ok that looks bad. But what if similar kids across the state only get 30s. Well that 40 need to be celebrated. If you’ve got kids like that and finding those celebrations doesn’t mean you ignore the negative. But I think really finding those celebrations and getting the morale high.”

P4 also believes in celebrating to increase morale, “You may need some day forums, you may need some lunch forums, you may need some evening forums. But, they need to know we need you, we need to hear your voice. Same thing for the teachers, we need to hear from the teachers what is it that they really want. Then celebrate the successes, when things happen, don’t go, ‘should have, better have.’ Celebrate, you know, this week we had fifty more kids on the honor roll, and we had two less kids in the front office. But, we need to celebrate, we need to pause and celebrate.”

P5 replied about morale, “The first thing I would do is talk to the teachers in groups, talk to the PTA, and go what’s going on? What do you think is happening? What do you need? What support do you need? What is working with the kids? What doesn’t work with the kids? Try to find out what teachers are really strong with their discipline and maybe have them lead the staff development. “And then I would go to my PTA and my community and you know do you have gift certificates that I can give to my teachers? Do you have prizes that I can give to my kids? So, as administrators when we see our teachers at duty, or doing the right things in the hallways we give them a ticket and they get prizes just as much, and they love Starbucks gift cards (laughter) and I spend my own money on staff, so I would probably buy stuff with my own money.

P6 stated, “Coming here to this campus, and this is my fifth year here morale was important for us and building community was important and so I think you have to, you can come in and say we are going to do this, this, and this for morale. But, I think you have to start with a team, you need to identify some people who are invested in building morale, and building a sense of community here.”

P7 regarding Scenario 16, the teacher wanting to leave her job, “So, I’ve always encouraged people who don’t feel like teaching is no longer for them to do what they feel is best because we want the students to be successful. And you don’t have the love for it you cannot convince your kids to have a love what it is you are trying to teach them. So, it’s just giving them a means for support to do whatever they feel is best, taking the blame off the students and putting it more on them as the adults and making the decision that is right for them.”

P8 stated in order to boost morale, “We start small, we start with everyday things, then we start with celebrations, and we really focus on those celebrations. We need to make sure we have the right staff in place. Our leaders, who need to be leading, even in our team, our team leaders, or department heads, are they the right people? Are they the positive people?”

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

In this study credibility was accomplished, as I was able to gain participation and conduct thorough and a sufficient number of eight interviews with participants at a local public school. Saturation was obtained by the sixth participant as I started hearing similarities and overlap in the participant responses, but I wanted to guarantee saturation, so I accepted two more interested participants.

Transferability

I wanted to ensure transferability of my study to increase trustworthiness.

Transferability refers to the ability to achieve similar results if the study was replicated

with similar participants and constructs. For this study, I am confident if this study was conducted in a different school district, the school administrators or CBCs would respond would respond to the discipline scenarios very similarly. Therefore, the study results are likely to be applicable to middle/junior high school administrators in other school districts in Texas.

Dependability

Dependability was achieved via code-recode procedures to ensure the coding in the data analysis process is consistent and accurate (Houghton et al., 2013). Double-checking the coding throughout the data collection and data content analysis process allowed a great level of accuracy for identifying emerging codes and themes. Also, the participants were asked the same questions to allow consistency with obtaining the true experiences of the participants.

Confirmability

I utilized reflexivity throughout the data collection and data analysis stages of the study. My own experiences and knowledge of student discipline were not interjected into the experiences of the participants. Also, I utilized member checking during the interviews to allow for feedback from the participants on the accuracy of the information and answers to the discipline scenarios.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I presented the data collection process of the eight participant interviews, data analysis procedures were identified, the setting of the interviews were described, information about participant demographics was provided, and the methods

used for evidence of trustworthiness were identified. Participants in this study provided thorough, detailed, and thoughtful responses to the student discipline scenarios. Data content analysis of the interviews was used to determine emergent codes and themes throughout data collection and analysis. There were several codes for each of the six main themes that emerged from the interviews, pertaining to the main research question of the study. Chapter 5 details the data interpretation, recommendations for future research, positive social change impact, and overall findings of the study.

Chapter 5: Interpretations, Limitations, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions of school administrators regarding student discipline management of female students in a middle/junior high school environment. Specifically, with Senate Bill 107, school administrators are specifically responsible for effectively managing all aspects of student discipline in public school districts in Texas. My study focused on middle/junior high school students due to high prevalence of disciplinary offenses that occur with this age group. In addition, female juvenile delinquency and student discipline issues in the school setting have become a concern. Due to the high number of student discipline referrals of African American female students (Blake et al., 2017), my study sought to examine school administrator perceptions regarding student discipline issues. According to Barrett et al. (2015), there is a concern for females that are entering the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

The qualitative generic approach was used in this study and allowed the use of scenarios or vignettes as the interview protocol to gather participant responses. Discipline scenarios described likely situations derived from research that could possibly occur in the middle school setting involving female students. Interview sessions were conducted face-to face with eight assistant principals at six junior high schools in a public urban school district in Texas. The participants responded to the scenarios and provided rich detail regarding their roles and daily experiences with discipline management of female students. As a result of the interviews, data analysis was conducted and six

themes were identified and determined to be critical for school administrators in the role of student disciplinarians. The six themes that were identified include, Category#1 - Relationships with Students, Category #2 - Student Behavioral Supports, Category #3 - Traditional Discipline Practices, Category #4 - Mandatory Discipline Consequences, Category #5 - Discipline Concerns for Female Students, and Category #6 - School Climate.

Administrators identified these important themes as they manage student discipline issues in their current roles. As an instrument in the study, I ensured participant confidentiality and evidence of trustworthiness was met in the data collection and data analysis stages of this study. Further, in Chapter 5, I interpret the findings of the study, discuss the limitations presented, and offer future recommendations for this topic.

Interpretation of the Findings

Chapter 4 detailed the participants' experiences and perceptions of discipline management of female students. In Chapter 5, I interpret the data that was collected and analyzed from the interviews with the participants. The findings were reviewed to understand how the data impacts or informs the field, and determine the need for further research. Data findings and interpretation of the data are in line with the research question for this study.

Research Question

RQ: What are the perspectives of CBCs regarding the role of student discipline management in regard to female middle school students?

Theoretical Foundations

There were two main theoretical frameworks that set the foundation for this study. Bandura's social learning theory was instrumental and allowed the understanding of how school administrators, teachers, and other school staff have the ability to positively or negatively influence students. Social learning occurs and can be applied to various settings and environments. The public middle/junior high school setting is the focus for this study, which involve social interactions among students and staff. It is important that school administrators, teachers, and other school staff communicate effectively and foster positive relationships with students, because students learn behavior and model the behavior of adults and role models (Lineweaver et al., 2017).

In tandem with social learning theory, it was important to examine how adult actions and influence can be positive or negative, so I incorporated the labeling theory as an important theoretical framework. Becker's labeling theory examined the way society views behavior and provides a stigma or label for that specific behavior (Gold & Richards, 2012, p. 144). Labeling, especially when addressing student behavior, can be overlooked, or done implicitly or explicitly. Whether implicit or explicit, often students with behavioral issues are identified as defiant, deviant, criminal, or at-risk (Restivo & Lanier, 2015). School administrators should be aware and understand that having biases and labeling students with behavioral issues is not conducive for fostering a supportive relationship. According to Lansu et al. (2013), labeling often leads to negative perceptions and biases. In this study, together the social learning and the labeling

theories allowed an examination regarding how school administrators have the authority to positively influence students through their own actions and behaviors.

The interview protocol incorporated situations that allowed the participants to address how their influence, actions, and behaviors can impact students. The participants shared detailed knowledge regarding how they would address student discipline issues for female students, and the impact that their own actions have on student behavior. Several themes were derived from the data shared by the participants.

Themes

There were six major themes that emerged as a result of the data collected from the participants. Thematic outcomes were derived from line-by-line coding, hand coding analysis, and specific key words of the participants. Throughout data collection, the participants provided thorough responses to the scenarios and I was able to capture how administrators in this role would address discipline concerns of female students. Chapter 4 presented the themes and detailed specific responses and statements quoted by the participants. In this section, I detail each theme as previously identified and interpret the findings in relation to the previous research on the topic, the current research question presented in this study, and the theoretical foundations of the study.

Category #1 - Theme: Relationships with Students

Positive relationships with students were one of the most overarching themes that was identified in the data. Building positive student relationships relates with student academic and behavioral success. Positive relationships with students foster school environments conducive for learning (Sukyirun, 2016). Students come from many

different upbringings and home environments, and may not come to school with the social skills that are required to have successful relationships with peers and adults. Therefore, schools are responsible for educating students academically and socially (Kim, 2016). To support the findings that teaching social skills are important for student success, some participants agreed that social skills must be taught.

P1 stated, “They do have social classes over there (alternative school), and so they work with them there, and then when they return to the campus, our crisis counselor comes in and continues to work with them on social skills as well.” In addition P5 commented, “they are kids and we need to remember that they are kids, and yes we are going to give them consequences for their behavior, but we also need to teach them, because not all of them come to us with the proper social skills.” P2 added, “All of them are our kids and you really have to establish a relationship and get to know our kids, get to know who they are, understand where they are coming from. There are certain environments where using your fists is a way to solve problems. So, it’s basically kind of up to us to start teaching that there are other ways to solve problems besides beating someone’s brains out.”

Researchers have shown that children learn social skills and behavior by observing adults (Lineweaver et al, 2017). Therefore, CBCs as discipline managers are required to be aware of their own behaviors and actions, even when addressing difficult discipline situations. When discipline situations get out of control, it may be difficult for administrators to respond calmly, but some of the participants in this study shared their experiences.

P3 stated, when responding to a scenario with an upset female student, “sometimes some of the cool air or nice cool breeze or maybe less in Texas some hot air. I would walk out with her I think sometimes all of us just need a moment. And to be honest, if I’m having a bad day maybe it would good for me to just go walk with her.”

P6 commented, that if she is feeling frustrated, she will not immediately handle the discipline issue until she has had some time to reflect, “I might go fix some coffee, I’m going to sit down, I’m going to put my things up. I’m not going to address it immediately because I’m still talking myself through being frustrated and getting here (to school). So, I would just say Lisa give me a little bit and I’ll be with you, and I’ve done that before, for whatever reason.”

P7 added, in response to an upset female student attempting to leave the school building, “Well, one thing that I can say about myself, because I have a pretty calm demeanor, so something like that wouldn’t shake me at all. But, definitely would try to, I wouldn’t make a scene in trying to go and get her. As loud as she left, is as calmly I would go after just because I don’t want to draw more attention to the whole situation.”

As mentioned in the presentation of the findings, establishing those critical relationships was important for the majority of the participants. Overall, this theme required deep self-reflection of the participants to examine their own experiences with students. Studies show that adults modeling positive behaviors can help change student negative behaviors (Soh, 2017). From the participant responses in this study and past research, it can be concluded that school administrators influence and impact student behaviors by their interactions with students. Teaching students social skills will help

foster positive relationships and can have a major influence on students in the school setting.

Category #2 - Theme: Student Behavioral Supports

Students with behavioral issues, including female students, need individualized interventions and supports in order to be successful. There are a myriad of behavioral supports that public school districts have implemented in their schools, as identified by this theme. Student behavior can improve significantly as a result of behavior management programs and interventions (Evanovich & Scott, 2016). In addition, S.B. 107 - Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator, stated:

The campus behavior coordinator shall respond by employing appropriate discipline management techniques consistent with the student code under Section 37.001 that can reasonably be expected to improve the student's behavior before returning the student to the classroom. If the student's behavior does not improve, the campus behavior coordinator shall employ alternative discipline management techniques, including any progressive interventions designated as the responsibility of the campus behavior coordinator in the student code of conduct (TEC, 2018).

There are various behavioral techniques, interventions, and programs that can help support student behavior. Some of the behavioral programs include SEL, RTI, SWPBIS, RD, and mindfulness techniques. School districts and administrators may choose to use one or more multiple techniques to assist with behavior support for students. Participants in my study were willing to share that their school district currently

utilizes Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) as a discipline management resource, specifically P2, P5, P6, & P8.

P2 commented, “We do have our Positive Behavior Intervention System Committee in place at our school, and so we meet monthly to discuss things. If this was a new role for me then I would definitely want to be in on those meetings to start getting the feel for what changes might need to be made and working with the teachers.”

P6 added, “So, it is important I think to kind of gage where everyone is and look at what pre-steps are in place, before trying to recommend those other practices we can put in place, like those restorative, those PBIS practices because I think the teachers need to understand why. And that is a conversation that we’re always having with teachers. Why didn’t this kid get ISS? Because it’s hard for them to see that he/she has already had five days of ISS, and it’s not working. They just want to see them punished. Whereas, our goal is to/should be able to restore and rehab, so to speak, so they are not continuing the same behaviors, which should be the goal to stop the behavior, and the traditional practices don’t always do that.” P6 also mentioned, “For PBIS we have a committee called our Paw Patrol. Those are the teachers that are totally sold out on the idea of PBIS. They are the hype men and women, and so identify your morale team, your hype men and women.”

Behavioral intervention programs may be beneficial for students with behavioral issues. Implementation of new programs like PBIS may not be readily accepted by all staff (Feuerborn et al., 2016). There will be hesitancy and pushback with implementation of any new program. But, researchers show that schools may receive more support and

buy-in from staff if they are properly trained and fully supported regarding the behavioral program (Meyer & Behar-Horenstein, 2015). The participants in this study have identified the importance of buy-in from the staff; additionally student buy-in is important to incorporating behavioral management programs (Evans, 2017).

Participants in this study shared their ideas on implementing strategies and trying to accomplish buy-in from teachers and other staff.

P2 stated, “Talking to them about having the students have buy-in into the policies and procedures going on in the classroom. And then talk to the students about doing goal setting in the classroom as well, with learning. So that you’re starting to have more buy-in from the students with their learning, and them seeing that they can be successful. But, then having the teachers understand they’ve got to be firm and fair and consistent with their kids too. That they can’t just go willy nilly on enforcing different things. But get teacher buy-in, have them get their students buy-in in the different classrooms, and it’s going to be a long process, it’s not going to happen overnight. But, just start implementing little things to help change the climate of the school.”

P3 stated, “Then there’s also sometimes people you have to often get rid of. There’s just those people that when you get the ball rolling they’re trying to push back. And you’ve got to get that critical mass moving in the right direction and people don’t want to be part of that critical mass.”

P4 commented, “Ya know if you take away the ISS and OSS, what are other options. If I create all the options I’m not going to have buy-in from the staff or teachers. But you have to have the buy-in from various people, and then you do want to bring in

(as part of a planning committee), some gung-ho anything you say type of people, because they are going to help bring the right energy. But, if you can turn that critical naysayer, if you can turn that corner with them, then out there you've got it won. You got to have them on the planning part. If you leave them out, then they'll lead without a title.”

The current research and the perspectives of the participants in this study supported this theme, and the consensus is that behavioral management programs are imperative for supporting students with behavioral issues. The constructs for implementing behavioral programs should be based on the school dynamics, and specific needs of individual students. Also, another level of student support involve fostering positive relationships with students, which was prevalent for many of the participants in this study. Behavioral management support programs are in demand, but must be efficiently implemented and supported over time to achieve desired results.

Category #3 - Theme: Traditional Discipline Practices

Many public school districts, including school districts in Texas, use disciplinary consequences, such as ISS, OSS, detention, and removal to an alternative school setting. But, punitive consequences prove to be ineffective in changing student behavior (Steinberg & Laco, 2017). Also, the more time students spend outside of the school-learning environment, particularly with OSS, the more instructional time students lose. Some participants in this study agree that traditional discipline practices do not always work. But, if these traditional practices are utilized, some of the participants mentioned

discipline consequences should be assigned equitably, fair, and consistent among all children.

P1 mentioned, “I think, it’s making sure that you’re equitable, because like I mentioned before, there are so many variables that go into managing student behavior, and building relationships on that and making sure that you’re making a difference to where there is change in the behavior, so I think that a lot of times teachers may feel that they are not supported, but they don’t always hear the entire conversation, it’s always happening behind the scenes, to where that should have warranted ISS, where really at this point may not have been the best way to go.”

P2 revealed, “But, then having the teachers understand they’ve got to be firm and fair and consistent with their kids too.”

P3 shared, “Again, I think you should self-reflect if you’re using OSS and ISS that much on a kid anyway. But if that’s your discipline for the kid, really, I think the self-reflect is going to be there. But looking for a way for her to get involved. Finding that strength of hers or finding the weakness and seeing how we can build it up.”

P6 responded, regarding managing student discipline in general, “And hoping you are doing what’s best, what’s right, understanding that fair is not always equal, and I think that’s the hardest.”

P7 stated, “Well, I think the most important thing is to be firm, fair, and consistent.”

But, there are times when assigning traditional consequences seem more appropriate, according to P2, “We already, ya know, I am not one to slam kids into ISS or

OSS, if we can find alternative ways to discipline then that is what I like to do.

Obviously, there are going to be situations where you have to do traditional ISS or OSS, like fighting.”

Discipline consequences must be equitable and fair for students (Restivo & Lanier, 2015). Participants in this study agree that discipline consequences should be fair and consistent for all students. The findings for this theme indicated that traditional practices are utilized if needed, along with implementing behavioral supports to manage student behaviors.

Additionally, unfair discipline practices are common for minority students, including female students (Gagnon, Gurel, & Barber, 2017). It can be concluded with this theme, participants use traditional disciplinary practices to manage student discipline according to their student code of conduct. Also, the participants use a combination of traditional discipline practices and behavioral programs when managing student discipline.

Category #4 - Theme: Mandatory Discipline Consequences

There are consequences that campus administrators may assign to students at their discretion. But, there are consequences for certain offenses that are mandated by state law. These mandatory offenses are described in student codes of conduct for Texas public school districts. Mandatory offenses include drugs, weapons, and other serious offenses. Many of the participants indicated that mandatory offenses require thorough investigations, campus police involvement, and possible removal to the alternative school per their student code of conduct.

P1 regarding a scenario where a female student brings a weapon to school, “But, unfortunately Michelle would be held accountable for the knife, and then during the investigation, if discipline needs to come down on Stacey based on information that I received then we’ll have to go that route too.”

P2 responded, “It’s not being a snitch or anything when you come talk to us it’s a matter of keeping everybody safe at the building. So, talk with her and of course she’s going to have to be disciplined for bringing a weapon.”

P4 stated regarding discipline scenario #11, regarding another female student physically attacks another female student, “Our campus police officers are there, we have a full-time officer.”

P5 replied to the scenario where a female student brings a weapon to school, “if it’s a non-illegal knife I would probably OSS her for three days for her to calm down, and for us to figure what to do with the other child and how to work through that. If it was an illegal knife, I would have to get the police involved.”

Some public school districts have campus police officers or SROs assigned to campuses. The school district where I conducted my study employs SROs at their junior high and high school campuses for safety purposes. School districts utilize campus police officers to address violent, and potential dangerous situations that may occur on school grounds (Swartz et al., 2016). Some of the participants mentioned they would utilize campus police officers to assist with various situations.

P1 in regards to a scenario where a female student attempted to leave school grounds without permission, “I would have to contact the SRO, I mean safety is number one.”

P5 responded to the same scenario, “In the beginning I probably would not say a lot to her, just let her talk and get it out, and if she is going to try to leave the building I would get on the radio and let our SRO and other administrators know.”

P6 added, “So I like to bring the resource officer in so he can speak to the law side of it, so that the kids are really clear. If you do this, now I can speak about what’s going to happen on the school side of it, but I want you know what happens on the law side of this. I pull him in and we conference with kids all the time, when it’s something of that nature, where they have the ability to cause imminent harm to someone.” School administrators can use their campus police officers for many different situations, some researchers argue to having a police presence in school is not warranted and can lead to a pipeline to prison mentality (Mallett, 2016).

P6 shared on how witnessing a student being taken to jail can be difficult, “I think the most difficult is feeling like you have missed the mark because you didn’t, or you couldn’t identify, just were never able to get that kid there and seeing a kid leave in handcuffs. If I see a kid leave in handcuffs my day is done.”

Also, other safety measures for some school districts in Texas include the usage of metal detectors, with hopes of decreasing students bringing weapons to school, such as pocketknives, firearm, and other types of illegal or prohibited weapons.

P1 shared on this issue, “I don’t believe in metal detectors. And I never put them in a school. It’s not a jail. It’s not a prison. If the kids really want to get something in, they can go around. I’ve been in schools with them and kids have brought stuff in. So, one I think that’s a poor job on whoever is the administrator of that school putting up metal detectors.”

With an increase of school violence and recent situations with school shootings, some researchers have purported safety precautions, like metal detectors, are essential in the schools (Mallett, 2016). But, as stated by P3, implementing such rigid measures create prison-type environments in the school setting (Allen & White-Smith, 2014). It can be concluded that mandatory discipline consequences are applied to serious offenses that are governed by the student code of conduct. The decision whether or not to utilize SROs, metal detectors, and other safety measures are still being debated by public officials, law enforcement, and school administrators. But, as with the participants in this study and previous research, providing safety for all students should be the main concern for managing serious student misbehaviors.

Category #5 - Theme: Discipline Concerns for Female Students

There is an overall concern with the increase of female juvenile delinquency and student discipline issues in the school setting. Previous research has been conducted on this issue and there are more female students entering the juvenile justice system than before, as well as an increase in school-related discipline offenses among female students (Barrett et al., 2015). In the middle/junior high school setting there is a high prevalence of overall student misbehaviors. During this period, between elementary and high

school, is a challenge for many children (Benner & Wang, 2014). All participants in this study have identified a growth in discipline concerns with female students.

P2 stated, “again it seems like they are getting more vocal with their behavior (females). They seem to be coming out more aggressively than what I have seen in the past.”

P3 and P8 stated, “yes” on seeing an increase for females with student discipline challenges.

Female students are prone to be involved in certain types of discipline offenses. Fighting is a common offense that occurs in the school setting (Chitiyo et al., 2014). Fighting offenses among girls can be linked to situations that have originated through social media outlets, including Snap Chat, Twitter, and Face Book, just to name a few. For example, many of the participants in this study agreed that social media was the most common source for female student discipline concerns, as stated by P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, and P7.

P3 commented regarding fighting and social media, “I think often girls don’t want to resolve with a fight. But unfortunately, society has told them that they don’t have another option. Whether it’s their mom or dad teaching that or they’re just seeing it on social media or TV. So, to me you want to listen to both of the girls. Get the story and then move on from there before making any knee-jerk reaction.” P3, further commented on a different question, “I would say that it’s not due to their race. I would say the rise in social media as women already; young women are already comparing themselves to each

other and those around them. And social media is not helping that. And not really being trained in how to handle social media.”

P5 provided that, “I would say the biggest things I deal with female students is gossip.”

P6 stated, “I’m going to blame social media on everything, so I think, but I am being honest when I say this that the increased use of social media has added a dynamic to behavior that nobody was really ready for, and as a result of that, again just across the board, girls from all ethnicities exhibiting these behaviors because of what’s happening on social media. And the pressure and all of these snap chat parties that they are a part of and then bringing it to school and so, the bullying is not happening here, it’s happening online for the most part is what we see here. That crosses all demographics, mean girls are mean girls, and that crosses all ethnicity lines, and so you are seeing these behaviors pick up from all ethnicities, and every time you can put your money on, something started online, and that’s what they bring to school with them, whatever they been up all night doing.”

P7 added, “I would say yes in a sense, (that student discipline has increased among females) but, I can’t really. It’s kind of difficult to grasp that because I feel like there has always been an issue with females. But, I can say that the insecurity in our females, our young ones are causing a lot of issues. I would say due to social media and all the other things. I can say that with conviction.”

Also, when addressing the discipline scenarios, I wanted to gain the perspectives of how race factored into discipline situations of female students. Researchers have

studied disproportionality of higher referrals for African American students in general (Blake et al., 2011). Here is what the participants revealed.

P1 replied, “I think it’s pretty much equitable, and looking at our numbers too, because they run our numbers pretty often, it’s pretty equitable and we are really balanced as far as our diversity so, we have mid-sized student groups across the board, with that being Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, we’re almost like 30, 30, 30.

P2 did not allude to more discipline issues for a particular race, and stated that discipline issues for female students are, “in general.”

P3, commented “I would think typically your white girls are typically more verbal and more emotionally abusive versus I would say your African American girls. And definitely your African American girls are more aggressive physically. Versus maybe your white girls are more aggressive on words or making things getting a picture and crying and making you look worse than you are. So things like that. And then I would say your Hispanics are somewhere in the middle on that.”

P4 stated regarding female student offenses, “The verbal altercations tend to be my Anglo, my Black girls for the most part, they get along with each other, believe it or not. When they beef, it’s a boy. Anglo girls for the most part, when they beef, I thought you was my friend. But, Hispanic girls they beef about everything.”

P5, “I would say for Blacks and Hispanics it’s more at school. Like, so and so is saying this about you, and for the whites I think it’s more on social media, and it doesn’t seem to hit school as much. But, a lot of things is just the drama, so in so said this, so in

so is going after this boyfriend. I'm just like whoa, wait a minute and boys you know they fight and you're done; girls hold on to it. So that's the main thing I deal with girls."

P6, "What I will that I have noticed an increase in is, use to see, mainly the African American girls who were getting in trouble, but now, and Hispanic. I'll say African American and Hispanic girls, but I think the tide has kind of changed and no one is off limits, and we're seeing an increase in Caucasian females, an increase in Asian females, with these behaviors."

P7, "I think it's across the board, but I would say our minorities definitely have more of a challenge with it. Here the Hispanics out number everybody, so that just seems more prominent now because that is our highest representation. But minorities for sure."

P8 advised, "This year at this campus, it has been African American females. It has been mostly gross insubordination and disrespect and fighting, drama among themselves, among the group. Compared to last year if we looked at the numbers, yes, that is hands down the biggest growth."

This theme was derived from in-depth participant responses, and required the participants to provide details about their respective campuses regarding female student discipline. It can be concluded that the majority of the participants have seen an increase in student discipline among female students. Also, there were specific offenses that were more prevalent among female students, which is in line with the current research. The common discipline offenses that occur most often among female students are social media misuse/cyber bullying, fighting, gossip, general disrespect of authority, and other verbal and physical actions among themselves.

A deeper look into female delinquency allows a look at how race is or is not a factor in managing student discipline. According to the participants, many stated African American and Hispanic female students have an increase in discipline issues. But, participants agree that they have experienced an increase in discipline issues among all females, regardless of race. The participants indicated that certain offenses are more prevalent for students of specific races. For example, some of the participants concluded that African American females tend to be more physically aggressive, Caucasian/white students tend to be more verbal, and Hispanics share some of both tendencies.

The overall conclusion for this theme is there is a growing concern for an increase in student discipline issues among females in the middle/junior high setting. There is a general concern for female students overall, but there are specific discipline concerns for minority female students. The participants are supportive all female students with behavioral issues.

Category #6 - Theme: School Climate

The school setting is where children spend most of their time. It is important for students to have a structured, welcoming, and encouraging place to grow and learn. A positive school environment will lead to productive student outcomes, academically and behaviorally (Zhang et al., 2016). Many elements factor into whether or not a school is considered to have a positive climate or environment. In this study, school climate was an important theme associated with teacher and staff support, student support, and administrator role. The theme of school climate is associated with school administrators' relationships with students and staff. Participants in this study identified several ways

administrators can help build and maintain a positive school climate. Scenario #10 was comprised of a situation involving how administrators can improve student and teacher morale at a low performing school.

P2 stated, “So, your culture is constantly changing. And so you’ve got to learn how to read those social cues and understand how to operate in that culture. And, so it’s basically understanding where our babies are coming from, and getting to know them, and then being able to work with them from that standpoint.”

P3 replied, “But first off you have to show them love, you have to show them hey, I understand. I understand you; maybe I understand some of your culture or trying to understand. And then from there you assume your school to understand your culture.”

P4 advised, “You may even need some times where the student panel is even able to dialogue directly with teachers. You need some forums, or some nights where your parents are able to dialogue. With the teachers, you got to be able to get down to the bottom of what do people want. Your end product may not even be the desire of that group of stakeholders. What do people want? What do kids want? What do they need to feel comfortable, appreciate, and love their school?”

P6 commented, “So you have to have a team who are committed and who are doing to do and employ all of these action items that you come up with and so it’s a matter of identifying what’s going to build morale, what’s going to make teachers come and they feel like they are surrounded by a community of people who really believe in what their doing, who believe in them regardless of how they come here. If they come broken, because of what’s going on at home, they can find a sense of peace here because

they really are coming to a place where they are welcomed, they are loved, they are valued, and so identifying those that make people feel that way.”

P7 stated, “I think I would need to understand the type of climate and culture that we have there, and figure out morale is so low. Why are teachers unhappy? Are they not so connected with the students? Are they scared? Are they unsure? Are they unknowledgeable about the types of student that they have? I think it is important to understand why the morale is low and once again it’s knowing the systems that we have in place. Feedback from those teachers is always good because you know exactly what’s going on and what’s happening, and then how they feel about it. And always offer, ask for suggestions. I think that if you are trying to implement anything it’s always good, the people that you have you have some input from them because they are one’s that are going to put it into place. So, it’s good to know that they have a part in that whatever is feasible and conducive to that environment is in a much better place.”

P8 added, “We need to create a sense of urgency for the low performing because I think that in certain times people think of we have poverty kids, so of course they are going to be low, and people think it is okay, and it not okay. And so the urgency is these kids need to grow, these kids got to learn, and so we create that sense of urgency that yes, scores matter, but student growth is most important.” In order for teachers to do their task of educating students, teachers need continuous support from administrators, especially when they have difficult classrooms of students with behavioral issues (Millei & Petersen, 2015).

P2 stated, “So, I think the first thing I would do is go in and observe, and be able to give her some possible suggestions about what I am seeing in the classroom. Another thing too is to possibly having one of our instructional coaches go in and teach the class to see if there is a difference with how the instructional coach is teaching compared to how the teacher is doing. And then just work with her from that standpoint.”

P3 commented, “Yeah obviously, at the end of the year teachers always burn-out thinking how do I do this another year. I think sometimes just a day off as a mental wellness day and then bringing her back and having that conversation. A mental wellness day and maybe some shopping can go a long way.”

P4 stated, “So maybe trying to get to the root of why they choose this career field and ask them are there any tools that they need from me, is there anything you need from me to support you because I can hear that education is your passion? I hate to you leave this field, leave this classroom because you have been beneficial to so many, and it may be an opportunity to tell this teacher, let’s also look at big picture.”

P6 provided, “I know that people think that sounds crazy in the work place, but it doesn’t matter that we are at work, everyone needs to feel loved and appreciated, so you have to know what speaks to them, and so if it’s a teacher and their love language is acts of service, then that may be what their crying out for. I feel like I am alone in this, and I feel like I don’t have enough support, and then let’s address this from a support issue. How can I serve you? What do you need me to take off your plate? What is going to help you get back to a place where you feel like you are thriving? Because usually when they are that frustrated, it’s because they are overwhelmed and they don’t know how to

come from under, identifying what they need to help them thrive. Sometimes it just a matter of what can I take off your plate. Sometimes it's I'm doing all this work and I'm not being recognized because their love language is affirmation.”

P7 added, “We can't control the students at home, what happens at home, but we can do our best to control here. Sometimes students just need a place to let loose and unfortunately, school is it sometimes. But, I would just let know I support her decision, but let her know sometimes we have those years. It's kind of cyclical, you know you have a few years of great students, but every now and then you get some that get hard to manage at the same time we don't give up. It should never be a situation to where you are doing something you don't love. But once you loose your love and passion for it you are not doing anybody justice including those kids.”

P8 stated, “I think it would be more of a coaching and facilitated conversation, and crucial conversation. So that I could dig a little bit deeper to figure out what it really was. Was it an issue of training, does she need to grow and get better a classroom management portion or was it the combination of kids and we just started off the year the wrong way.” P8 also added, “It's about relationships with that teacher.”

The participants in this study have indicated the need and importance for providing student and teacher supports as part of their roles as administrators. Building a successful school environment will help boost morale and positively cultivate the learning environment. Also, teachers' support of students, behaviorally and academically, is essential in fostering a supportive environment for students. Teachers spend more time with students than any other adult on the school campus, therefore;

teachers' positive engagement with students can offer the appropriate climate and culture for students to be successful (Benner & Wang, 2014).

P1 stated, "I think that the buck stops with the teacher so I think there is an engagement problem. I think it is a two-way street, yes is not all falls on the teacher, but the eventual responsibility lies with the teacher, so we have got to make sure that we here are providing engaging lessons that are going to keep those kids out of trouble, if you engage a kid, their not going to be in trouble, if their working hard and they are intrinsically motivated to do what their doing, then you're not going to have any problems, and they'll learn more, so I think it's about evaluating the level of engagement and that's getting into the classroom and seeing what your teachers are doing, especially within, if you've got a group of students with behavioral issues seeing where those are, seeing who their teachers are, and kind of shadowing them to see how things are going within the classroom."

P2 suggested, "So, another thing to look at too is helping those students because sometimes we find that the behavior issues are because they aren't understanding, but it is finding ways to connect the learning for them in a way that they are going to understand it, whether it's using more manipulatives, whether it's reading to them, making be okay with being read to, which we find that a lot of our kids are okay with that. It's just finding ways to really connect the learning, and figuring out what it is they need to help them be successful."

P3 stated, "I try to tell my story, I try to encourage my teachers to tell their story. All of us have some type of background that was probably rough at some point in some

capacity. I think sharing your story with a kid often times they'll open up a little bit more. I think really the route that I would go with that kid is figuring out that social emotional issue. What's going on at home? Are you one of ten and you're taking care of younger siblings? Are you the younger sibling and no one is taking care of you? Is mom around? Are there guys in and out? Is it just dad and he doesn't understand how to take care of a young lady? Or he doesn't know how to do your hair? Things like that I would look at. Once you've got some of those answers I think then you can figure out what you need to do. But without those answers I don't think you making a decision is gonna be good for that kid or your school moving forward."

P7 commented, "So, I think if it's a situation where we are addressing the behavior issue, making sure that we are keeping them in the classroom, keeping them focused where they can get their instruction and supports that they need that would definitely help with their scores. But, once again trying to understand why they are having the behavioral issues. Are we understanding or aware of the support that they may or may not have at home? What kind of additional supports are we giving them here knowing that? Are we providing them with additional resources and opportunities to close that gap?"

P8 advised, "I would improve my relationship with her (teacher), and I think teachers also need coping strategies for when they get angry at a kid who's being disrespectful. So, I would find a way to train all of the staff. We also need to train teachers on kids of trauma, how trauma presents itself in adolescence. Because it just doesn't trigger with misbehavior, there are many other facets that are there and our

teachers, most teachers have grown up in a pretty stable home and had a pretty stable life and so they do not understand where some of these kiddos are coming from.”

The school environment is expected to encompass student learning, positive relationships, good behavior, and safety. School administrators are responsible for ensuring students receive a free and appropriate education. In addition, teachers expect to be supported by the administration, as teachers work to support students academically and behaviorally. The participants in this study emphasized that student support from administrators, as well as teachers, can help build and maintain a stable school environment. The overall climate and success of the school setting is dependent upon relationships (Zhang et al., 2016).

Limitations of the Study

My study sought to gain the perspectives of CBCs in the role of student discipline management of female students in the middle/junior high school setting. One limitation of this study is that only one local public school district was included. Other school districts were not included in this study due to time constraints of the researcher and saturation was readily met using participants in one district. Obtaining information from other CBCs in other Texas school districts may be instrumental to examine whether administrators share similar or different discipline management practices. Also, conducting a qualitative research design was beneficial for the purposes of my study; I did not include any discipline data in this study. Quantitative measures to analyze discipline data may be helpful to determine trends in behavior among female students. Another limitation is that this study only examined the perspectives of CBCs regarding

discipline management practices applied to female students. Male students were mentioned in some aspects within the study, but male students were not the focus of this study. It would be beneficial to gather feedback from CBCs on how discipline is addressed for male versus female students. Another limitation is that only participants in junior high school were examined. The study did not include perspectives from CBCs in the elementary or high school setting. Comparison of discipline management practices among the various school levels would be potentially beneficial for CBCs. Further, my study did not examine the perspectives of teachers or other school staff, which may be imperative to gain more knowledge of how these school employees respond to student misbehaviors or discipline situations.

Recommendation for Future Research

Through the data collection and analysis, participants in this study revealed thorough information that informed the field. Future research will be needed to provide more information in regards to the new S.B. 107 – Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator, now officially adopted into law and codified in the Texas Education Code, Sec. 37.0012 (TEC, 2018). Participants from this study were assistant principals that were designated as the CBC for their respective campuses. But, most of them were only vaguely familiar with the requirements set forth under the new mandate. However, the CBCs were all aware that they were primarily responsible for managing student discipline on their campuses. Some of the CBCs believed that the new law basically is just a title change that really would not affect their daily job responsibilities, or how they manage student discipline. I would recommend the state provide in-depth training to

school administrators in Texas school districts regarding specific requirements for this new law. Future research is warranted for the impact this new law has on student discipline management practices of school administrators.

This study focused on the discipline management applied to female students. Many of the participants indicated an increase in student discipline challenges and behavioral issues for female students. The increase in discipline challenges warrants further studies into the causes, reasons, and supports needed for female students with discipline and behavioral issues. As identified from this study, more studies should focus on female students and the specific offenses like social media misuse, fighting, general disrespect, and bullying. Also, looking at the data in regards to the discipline offenses and consequences assigned to female students would be beneficial to further understand how administrators manage discipline for these students. Participants in this study indicated that they perform regular discipline data reviews to determine trends in the data.

In addition, I examined whether discipline management practices were equally and equitably applied to all female students, including African American females. The results of this study determined participants treat female students equally and fairly regarding discipline management and are consistent in the assignment of disciplinary consequences, regardless of students' race or ethnicity. But, some of the participants revealed that there is still a higher discipline rate among minority female students, including African American students. Therefore, more studies are warranted to further inform the field on specific discipline concerns of minority female students, including African American female students.

Future studies are recommended to examine SROs and their possible impact on student discipline in the school environment. Also, in regard to ensuring students have positive behavioral supports and in alignment with CBC requirements, the role of SRO's should be examined. CBCs and SROs should be on one accord as to how to best support students with behavioral and discipline issues. Thus, CBCs and SROs should be required to attend similar behavior management support trainings. As presented in the literature review, the role of SROs in the school environment is under scrutiny in regard to how SROs support students, positively or negatively influence students, potentially stigmatizes or label students, and provide safety to the learning environment.

Social Change Implications

There have been copious research and studies conducted regarding delinquent males in the juvenile justice system and male students in regards to student discipline issues in public schools. Past research and the findings of this study indicate there is a concern for female juvenile delinquency, specifically in the school setting (Barrett et al., 2015). Bringing awareness to the issues currently affecting female students is critical in understanding how to support and help female students succeed in the school setting and beyond. If female students with behavioral issues receive the appropriate supports, this could lessen their chances of being involved in the juvenile justice or criminal justice systems.

Also, there has been an increase of discipline infractions for African American female students (Blake et al., 2017). The results of this study indicate there is a behavioral concern specifically for female minority students, including African American

female students in the middle/junior high school setting. More studies will need to be conducted to determine the specific needs for minority female students. Also, this study will bring awareness of the specific reasons why minority female students may present behavioral problems in the school environment. Behavioral problems of female students may be associated with family dynamics and disadvantaged neighborhoods (Kim, 2016). A better understanding is definitely needed regarding student discipline to ensure female minority students receive ample supports to be successful. This study provided awareness for the need to implement additional supports for minority female students.

This study also provided awareness to the new mandate, originally created via S.B. 107 – Designation of Campus Behavior, which is a codified law in the Texas Education Code, Sec. 37.0012 (TEC, 2018). Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator became effective for all public school districts in Texas on June 20, 2015. The requirements under this new law provide that a CBC is designated at each public school to effectively manage student discipline. As a result of this mandate more behavioral supports and interventions are being implemented and utilized in school districts. Also, school administrators have the authority to positively or negatively influence student behaviors. The actions and behaviors of school administrators are imperative when addressing student behaviors and should be taken into consideration.

The overall social impact of this study will bring more awareness to discipline issues of female students in the middle/junior high school setting. This awareness will potentially foster conversations among parents, administrators, and mental health agencies on how to best support students with behavioral issues in the school setting.

Also, special emphasis should be provided to further understand and support minority female students in the school setting. This study sheds light on the new state mandate for school administrators, designated as CBCs. Student discipline management of students with behavioral issues should be handled effectively and efficiently.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to determine the perspectives of CBCs as disciplinarians for female students in the middle/junior high school setting. Further, I wanted to determine if there was prevalence or more discipline issues for African American female students in the school setting. Student discipline management is considered an enormous task for school administrators (Millei & Petersen, 2015). Implementation of student discipline mandates, policies, and laws regarding specific requirements are required by many states. Specifically, in this study, I wanted to incorporate the Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator mandate that was enacted into law June 20, 2015. This mandate requires all public schools in Texas to designate a school administrator to specifically manage student discipline on their campuses. In this study, assistant principals at a local public junior high school were designated as the CBCs. The junior high campuses consisted of 7th & 8th grade students, and the CBCs primarily were the disciplinarians, among other assistant principal duties assigned.

The theoretical frameworks used in this study were based on the social learning and labeling theories. The social learning theory was utilized in regards to how school administrators can influence student behavior. Participants in this study revealed the importance of positively reacting to discipline situations that may arise, even difficult

situations. Administrator and teacher actions can be a direct influence on students. Another framework was the labeling theory. The labeling theory was important in this study because it allowed a look into the awareness and professional judgment administrators should take into consideration when handling student discipline issues. Labeling of students was not something that was profound in this study, as the participants were aware that labeling of students is not productive, and does not benefit students. Bringing awareness to potential labeling of students by school administrators and how it can negatively affect students was the goal for this study.

A qualitative generic phenomenological study was conducted to gain in-depth, rich, and detailed perspectives of the CBCs at a local urban public school district in the state of Texas. Purposive sampling was used to select participants specifically identified as a CBC. Also, only junior high campuses were used in this study, as past researchers agree that the middle school environment poses a concern for many school administrators in regards to an increase in discipline among students at this grade level (Kim, 2016). The interview protocol consisted of discipline scenarios used in this study to immitate possible discipline situations that may occur among female students in this setting.

Data collection consisted of eight participants were interviewed face-to-face and responded to the discipline scenarios regarding how they would specifically address each situation. The interview sessions took place at six junior high campuses in the approved local school district. All interview sessions were consented by the participants and they were audio recorded. Field notes were taken and observations were made of the

participants, setting, and details of the interview sessions. For data analysis, the audio recordings were transcribed and data content analysis was performed using the line-by-line method and code-recode procedures. Several codes emerged and six main themes were identified and categorized.

Student discipline encompasses so many variables, and this study examined many aspects of student discipline, including discipline management practices of school administrators, female students, discipline issues among female students, administrator/teacher/student relationships, traditional discipline practices, mandatory consequences, behavioral management supports and interventions, and school climate. The research question for this study entailed gaining the perspectives of CBCs in the role of student discipline management in regard to female middle school students. I believe the research question was thoroughly answered, and supported by the responses of the participants on the various discipline scenarios. The findings of this study revealed there is a concern for the increase in student discipline and behavioral issues among female students in the school setting. Additionally, the findings indicate a need for further examination of student discipline issues for female minority students, including African American females. Also, more training should be implemented for the CBC requirements, and more behavioral supports are needed for school administrators and teachers for successful discipline management processes. It is important to ensure all female students with behavioral issues in middle/junior high school receive the appropriate behavioral supports in the school setting in order to prevent future juvenile delinquency in society. As the participants revealed in this study, the key to successfully

student discipline management is having consistent, caring, and supportive relationships with students, which is supportive of a positive environment conducive for learning.

The social change impact of this study will bring awareness to the new CBC law requirements, and its implementation on public school districts in Texas. Mandated CBC training should be required for each school district in Texas to provide school administrators on-going assistance under the requirements of the new law, and to keep them abreast of current information on the topic. The training would consist of providing local school districts an opportunity for their school administrators to collaborate and share best practices for implementing behavioral interventions and supports for students with discipline issues. Specific training from professionals on various behavioral interventions and supports would be included.

Also, this study is important to emphasize the student discipline concerns relating to female students in the middle/junior high school setting. Collaborative efforts are needed from school district officials, school administrators, mental health/behavioral professionals, counselors, community advocates, and parents in order to provide adequate assistance to female students. The necessary behavioral interventions and supports for female students could potentially decrease discipline-related issues in the school environment and reduce further involvement in the juvenile justice system.

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Appendix A: Letter to Administrator at XYZ Independent School District

Dear Administrator:

My name is Tamara K. Jordan and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I am conducting dissertation research on the perspectives of Campus Behavior Coordinators (CBCs) in regards to student discipline management practices of female students in middle school. In addition, the study will examine discipline practices of African American females in middle school. There are many studies regarding school administrators and their discipline management practices, and juvenile delinquency of male students. However, there is little known about the impact of discipline management practices since the passing of S.B. 107, designation of Campus Behavior Coordinators (CBCs). Also, further research is warranted regarding student discipline and delinquency among African American female students. This research will provide insight into how this new Texas state mandate is implemented in public schools, and how CBCs address student discipline management among female middle school students, including African American females.

At this time, I would like to request your permission to contact your CBC employees to be participants in this study. Their experiences and feedback is important, and the results could potentially lead to significant information valuable to the field. Also, your assistance in conducting this much-needed research is important. If willing, I would like for you to identify the current CBCs assigned to all of your middle school campuses. Then, I would be able to contact the CBCs to discuss the nature of this study and request their participation. The participants of this study need to be officially

designated as the school administrator named the CBC on their respective public middle school campus.

Please advise if there are any other requirements or procedures that your organization may require in order to gain access to your employees. If you would like to discuss this request, or have any questions concerning this study, I can be reached at (XXX) XXX-XXX or emailed at tamara.jordan@waldenu.edu.

Sincerely,

Tamara K. Jordan
Doctoral Candidate
Walden University

Appendix B: Letter to Participant

Date:

CBC

Address

Dear (Name of Campus Behavior Coordinator),

My name is Tamara K. Jordan and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I am conducting dissertation research on the perspectives of Campus Behavior Coordinators (CBCs) in regards to student discipline management practices of female students in middle school. In addition, the study will examine discipline practices of African American females in middle school. There are many studies regarding school administrators and their discipline management practices, and juvenile delinquency of male students. However, there is little known about the impact of discipline management practices since the passing of S.B. 107, designation of Campus Behavior Coordinators (CBCs). Also, further research is warranted regarding student discipline and delinquency among African American female students. This research will provide insight into how this new Texas state mandate is implemented in public schools, and how CBCs address student discipline management among female middle school students, including African American females.

I realize that your time is important to you and I appreciate your consideration to participate in this study. In order to fully understand your experience we need to meet on one occasion for approximately one hour for the meeting. Meetings can be held at a location of your choosing, time, and date. The meeting is designed to simply learn about

your experience of being the school administrator responsible for discipline management on your campus, and your role as Campus Behavior Coordinator. It is important to hear your voice in this matter, as the feedback could potentially lead to significant information valuable to the field. Your privacy and confidentiality is very important to your contact information, identity, and feedback will be kept strictly confidential.

Please contact me at your earliest convenience to schedule a date and time that we can meet. My telephone number is XXX-XXX-XXXX. You can also email me at tamara.jordan@waldenu.edu. I look forward to hearing from you.

Tamara K. Jordan
Doctoral Candidate
Walden University

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

**Campus Behavior Coordinators' Perspectives of Student Discipline among
Females in Middle School**

Dissertation Research - Walden University

You are invited to participate in a research study to gain informative feedback from Campus Behavior Coordinators (CBCs) on the discipline management practices of female students in middle school, including African American students. You were selected as a possible participant because of your knowledge and/or experience related to the topic. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before acting on this invitation to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Tamara K. Jordan, Doctoral Candidate at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to better understand your experience in the role of CBC, as a newly mandated requirement for public school districts in Texas to manage student discipline.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in one single interview at your place of employment or a location of your choice for approximately one hour in length.

The interview session will consist of your responses to various discipline scenarios that may occur in the middle school setting. The following scenarios will give you an idea of the type of questions or scenarios that will be used in this study:

Scenario # 1

Susie, an African American student continues to constantly tease, call names, and make fun of Peggy, a Caucasian American female student; as a result Peggy acts out and strikes Susie. How would you handle this situation?

How would you respond if the roles of the students were reversed?

Scenario # 2

You are a new assistant principal assigned to a middle school that is known for using traditional discipline practices, like In-School Suspension (ISS) and Out-of-School Suspension (OSS). Your school is moderately in need of student discipline reform and effective behavioral management practices, and you have just been named the Campus Behavior Coordinator. How would you embrace this new role and responsibility?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Walden University, your employer, or myself. If you initially decide to participate, you are still free to withdraw at any time later without affecting those relationships.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

There are no known risks associated with participating in this study. The potential benefit of participating in this study may come in the form of providing more inclusive support services.

In the event you experience stress or anxiety during your participation in the study you may terminate your participation at any time. You may refuse to answer any questions you consider invasive or stressful.

Compensation:

There is no form of compensation for participation.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any report of this study that might be published, the researcher will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records. Interviews will be audio recorded for purposes of providing accurate description of your experience. Audiotapes will be destroyed at the completion of the study, which will be within five years.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Tamara K. Jordan. If you have general questions regarding the study, you may contact myself at XXX-XXX-XXXX or tamara.jordan@waldenu.edu. You may also contact Dr. Tina Jaeckle, who is my Chair for the doctoral research at XXX-XXX-XXXX or tina.jaeckle@waldenu.edu. If you have questions regarding your right as a participant in this study, you may contact Dr.

Leilani Endicott, the Research Participant Advocate at Walden University at XXX-XXX-XXXX or IRB@mail.waldenu.edu.

You will receive a copy of this form from the researcher.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and received answers.

I consent to participate in the study.

Printed Name of Participant:

Signature of Participant:

Date

Signature of Investigator:

Date

Appendix D: Interview Protocol / Discipline Scenarios

Date: _____

Location: _____

Name of Interviewer:
_____Name of Interviewee:

This interview protocol will consist of various discipline scenarios that may rise in the middle school environment. You are asked to please respond to the scenarios objectively, honestly, and according to your own experiences. The scenarios will be divided into several sections, including: Disciplinary Skills & Dispositions, Behavioral Management Support, School Climate, Student Academic Support, and Teacher & Staff Support.

Considering your role as a CBC, how would you respond to the scenarios below? Also, consider how your actions and decisions influence the outcome of each scenario.

Disciplinary Practices & Dispositions (6)

Scenario # 1

Susie, an African American student continues to constantly tease, call names, and make fun of Peggy, a Caucasian American female student; as a result Peggy acts out and strikes Susie. How would you handle this situation?

How would you respond if the roles of the students were reversed?

Scenario # 2

You are a new assistant principal assigned to a middle school that is known for using traditional discipline practices, like ISS and OSS. Your school is moderately in need of student discipline reform and effective behavioral management practices, and you have just been named the Campus Behavior Coordinator. How would you embrace this new role and responsibility?

Scenario # 3

A group of female students get into a major fight, causing involvement from the campus police officer, and other staff members; some students had to be restrained. Afterward, a fellow colleague complains to you and states, “I’m tired of this, these Black kids are bad” and further states, “why can’t we just kick them out, cause they don’t want to learn anyway.” How would you respond?

What if the students in this scenario were a different race, other than African American. Would you respond differently? If yes, why and how.

Scenario # 4

Sara, a 6th grade African American female student comes into the school everyday unhappy, angry, will not comply with the teacher, and when you intervene she yells, screams, curses at you, and causes a major scene. How would you handle this situation?

Scenario # 5

In the beginning of the school day, the tardy bell is about to ring and you see a group of female students huddled around talking, laughing, and dancing. How would you respond to this situation?

Scenario # 6

You have had a terrible morning before you make into the office, and as soon as you walk into your office, there sits Lisa. Lisa is an 8th grade, Hispanic student and frequent visitor to your office since 6th grade due her history of disciplinary infractions. Lisa is physically upset and upon seeing you enter she stands up and folds her arm; you rush past and put your briefcase in your chair. Before you can even ask Lisa why she is there this time, she starts speaking loud and fast, and you tell her to calm down. Lisa continues to talk, and then when you come closer to her she brushes past you and slams the office door and attempts to leave the school building. How would you respond to this situation?

Behavioral Management Support (3)Scenario # 7

Tiffany, a 7th grade Caucasian American student is constantly in and out of your office for various offenses, ranging from fighting, stealing, bullying, and other misbehaviors. The discipline consequences that have previously been assigned to Tiffany does not seem to help, like In-School Suspension, and detentions. How would you address the situation of continuous discipline issues of this student?

Scenario # 8

The school counselor has been meeting with an African American student, Laura, everyday for a month and there is very little improvement shown in the student's behavior. How would you address this situation?

If the student in this scenario were of another race, would you handle it differently? If yes, how and why?

Scenario # 9

You are a seasoned school administrator, with numerous years of experience as a teacher, assistant principal, and principal. You are in the process of instructing your staff on the new state mandate of S.B. 107 implementation of Campus Behavior Coordinator, which requires a look at the discipline management practices of public schools. How would you handle this task?

School Climate (3)

Scenario # 10

You work in an urban, predominately minority school district with very few resources at a middle school where student discipline issues are high. Currently, the school is low performing and student, teacher, and employee morale is low. How would you address this situation?

Scenario # 11

You recently received a complaint from a parent of a Caucasian American female student who states that the school is unsafe due to her daughter was attacked by another Caucasian American female student, and that her daughter will not be returning to the school until safety measures are put in place. Also, the parent threatens to go the school board and media. How would you address this situation?

If the students in this scenario were African American students, would you handle it differently, if yes, how and why?

Scenario # 12

Michelle, an African American female student is stopped at the metal detector one morning in possession of a pocketknife. The student declares that she has the knife for protection from another African American student, Stacey. Michelle claims Stacey has threatened to fight her on numerous times. How would you handle this situation?

If the students in this scenario were of another race, would you handle it differently? If yes, how and why?

Student Academic Support (2)Scenario # 13

Your school has just received the students' results from the state assessment. A group of students with behavioral issues have been identified as some of the low performers. How would you address this issue?

Scenario # 14

Priscilla, a Caucasian American student recently got kicked out of a group home, and is homeless, she has not presented major student discipline issues in the school environment, but she sleeps in class; therefore, her grades are falling. How would you respond to this situation?

If the student in this scenario was an African American student, would you handle it differently, if yes, how and why?

Teacher & Staff Support (2)Scenario # 15

Ms. Foster has a class of well-behaved 7th grade students for the most part, but Dianna, an African American student is a repeat offender with anger management issues

and her mom will not agree to further testing, as recommended by staff. How would you provide assistance to the student and staff?

If the student in this scenario was an African American student, would you handle it differently, if yes, how and why?

Scenario # 16

A well-known, outstanding, and recognized teacher confides in you that she loves her job of 7 years, but is thinking about a career change after the current year due to the uncontrollable student misbehaviors in her 6th grade classroom. How would you address this situation?

Appendix E: Demographic Questions

1). What is your age range?

25 – 35

35 – 44

45 – 54

55 – 64

65 – 74

2). What is your ethnicity?

White/Caucasian

Hispanic or Latino

Black/African American

Native American or American Indian

Asian/Pacific Islander

Other

3). What is your highest degree received

Bachelors

Masters

Professional Degree

Doctorate

- 4). How long have you been employed as an Assistant Principal?
- 5). How long have you been employed as an Assistant Principal at this campus?
- 6). Do you primarily handle discipline in your current role?
- 7). Are you familiar with Senate Bill 107 – Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator
- 8). Are you designated as the Campus Behavior Coordinator on your campus? Does anyone else on your campus share this designation?
- 9). What is the most challenging part of managing student discipline on your campus?
- 10). Have you experienced an increase in student discipline challenges with female students? If so, are there more issues from one race of female students in particular?