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A Student Saved is NOT a Dollar Earned

A Meta-Analysis of School Disparities in Discipline Practice Toward Black Children

Jemimah L. Young, Jamaal R. Young, & Bettie Ray Butler

Abstract

Exclusionary school discipline practices continue to play a key explanatory role in racially disproportionate outcomes in the justice system. Three decades of research substantiate the disproportionality of discipline practices and the negative effects on Black students. However, a meta-analysis of this phenomenon and its moderators remains absent but is warranted based on its practical and empirical import. Thus, this meta-analysis synthesized the research on school discipline disproportionality between Black and White students by aggregating odds ratios across studies. An exhaustive search of the literature and rigorous screening process produced a final pool of 29 studies representing 51 independent effect sizes. Based on the test for homogeneity we concluded that there was significant heterogeneity, $Q(50) = 20115.40, p < 0.001$. Thus, a random effects analytic model was employed. After testing and adjusting for publication bias, the overall mean estimated odds ratio was 2.58, $p < 0.001$. Thus, the odds of being disciplined if Black are more than 2 and half times the odds of being disciplined if White. The subsequent moderator analysis results suggest that grade level and gender were not significant moderators of the disproportionality. Rather the results explicitly indicate that the ill-effects of school discipline are “equally” disproportionate toward Black male and female students across all K-12 grade levels. Results also indicate that statistically

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significant differences in effect size magnitude exist between disciplinary actions taken, and data collection methods. Implications of these results and suggestions for application and future research are provided.

Keywords: School-to-prison pipeline, Meta-analysis, Black students, school discipline

Introduction

Exclusionary school discipline practices continue to play a key explanatory role in racially disproportionate involvement in the justice system. Studies have connected increases in school suspensions and expulsions to increases in incarceration rates (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2005; Losen, 2015; Nicholson-Crotty, Birchmeier, & Valentine, 2009; Skiba, Arrendondo, & Williams, 2014) in a burgeoning body of research known as the “school-to-prison pipeline” literature (Wald & Losen, 2003). The relationship, particularly, between the school and juvenile justice system has been most pronounced among Black students (Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009; Skiba, 2015). All things considered, any policy that results in a negative correlation with academic achievement and a positive correlation with incarceration- for any ethnic group-is unjustifiable (Skiba et al., 2008). For this reason, school-based zero tolerance policies remain highly controversial; and have been met with much resistance and criticism- often being challenged as a violation of civil rights in federal courts (Kim, Losen, & Hewitt, 2010).

The past three decades of scientific and behavioral research on school discipline (e.g., Children’s Defense Fund, 1975; Skiba, Chung, Trachok, Baker, Sheya, & Hughes, 2014) has chronicled the disproportionate representation of Black students for school discipline- specifically in the area of suspensions (McCarthy & Hodge, 1987), expulsions (KewellRamani, Gilbertson, Fox & Provasnik, 2007), and office referrals (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002); a phenomenon also known as the discipline gap (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Monroe, 2009). In analyzing this gap, several researchers (Browne, Losen, & Wald, 2002; Skiba & Knesting, 2001) have consistently found evidence showing that Black students are oftentimes disciplined more frequently and severely; despite the fact that studies reveal that they are generally no more likely to display greater levels of disruptive behavior in comparison to their peers from other ethnic groups (Dinkes, Cataldi, & Lin-Kelly, 2007; Rocque, 2010). The detrimental effects of school exclusion are numerous. At the most basic level when students are removed from their learning environment even for a simple office referral, they will inevitably miss valuable classroom instruction (Blake, Butler, Lewis, & Darensbourg, 2011). These effects are consistent, and prevalent across the current discipline literature (Marchbanks, et al., 2014).

Discipline scholars (Dupper, 2010; Marchbanks et al., 2015) know all too well the often subtle, unintended yet deleterious consequences that surface as a direct result of exclusionary discipline practices, especially for Black students. From lagging

achievement to dropping out of school; Black disproportionality in school discipline functions at the very heart of several negative outcomes (e.g., bad grades, retention, recidivism, incarceration, economic hardship, etc.). Despite the somewhat intuitive link between suspensions and expulsions and student performance, research in this area has remained relatively scattered. Only a handful have attempted to synthesize this growing body of literature beyond the descriptive identification of disparate patterns (Gregory, et al., 2010) and few have quantified disproportionality in such a way as to yield an understanding of its causes (Skiba, et al., 2014).

Given this, the purpose of the present study is twofold. Our first objective is to provide a quantitative summary of the magnitude of disproportionality in discipline practices toward Black students chronicled in the current literature. Second, we examine the possible moderating relationship between grade level, gender, discipline actions, and data collection methods. The findings of this study are important because they provide a meta-analytic lens that affords researchers and educators a summary of the cumulative magnitude of disproportionality effects for Black students that can be used to assess results of future studies as well as school-wide practices.

The Discipline Gap

Given the long-standing evidence of the persistent discipline gap and its relationship to the school to prison pipeline, it is imperative that researchers and educators are armed with a comprehensive and informative synthesis of the effects and moderators of school discipline disproportionality and Black students. Evidence of the discipline gap was first documented by the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) (1975) in a seminal report revealing the disparities in discipline practices within American schools. The discipline gap, as it is referenced here, is much like the other gaps—the opportunity gap (Carter & Welner, 2013) and the education debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006)—in that disparities (i.e., in discipline, in education resources, in education experiences, etc.) between White and Black students have historically created advantages for some, and disadvantages for others.

Discipline in Black and White

Using a sample of over 2000 school districts from the federal Office of Civil Rights' national dataset; the CDF found that 1 in every 8 Black students—compared to 1 in every 16 White students—were suspended at least once during the 1972-1973 school year (1975). Disproportionality in discipline practices, like those referenced by CDF, persist even today (Losen, 2015). Losen and Skiba (2010) point out that the racial gap in school suspensions has at least doubled since the early 1970s—this being particularly true for African Americans. The suspension rate for these students went from 6% in 1973 to 15% in 2006 (Losen & Skiba, 2010). From this report, two major findings emerged. First, during the 1972-1973 academic school year, the use of suspensions in public schools accounted for the removal of over

one million students from their respective educational institutions, which was a total loss of over four million school days and 22,000 school years (CDF, 1975). Second, Black students were suspended twice the rate of any other ethnic group (CDF, 1975). These findings would, ultimately, provide a platform whereby racial discrimination in the use of school suspensions could be further explored.

Alternative Perspectives

Since the publication of the CDF report, some researchers (Kinsler, 2009) contend that racial bias plays a very minute role, if any, in the distribution of school sanctions. McCarthy and Hoge (1987) were among the first to challenge the salience of race as a determinant of school punishment. They found that students' past history of official punishment, teacher perceptions of student demeanor, and previous academic performance were stronger predictors of suspensions in comparison to race. When these three variables are controlled, McCarthy and Hoge (1987) find, in their study, that race, along with other demographic characteristics, such as, socioeconomic status and gender, has no effect on the type of school punishment a student receives. In his study of the Black-White school discipline gap, Kinsler (2009) reports findings closely related to those of McCarthy and Hoge using North Carolina school infraction data. In investigating gaps in punishment within and across schools, Kinsler found that Black and White students are equally likely to be suspended and receive similar suspension durations. While Kinsler certainly does not rule out the possibility that racial bias could explain racial gaps in discipline; he maintains that such was not the case in his study.

Despite these findings, the interest in the relationship between race and school suspensions continued to gain notoriety, perhaps as an immediate result of the publication of *Opportunities Suspended*. This report, developed by the Civil Rights Project (CRP) at Harvard University (2000), was the first comprehensive national report to scrutinize the disproportional impact of zero tolerance policies—school or district-wide policies that mandate pre-determined, typically harsh, consequences or punishments (such as suspension and expulsion) for a wide degree of rule violations (Solari & Balshaw, 2007)—on students of color (Civil Rights Project, 2000). Initially, the report showed that Black students make up roughly 17% of U.S. public school enrollment, yet they constitute approximately 32% of those suspended from school. White students, on the other hand, represent 63% of the total enrollment, and make up 50% of suspensions. When comparing these two statistics, suspensions for White students are seemingly more proportionally distributed.

The CRP report also showed that while several students were referred to the office for a variety of reasons, African Americans were frequently referred for non-dangerous, nonviolent offenses, such as, disobedience, defiance of authority, and disrespect of authority (Blake, Butler, Lewis, & Darensbourg, 2011). Infractions such as these are often subjectively defined. As a result, it is quite possible that the

determination of whether an infraction occurred could, very well, be tainted with bias and stereotypes (CRP, 2000). The many views and perspectives on this issue have produced a vast and rich body of research that warrants systematic review.

Problem Statement

While some skeptics of the discipline gap believe that Black students' behavior is simply more disruptive; there is little evidence in support of this theory, which in turn speaks to why it is rarely considered a plausible explanation for the overrepresentation of Black students for disciplinary action (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). With no explanation at hand, to explain this phenomenon, researchers have, therefore, felt the need to revisit the influence of race in the administration of school discipline; with the aim being to clearly articulate if, indeed, race—as it pertains to bias and discrimination, could be partly responsible for the disproportional patterns seen in discipline practices (Skiba, et al., 2002; Roch, Pitts, & Navarro, 2010; Welch & Payne, 2010). Notwithstanding the overwhelming interest in racial disproportionality in school discipline, just recently studies have begun to assess the magnitude of disproportionality through a gendered lens looking specifically at discipline practices meted out to Black students (King & Butler, 2015). Yet, and still, this vein of inquiry is deserving of much needed synthesis and meta-analysis due to the severe implications that function as a result of the relationship between exclusionary discipline practices and student achievement, as well as, the scarcity of viable alternatives to school suspension.

One of the most seminal studies within the corpus of discipline literature was conducted by Russell Skiba and colleagues (2002). Using the method of discriminant analysis, these researchers uncovered large, statistically significant differences between the rate of office referrals and race. Consistent with much of the prior scholarship in this area, they generally concluded that those students typically referred for sanctioning, which resulted in suspension, were namely Black students (Townsend, 2000). While discipline disparities impact both males (Lewis, Butler, Bonner, & Joubert, 2010) and females (Blake et al., 2015) within this subgroup; Black males are widely cited as having the greatest risk for school exclusion through disciplinary action (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). Aside from race, as seen above, other studies have identified additional variables that are likely to contribute to disparities in discipline. Among the most prominent of these indicators are gender, grade level, and type of disciplinary action.

Given the need to synthesize this growing body of literature this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the magnitude of disproportionality present in school discipline practices toward Black students compared to White students?

2. How do student characteristics moderate the amount of disproportionality?
3. How do school level factors moderate the amount of disproportionality?

Method

We conducted separate searches using the keywords “school discipline,” “Black Students,” “Students of Color,” and “zero tolerance.” Each search was conducted in the following databases: (a) Academic Search Complete (169 citations), (b) PsycINFO (70 citations), and (c) ERIC (77 Citations). Our search was exhaustive, thus publication date restrictions were not employed. The three searches resulted in 87 citations, which were entered into a master library using Zotero online software. We used Boolean operators to identify studies that incorporated a combination of pertinent search terms. For example, studies that investigated “zero tolerance” and “Students of Color” were located from within the master list. As a result, we organized and read a total of 87 articles. We used the following criteria for including studies:

1. Studies had to concern discipline practices for exclusively Black K-12 students compared to White K-12 students.
2. Studies had to directly assess students’ discipline. Examples include survey results, transcript data, or observational methods.
3. Studies had to disaggregate student results for specific discipline outcomes. For instance, one study included expulsions and suspension, which represent two separate discipline outcomes.
4. Studies had to include sufficient quantitative information to calculate odds ratio effect sizes.

Grey literature was initially retrieved, but after cross-referencing data between published studies and dissertations, dissertations were removed due to substantial overlap between data presented. For example, published studies included samples and data from dissertation studies (Lewis et al., 2010; Butler, 2011). In an effort to ensure that the studies were more similar than different, only published studies were retained. After applying the inclusion criteria, an initial pool of 33 studies were retrieved. However after removing the grey literature, a final pool of 29 studies representing 51 independent effect sizes was retained. A flowchart of the entire study retrieval and review process is presented in Figure 1.

Coding Studies

Each study was coded for information about the discipline and school characteristics, student sample, and research quality. School characteristics included location, SES, public/private, etc. Disciplinary action and duration of the consequence, if any, were also coded as part of the study. Although duration is a reasonable study characteristic it was not included in the final analysis because of the different varia-

tions of non-time contingent discipline outcomes. Disciplinary actions were coded into three categories: (1) Office Discipline Referral (ODR), (2) Suspension, and (3) Exclusion. ODRs represent minor infractions that did not lead to suspension or exclusionary action. Suspensions included in school and out of school suspensions that lasted less than one week. Exclusions included instances where the student was expelled or sent to alternative school.

Figure 1
Study Inclusion Flowchart

Student information included primarily study demographics such as gender representation and race (male, female, & Black), and grade level (K–6, 6–12, and K-12). When grade levels overlapped categories, we chose to categorize studies as K-12. Finally, each study's data collection procedure was coded as either national or state/local. Given the nature of discipline data, the authors hypothesized that differences exist between national data collections and state/local results. Each author met to develop the coding protocol, the coding form, and came to a consensus on the overall coding procedure. Following the initial meeting, each author separately coded a random sample of four studies using the coding form. Given their backgrounds and expertise, coding forms from authors 2 and 3 were used to assess inter-rater reliability. The resulting inter-rater agreement was 90.6% (Cohen's $\kappa = .892$, $p < .001$). We compared completed forms, identified and resolved discrepancies, and made appropriate revision to improve performance. The first author reviewed the studies independently of the author pairs and verified the accuracy of the study codes entered in the meta-analysis database.

Analysis

We conducted the meta-analysis in four steps. First we computed an odds ratio effect size for each study. Second we computed an overall effect size across the research studies. Then we performed the homogeneity analysis, followed by the final moderator analysis. We utilized Comprehensive Meta-analysis (CMA) version 2.0 for the data analysis and presentation of the results. For the purpose of this analysis, we report odds ratios as the measure of effect size, which was calculated and adjusted for small sample sizes within CMA 2.0 (Rosenthal, 1991). The majority of the included studies provided odds ratios as the measure of effect size, and utilized White students as the reference group. The odds ratio is a measurement of association which compares the odds of an event of those exposed to the odds of the event in those unexposed (Kalra, 2016). In the present study, the odds ratio is used to evaluate whether the odds of receiving disciplinary action is the same between Black and White students. Here we used White students as the reference group, thus if the odds ratio is 1 there is no difference. However, if the odds ratio is greater than 1, then the odds of receiving disciplinary action are greater if the student is Black, likewise if the odds ratio is less than 1, then the odds of receiving disciplinary action are greater if the student is White. There was variation in the design and presentation of study results. For example, some studies examined different discipline outcomes. Accordingly, for all studies we adjusted weights to account for the different standard errors and sample sizes (Hedges & Olkin, 2014). Finally, because some studies report outcomes for independent samples on separate interventions, these studies were analyzed as independent samples.

Data from independent samples were used to compute overall effect sizes for the proportional differences between Black and White student disciplinary action

occurrences. Based on the assumption that larger sample sizes produce more reliable estimates of effects, studies were weighted according to sample size. We conducted a homogeneity analysis to determine whether the effect sizes varied more than what are expected from sampling error. The value of the Q statistic was statistically significant; thus we concluded that the effect sizes were not homogeneous. This result is consistent with prior research that suggests that discipline is differentiated by student and school level characteristics, particularly race. Thus, the random effects model was employed and the final moderator analysis was conducted to identify factors that might account for variation in effect sizes across studies. According to Pigott (2012), a random effects moderator analysis is best suited for investigations of multiple sources of variation amongst studies that can be accounted for by study characteristics. Therefore, given the limited set of categorical moderator variable identified in this study and our focus on the study characteristics, the random effects model was used to calculate a Q statistic for each moderator.

Results

Figure 2 presents a forest plot, summarizing the quantitative characteristics of the 29 studies included in the synthesis. The publication years for the studies ranged from 2006–2015, and the median year of publication was 2011. The majority of the studies were conducted across all grades, initially 6-12, and then k-5. The majority of the studies included nationally representative samples of Black students compare to White students. Furthermore, the studies in this sample included mixed gender groups or exclusively male participants. The sample of studies was comprised of studies conducted in the United States, however this was not an inclusion criteria. Finally, the discipline practices varied from ODR to expulsion.

We calculated effect sizes for each of 51 independent samples extracted from 29 studies. Figure 2 presents information on each independent sample, effect size, and lower and upper limits of the 95% confidence interval. Based on the test for homogeneity we concluded that there was significant heterogeneity, $Q(50) = 20115.40$, $p < 0.001$. The “one study removed” procedure was utilized to identify possible outliers (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2009). This procedure did not yield any outliers. To assess the stability of the summary effect size we calculated the classic fail-safe N . According to Rosenthal (1979) the Fail Safe N , estimates the number of studies required to yield a non-statistically significant mean effect size at the $p < 0.05$ level. Hence, this statistic “indicates the stability of meta-analytic results when additional findings are included, no matter the source” (Persuad, p. 125, 1996). For the present study the value of the Fail Safe N was 63, which suggest that we would need to retrieve an additional 63 studies to observe a statistically non-significant mean effect size at the $p < 0.05$ level. Please see Table 1 for complete analysis details. Figure 3 presents the visual results of a trim-and-fill to examine the representation of effect sizes in the sample. The results of the trim-and-fill resulted in the imputation of 12

additional studies and the mean effect size was adjusted accordingly. After completing the trim-and-fill procedure the overall mean estimated odds ratio was 2.58, $p < .001$. This value was statistically significant and large based on effect size benchmarks.

Figure 2
Forest Plot of Individual Study Effect Sizes and Confidence Intervals

Table 2 presents the mean effect sizes for each level of the different moderators, including grade level, gender, disciplinary action, and data collection. In table 2, when the 95% confidence interval does not include zero, the effect of the moderator is significantly different from zero. We also included the QB values for the homogeneity analysis of the effect sizes for each moderator. A QB value that is statistically significant indicates that the moderator influences the variation among the effect sizes. As indicated in Table 2, the effect sizes for grade level (K-5, 6-12, and K-12) were all statistically significantly greater than zero. However, based on the QB statistic, grade level was not a statistically significant moderator of disciplinary actions towards Black students. For the analysis of gender 10 effects were disaggregated by race and gender. The effect sizes Black male and female students were statistically significantly different from zero; however, the QB value for gender was also not statistically significant different from zero.

The value of the QB statistic for disciplinary action was statistically significant,

Table 1
Summary Statistics for Mean Effect Size, Heterogeneity Analysis, and Publication Bias

	k	ES	CI	Heterogeneity		Publication Bias	
				Q	I^2	Fail-Safe N	Trim and Fill
Overall Results	51	2.58*	[2.30, 2.90]	20115.40*	99.75	63	12

Figure 3
Funnel plot with imputed studies from trim-and-fill

thus the level of disciplinary action accounts for some of the variability observed in the disproportionality. Furthermore, all effect sizes for were statistically significantly greater than zero, and a larger effect size was observed for more severe actions such as suspension and exclusion. Although much of the literature on student discipline is derived from large national datasets, thus we were interested in the effects of data collection on discipline effect size for Black students. Finally, the QB value for the data collection (national or state/local) was statistically significant, thus the magnitude of effect sizes were moderated by the research data collection source. Additionally, the largest effect sizes were observed for studies from state and local school data.

Discussion

The results of this study have substantial and profound implications for addressing the school to prison pipeline. First the results of this study indicate that Black students across all K-12 grade levels are more than twice as likely to incur school discipline actions. The cumulative effects observed in this study substantiate 30 years of research by aggregating ostensibly similar studies into one overall effect size estimate. The cumulative mean odds ratio effect sizes was large and statistically significantly different from zero, substantiating the empirical and practical relevance of these results. Although, a longstanding empirical history has chronicled the perpetual discipline gap, the quantification of the between study

Table 2
Analysis of Effect Size Moderators

<i>Moderator</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>QB</i>	<i>Effect Size</i>	<i>95% Confidence Interval</i>
Grade Level		2.65		
K-5	13		2.19	[1.74, 2.76]
6-12	15		1.63	[1.18, 2.25]
K-12	23		2.15	[1.88, 2.46]
Gender		.03		
Male	4		2.35	[1.47, 3.75]
Female	6		2.26	[1.88, 2.71]
Disciplinary Action		16.35*		
ODR	15		1.29	[.95, 1.75]
Suspension	21		2.58	[2.23, 2.99]
Exclusion	15		2.07	[1.50, 2.85]
Data Collection		13.09*		
National	39		2.20	[1.96, 2.48]
State/local	12		1.28	[.98, 1.68]

Note: *k* represents the number of effect sizes, *represents a statistically significant value of QB .

magnitude was elusive until now. Though many may question the causality of the discipline gap, the reality of its robust nature and magnitude cannot be ignored. Several moderators of the effects also provide practical and scientific import.

Black children should be affirmed early and often, thus examining the disproportionally across K-12 grade bands was a major consideration in this study. The results of this study suggest that the discipline gap between Black students and White students begins early and is consistent across grade levels. This finding parallels recent studies that highlight the early and persistent discipline gap (Gregory et al., 2016; Morris & Perry, 2016). The lack of statistically significant differences is a reflection of the need for culturally responsive teaching as a means to avoid unnecessary disciplinary actions that stem from cultural discontinuity. Moreover, establishing good practices throughout the K-12 continuum is crucial to the sustaining positive effects across schools (Larke, Young, & Young, 2011; Young & Young, 2016).

The literature has illustrated, relatively consistently, that male students receive a disproportionate degree of disciplinary actions (Simmons-Reed, & Cartledge, 2014). Yet this is not the case for Black students when effect sizes are aggregated based on the results of this meta-analysis. The mean odds ratios for Black boys and girls were not statistically significantly different in magnitude, and thus indicate that disproportionality in disciplinary action does not discriminate between Black boys and girls. Rather the results explicitly indicate that the ill effects of school discipline are “equally” disproportionate toward Black boy and girl K-12 learners compared to their White counterparts. The level of disciplinary action was a statistically significant moderator of the effect sizes in this study.

Based on this study Black students are more likely to receive suspensions and other exclusion practices than minor office referrals. The residual effects of school exclusion are numerous, but the results of this suggest that Black students are more prone to short and long-term school exclusion. Innovative practices and interventions are on the horizons; recent studies seek to critically examine administrator perspectives and zero tolerance policies to provide alternatives to current praxis (Day, 2016; Hoffman, 2014). Unfortunately, until these refined policies emerge, the absence of quality, culturally relevant instruction and the presence of seemingly biased disciplinary policies will continue to have drastic effects on the ability of Black students to matriculate through the K-12 educational system. Finally, effect sizes were differentiated by data collection. Nationally representative samples had smaller effect sizes than the observed effect sizes for local and state data sets. This does suggest that methods matter, and that results across studies should be examined to maintain the highest degree of empirical rigor.

Limitations

Because of the explanatory importance of experimental research, randomized

control trials are preferable in meta-analytic research. However, it is important to recognize that in most situations, educational researchers must submit to the will of the school district, which may prohibit the implementation of specific design protocols. These and other constraints placed on the primary researcher become the burden of the meta-analyst, which was a limitation of this study (Young, Ortiz, & Young, 2017). Additionally, a lack of grade spans specificity was present in the observed studies. This was most apparent in the middle grades. Because the middle grades represent a unique and important transition period for Black students, another limitation was the inability to draw explicit conclusion for the middle grades due to grade span overlap.

Finally, as researchers we chose to report the odds ratio instead of the risk ratio, given the larger representation of the odds ratio in the primary studies. This is a limitation given the distinctly different interpretations between the two effect size statistics. Specifically, the overall odds ratio for this study was 2.58, which is interpreted as “the odds of being disciplined if a student is Black are more than two and a half times the odds of being disciplined if a student is White.” However, if risk ratios were utilized then the interpretation is somewhat more comprehensible, for example “Black students are more than 2 and a half times more likely to incur disciplinary action in schools” is an appropriate interpretation for a risk ratio. Despite this limitation we chose to use the odds ratio to support meta-analytic thinking. The American Psychological Association and the American Educational Research Association encourage meta-analytic thinking as an important data reporting practice (AERA, 2006; APA, 2010). Meta-analytic thinking is defined as the prospective formulation of study expectations and design by explicitly invoking prior effect sizes and the retrospective interpretation of new results by direct comparison with prior effects in the related literature (Thompson, 2002, p. 28). Using the odds ratio instead of the risk ratio supports meta-analytic thinking because the odds ratio is the more common metric in the related literature, thus using the odds ratios supports researcher comparison and interpretation across studies.

Conclusion

There are many school-level factors that must be considered in conjunction with the school-to-prison pipeline. However, the parallels between the correctional system and school discipline practices cannot be overlooked. First, Black youth are overrepresented in the correctional population, and likewise Black youth are disproportionally represented in school discipline profiles. The results of this study provide a quantification of the magnitude of the disproportional practices in discipline towards Black students across decades of research. Researchers and educators can use these results to inform interventions to dismantle the systemic educational policies and practices that often contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. Our hope is that this study will further discussions that lead to the end of

the commodification of Black lives as a means to support the American correctional system. Based on the results of this study, Black students are severely and disproportionately disciplined in American schools. Causes, warrants, and justifications cannot qualify these results, because no matter the rationale, the outcomes are not only detrimental to Black students and parents, but to our nation as a whole.

In conclusion, Fredrick Douglas once said, "For it is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." We, as educators, cannot disregard our complicit role as architects of the school-to-prison pipeline. Whether consciously or unconsciously, implicitly or explicitly, as members of the educational community we are accountable. Hence, we must redress this phenomenon by redrawing the blueprint of American schools or be prepared to rebuild a generation of young men and women with fractured knowledge, skills, and identities.

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