

**Cultural Competence, Implicit Racial Bias, and its Impacts on Subjective Discipline
Decisions in Education**

by

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Abstract

The current study's goal was to explore how individual levels of cultural competence and levels of implicit racial bias may impact the decision of teachers when faced with a subjective discipline decision. A series of hierarchical regression analysis, and descriptive and correlational analysis was used to tests the hypotheses.

Keywords: implicit, bias, cultural competence, decision-making, education, subjective discipline

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List of Abbreviations

IAT	Implicit Association Test
TMAS	Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey
MTCS	Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale
QDI	Quick Discrimination Scale
APA	American Psychological Association

Chapter I

Introduction

Research Background

In the United States, Black and African American students are disproportionately punished in the American educational system (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). The frequency of students being sent to the office, suspended, and expelled has consistently facilitated students into juvenile justice centers, but more so, into prison (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). This phenomenon is frequently referred to as the school-to-prison pipeline (Triplett, Allen, Lewis, 2014). Research has shown that these disproportions in numbers cannot be explained by different rates of problem behaviors of Black and African American students compared to White students (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Bradshaw, Mitchell, O'Brennan, & Leaf, 2010). Subjective discipline has been discussed most recently as being a facilitator for the school to prison pipeline that exists (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). Because subjective discipline requires teachers and administrators to lean on their own frame of reference and value system when making decisions, it is easy for personal bias to have an impact on the decision that is determined (McNeal, 2016). Subjective discipline decisions have also been shown to be impacted by forms of implicit bias (Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Polluck, 2016). The allowance and use of subjective discipline practices has created substantial problems and debilitating outcomes for students of color, but most harshly, Black and African American students (Skiba & Knesting, 2001; DeMatthew, Carey, Olivarez, & Saeedi, 2017).

These racial disparities in education nationwide may be due to cultural competence on the part of individuals tasked with handling student behavioral concerns (Hanson, 2005). Scholars in the field of education have discussed the value and importance of cultural

competence for teachers describing cultural competence as taking responsibility for learning about students' cultures and communities and using students' cultures as a basis for their own learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Although multicultural competence is not at all a new conversation within the field of education, the national educational system is still facing a large social injustice, with regard to subjective discipline. Black and African American students are oppressed by subjective discipline decisions that most often lead to students of Black descent falling victim to implicit racial biases that are so engrained not only in our systems, but in our cognition as well (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Devine, Forsher, Austin, & Cox, 2010; Greenwald & Krieger, 2006). Over time, research has been clear that there are various forms of educational disparities that exist for Black and African American students. For example, studies have shown that students of Black descent are being filtered into special education programs at much higher rates, consistent achievement gaps, and the school-to-prison pipeline continuously placing Black students into the American prison system (Fenning, & Rose, 2007; Harper, 2010, Teske, 2011; Girvan, Gion, McIntosh, & Smolkowski, 2017). Scholars have asserted that these alarming rates can be partly explained by implicit racial biases that occur within decision-making (Girvan, Gion, McIntosh, & Smolkowski, 2017). More recently, research within education has started to call for in-depth looks into the educational system and the approach to how we think about education, the policies involved within education, and how educators and administrators make their decisions (Girvan, Gion, McIntosh, & Smolkowski, 2017; Coles & Powell, 2020).

Cultural competence is defined differently across professional fields yielding various adaptations of its definition. The definition of cultural competence is continually evolving, showing its complexity and multidimensional views of how cultural backgrounds shape

individuals' attitudes and beliefs. One well-known model of cultural competence developed and presented by Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis (1992) divides personal cultural competence into three categories being (1) attitudes and beliefs, (2) knowledge, and (3) skills, with each of these three components considered to be vital factors for individuals to establish personal cultural competence. Furthermore, as cultural competence has been required training within various fields, the goal has been to urge professionals to increase their own personal level of self-awareness (Sue, 2001). This is done through examination of life experiences with minority groups while also gaining the skills necessary to work with and provide services to individuals with minority statuses (Sue, 2001; Ogbu, 1992). A basic assumption of multidimensional cultural competence is that no one is born into our society with the desire to be biased, prejudice, or discriminatory, however, these factors may perpetuate themselves in our day to day interactions (Sue, 2001).

It is no surprise that implicit racial bias is noted as being one of many factors explaining why there is a large discrepancy in Black and African American students being ostracized, disproportionately punished, and less likely to be referred to gifted programs in schools (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Grissom, Rodriguez, & Kern, 2017). Implicit bias differs from cultural competence in that it is produced from thoughts and feelings that often exist outside conscious awareness, and then becomes difficult to control (Hall et. al., 2015). Many scholars have taken this conversation and expanded it within research showing that implicit racial bias has indirectly facilitated disparities seen within healthcare, employment opportunities, and the justice system (Hall et. al., 2015; Levinson, 2007; Purkiss et. al., 2006). Implicit racial bias, happening on an individual level, but at a very frequent rate, can be considered a silent yet grave threat to society (Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, Pollock). Implicit racial bias has proven to

have impacts on how physicians deliver medical care, how employers choose their employees, and how the justice system delivers justice (Chapman, Kaatz & Carnes, 2013; Green et. al., 2007).

Its remarkable feature is that individuals are unaware that they possess implicit racial biases, as well as are unaware of how those biases inform their decision-making on a day-to-day basis (Greenwald & Krieger, 2006). Scholars have asserted that it is very plausible for individuals to outwardly endorse egalitarian attitudes and values but also experience negative emotions and attitudes when in the presence of members from a certain racial or ethnic group (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000). Studies have also shown that those type of experiences informs individuals decision-making, introducing this new perspective establishing that individuals' explicit values do not always align with their implicit thoughts (Hastie, 2011). Additionally, the conflict between an individual's explicit values about race, and implicit racial biases are not always apparent to the individual that possesses them. Often, individuals express the highest regard to egalitarian views, but also carry implicit racial biases that inform their decisions unknowingly (Blair et. al., 2013).

Many scholars have taken the work of Greenwald & Krieger explaining that because we live in a world where our implicit mental processes (including implicit memories, perceptions, attitudes, and stereotypes) can be highly influenced by our social and environmental context (2006). This allows us to also acknowledge that monoculturalism and ethnocentrism is so embedded within the American school system that it becomes difficult to address problematic features, and how that hurts the students who do not fit into that monoculture. Monoculturalism and the invisibility of its effects, is in fact, a major culprit that works against cultural competence in the American society (Greenwald, & Krieger, 2006; Sue, 2001). A feature of monoculturalism

is the strong, unspoken belief in the superiority of one group's cultural heritage, in terms of their values, traditions, dress, art, craft, and more (Sue, 2004). In many cases, members of this group possess conscious and unconscious feelings of superiority that may actually be reflected in the way they engage with others, along with decisions they make (Sue, 2004; Ogbu, 1992). For example, one study that explored implicit racial bias in early education staff found that the staff tended to observe Black students more closely when challenging behaviors were expected to occur compared to White students (Gilliam et. al., 2016).

This study showed that when teachers were primed to expect a challenging behavior from the student, the teachers observed the Black students far more, unknowingly to the participants, suggesting that implicit biases may have caused the hypervigilance and close attention to the Black students (Gilliam et. al., 2016). This study also shows that Black students are potentially being observed more for behavioral concerns in general, which also increase chances of being referred for disciplinary actions (Gilliam et al., 2016). These small depictions of implicit racial bias have created and maintained a society that makes it very difficult to shift towards a multicultural climate. Another notable aspect of monoculturalism is that a person does not have to be a part of the superior group but can still be impacted and perpetuate the same harm (Sue, 2001). Studies have shown that individuals who identify as racial minorities also are victim to implicit racial bias. Measures like the IAT have shown that biracial and Black individuals can also show a moderate preference for White individuals (Riddle & Sinclair, 2019). This does not indicate an anti-Black bias, but shows that implicitly, monoculturalism can impact racial minorities implicit biases as well.

Being introduced to cultural competence and its frameworks has shown to aid individuals to develop the skills necessary to combat the impacts of implicit racial biases they may possess

(Sue, 2001). First, this introduction to cultural competence causes individuals to engage in a personal self-reflection and brings awareness to the issue at hand (Sue, 2001; Weech-Maldonado et. al., 2018). Although the idea of cultural competence was only introduced within the last few decades, various studies have suggested that cultural competency plays an increasingly important role in the way all individuals navigate interactions with each other (Stone & Moskowitz, 2011). Development within cultural competence has also shown to increase sensitivity towards minority groups, decreasing unintentional acts of discriminatory behavior (Stone & Moskowitz, 2011).

Operational Definitions

Implicit Racial Bias: Implicit racial bias is defined as the process that involves perceiving someone differently based on the social construct of race and for the current study will be measured through the use of the Race Attitude Implicit Association Test (Gravett, 2017; Rezaei, 2011). Scores range on a scale from -2.0 to 2.0, and scores above .65 or below -.65 are indicative of implicit racial biases.

Cultural Competence: Cultural competence is defined as the ability to maintain a set of attitudes, perspectives, behaviors, and policies both individually and organizationally that promote positive and effective interactions with diverse cultures and for the current study will be measured through the use of the Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale (Sue, 1998; Spanierman et. al., 2011). The MTCS assesses three areas of multicultural teaching competencies: awareness, knowledge, and skills. The higher scores indicate higher levels of multicultural teaching competence (Spanierman et. al., 2011).

Discriminatory Attitudes: Discriminatory attitudes is defined as the negative attitudes, behaviors, and thoughts towards an individual or group based solely on the individual's membership of a certain social group and will be measured through the use of the Quick Discrimination Scale (Ponterotto et. al., 1995). The QDI scores range from 30 to 150 with high scores indicating more awareness, sensitivity, and receptivity to racial diversity (Ponterotto et. al., 1995).

Statement of the Problem and Research Hypotheses

Black and African American students face extreme barriers and are faced with prejudicial and subjective discipline measures within the educational system nationwide at drastic rates compared to White students (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Although the field of education has laid a solid groundwork for addressing the value of cultural competence in its field, we are still facing consistent numbers of Black and African American students being disproportionately punished compared to White students (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Considering a multidimensional cultural competence framework, individual levels of cultural competence are important (Sue, 2001). Cultural competence, at the individual level, is having knowledge, self-awareness, and skills necessary to check implicit racial biases as they may occur (Sue, 2001). Furthermore, research has shown that the more a person engages in self-reflection and awareness (components of individual cultural competence), the more likely they are to combat discriminatory attitudes and implicit racial biases that may arise (Devine, Forscher, Austin, & Cox, 2010). In this study, we will be exploring how individual cultural competence, implicit racial bias, and subjective decision making interact with the research question and hypotheses listed below:

Research Questions & Hypotheses

1. Did levels of cultural competence of a teacher relate to levels of implicit racial bias?
 - It was hypothesized that the less cultural competence an individual had, the more likely they were to express implicit racial bias.
2. Did levels of cultural competence of a teacher relate to levels of discriminatory attitudes?
 - It was hypothesized that the less cultural competence an individual had, the more likely they were to express discriminatory attitudes.
3. Did educators with higher levels of implicit racial bias express lower levels of discriminatory attitudes?
 - It was hypothesized that individuals with higher levels of implicit racial bias express lower levels of discriminatory attitudes.
4. Did levels of implicit racial bias and discriminatory attitudes impact subjective discipline decisions of teachers?
 - It was hypothesized that the higher the level of implicit racial bias and discriminatory attitudes a teacher possessed, the more severe the prescribed punishment.
 - It was hypothesized higher levels of implicit racial bias and discriminatory attitudes would be stronger predictors of punishment for the Black racial identity vignette compared with the White or No racial identity.
5. Did the racial identity of students impact the subjective discipline decision for teachers?
 - It was hypothesized that teachers would indicate a decision representative of more severe punishment for students of Black racial identity compared to students of White racial identity or with no identity indicators.

6. Did priming with cultural competence knowledge influence the subjective discipline decision for teachers?

- It was hypothesized that teachers primed with cultural competence knowledge would indicate less severe punishment across student groups.
- It was hypothesized that priming cultural competence decreased the influence of racial identity in subjective discipline decisions.

Significance of the Study

The study of cultural competence and implicit racial bias in subjective discipline decisions have a profound significance not only to the professional field of Counseling Psychology and Education, but to society as a whole. The concern of educational disparities, the slow growth of individual cultural competence, and social inequities that seem to be embedded in our educational system nationwide present a clear conceptualization that should be recognized as a form of oppression on a historically marginalized population in American society. Although health disparities have gained much of the attention, educational disparities are too situated within a large, national context suggesting that Counseling Psychologists have an integral part of what should be a multidisciplinary and national effort.

Additionally, the World Health Organization (2008) has asserted that educational attainment, quality, and access is a social determinant of physical and mental health. While healthcare services, food, and housing are important social determinants of health, research shows that levels of educational attainment is a strong predictor of long-term health and quality of life (DeWalt et. al., 2004). We must acknowledge that educational inequities that exist in American society, in a number of interconnected pathways, impact the physical and mental health and wellbeing of Black and African American students.

For instance, students impacted by educational disparities will experience shorter life spans, have a higher chance of entering into the penal system, increased chances of mental health concerns, and higher chances of living below the poverty line compared to well-educated individuals (Hummer & Hernandez, 2013; van der Heide et. al., 2013; Dohy & Tachelle, 2018). Moreover, higher educational levels have shown to be a protective factor against anxiety and depression (Bjelland et. al., 2008). For Counseling Psychology to fail to recognize the lack of multicultural competence within our national educational system and its relationship to disparities in mental and physical health for students of color is a social injustice in itself.

The field of education has done a significant amount of work in establishing and addressing gaps in culturalism by developing and implementing culturally adaptive and responsive teaching frameworks, considering ways that classrooms and pedagogy is culturally competent, and creating learning communities (Gay, 2002; Johnson, 2006; Brown, 2004; Bustamante, Nelson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). However, we are still witnessing this large disproportion of Black and African American students being ostracized in a number of formats, specifically, being punished at higher rates subjectively (Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Pollock, 2016). This is where scholars like Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis progressed their work by ascertaining that systems that America, and all the systems that exist within it, is engrained in monocultural and ethnocentric standards (1992).

The collective work of scholars providing understanding of cognition, bias, and how they manifest, is what promoted and improved the conceptualization of addressing social inequities that exist in our institutions (Triplett, Allen, & Lewis, 2014). Cultural competence is described as being multidimensional and needing work to happen at various levels (Sue, 2001). At the individual level, when cultural competence is absent, the barriers we face are stereotypes,

prejudices, and harnessed implicit biases that many folks are unaware of (Sue, 2001). At the societal level, we are experiencing the invisibility to ethnocentric and monoculturalism (Sue, 2001). Furthermore, cultural competence is thought to only be effective at the organizational level to have societal level impacts if the work is first established on an individual basis by developing personal cultural competency (Sue, 2001). The rationale is that systems of power and privilege cannot address those systems if personal cultural competence has not been established to promote the understanding and value of acknowledging a system of inequity exist.

The facts are that Black and African American students are excessively punished and punished more severely in subjective discipline decisions (Girvan, Gion, McIntosh, & Smolkowski, 2017). The use of subjective discipline practices allows for implicit racial bias to influence the decision made for Black and African American students. Engaging in the reduction of the systemic inequities of students of color aligns directly with Counseling Psychologists values of promoting social justice, as well as our ethics to promote the welfare of those whom we serve (Packard, 2009). Furthermore, Counseling Psychologists serve within various capacities such as consultants, public policy analysts, outside of our traditional roles of teaching, researching, and providing therapy. This study attempts to highlight the importance of introducing cultural competency as a multidimensional approach, starting with developing individual levels of cultural competence in order to address system-level change. The current study's goal is to explore how individual levels of cultural competence and levels of implicit racial bias may impact the decision of teachers when faced with a subjective discipline decision.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Subjective Discipline

Background of Subjective Discipline

In America, there is an unspoken concept of “the American dream”. It is the idea that everything can be yours if you try. It is evident that the American dream can be an illusory concept for Black and African American individuals in America (Martin & Smith, 2017). Research has shown that our society has clear racial disproportionalities and inequities that exist for Black and African Americans in the United States related to employment, education, healthcare, and the justice system (Chapman, Kaatz, & Carnes, 2013; Green et al., 2007, Cooper, 2003). For Black and African American children who navigate the American public-school systems, many of them have experienced their educational institutions as being systems of inequity. Black and African American students are facing an educational system that continues to cover its eyes to acknowledging and addressing the significant amount of students that are being failed by its institution at much higher rates than any other racial group (McNeal, 2016). The field of education has embraced the importance of cultural competence and its integration into the educational system, but Black and African American students continue to remain victims to a system where teachers unknowingly and subjectively make decisions regarding discipline when implicit racial bias may be present (Greenwald & Krieger, 2006; Rynder, 2019; Coles & Powell, 2020; Martin & Smith, 2017).

In the American school system, school discipline is developed and driven by governing school districts, boards, and state regulations. While school discipline is important, it has also been used to historically exclude students from access to education and academic progression (Coles & Powell, 2020; Martin & Smith, 2017; Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Polluck, 2016).

Potentially written to be equitable, research has shown that the outcomes of school policies show a clear disproportion in who is being impacted by them (McNeal, 2016). These policies allow for a great amount of flexibility in what classroom infractions are forwarded to the administrators for discipline (Hanson, 2005). In the 1990's the zero tolerance policy became a standard that was adopted among school districts and boards nationally (Hanson, 2005), This adoption by various school districts was often adapted to meet the needs of the schools with agreeance of its leadership (Hanson, 2005). Part of that process allows for teachers and administrators to engage in subjective discipline practices that is significantly related to resulting in exclusionary forms of discipline like suspension or expulsion (Triplett, Allen, & Lewis, 2014). This leads to some discipline measures being objective, while others are not. Subjective discipline, also commonly referred to as subjective offenses, has been labelled as a main facilitator of epidemic levels of suspensions and expulsion that are seen with Black and African American students in the American public school systems nationwide (Triplett, Allen, & Lewis, 2014).

Because subjective discipline requires teachers and administrators to lean on their own frame of reference and value system when making decisions, it is easy for personal bias to have an impact on the decision that is determined (McNeal & Dunbar, 2010). The grave concern with subjective discipline is it gives teachers and administrators the ability to “make a call” based on their ideas and beliefs of what they feel is the best decision to make (Forsyth, Biggar, Forsyth, & Howat, 2015). Subjective discipline has shown to be motivated by implicit bias (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). A great example provided by Martin & Smith (2017) shows the nature of subjective discipline who studied the concept of disrespect an inherently subjective behavior rooted in the eye of the beholder, and difficult to prove. Subjective discipline is seen mostly through subjective suspensions; these suspensions require an adult to use their judgment to

determine if a student's behavior warranted a school suspension (Balderas, 2015). Research shows that Black and African American students are referred for more subjective offenses and concerns and for less serious offenses that may not result in a referral for a student of White decent (Martin & Smith, 2017).

Subjective discipline and those subjective type policies in schools is what has led to the increase in Black and African American students arrest, having lower academic achievement, and having significantly higher dropout rates (Forsyth, C. J., Biggar, R. W., Forsyth, Y. A., & Howat, H. 2015; Triplett, Allen, & Lewis, 2014). Many scholars have asserted that exclusionary practices such as school suspensions are actually anti-Black policies that purposely remove and exclude Black and African American students from the school system (Coles & Powell, 2020). Researchers have theorized that the overrepresentation of Black and African American students in office disciplinary referrals reflects a clear cultural bias embedded within school discipline practices (Bradshaw et. al., 2010). Furthermore, education scholars, mental health professionals, national organizations, and more have called for addressing the educational inequity by also addressing and eliminating disparities in subjective discipline practices (Anyon et. al., 2014).

Black and African American students being impacted at much higher rates, even when other variables are consistent (Losen & Martinez, 2013). Furthermore, it is implicit racial bias that facilitates disparities in subjective discipline and perpetuates the cycle of Black and African American students into the prison system, or other debilitating outcomes (Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Polluck, 2016). The disproportionate number of Black and African American students being severely punished through subjective discipline cases compared to white students is also apparent and very salient to Black students. Studies show that many students felt they were victims of implicit racial bias and cultural insensitivity from their respective teachers

(Mongan & Walker, 2012; Losen & Martinez, 2013). As a self-fulfilling prophecy, students who perceive that their teachers view them as hostile, may in turn become more hostile (Bradshaw et. al., 2010). The use of practices like subjective discipline has shown to impact student's perception, with them feeling a lack of support, differential treatment, and low expectations from their teachers compared to White students (Hanson, 2005; Teske, 2011). This furthers students to feel less connected to their school which leads to a greater risk of behavioral concerns and student disengagement (Bradshaw et. al., 2010; Fueyo & Bechtol, 1999).

A notable qualitative study that interviewed Black and African American mothers perceived their children's teachers as being "powerful figures" who they felt "undermined their efforts" to actually provide their students with equitable educational opportunities and a positive sense of racial identity (Cooper, 2003. pg. 7). Black and African American students face barriers through subjective discipline measures but are also faced with systemic barriers in access to quality education. Studies show that Black and African American students are often taught at schools that are dilapidated and largely under resourced (Coles & Powell, 2020; Darling-Hammond, 2004). Other studies discuss how institutional barriers within education as well as facing culturally insensitive teachers make it even more difficult for Black and African American students to succeed academically (Hanson, 2005; Fueyo & Bechtol, 1999). As a consequence, to being under-resourced and under-funded, students in urban schools have experienced a significant decline in the amount of qualified and certified teachers who want to teach in that setting (Darling-Hammond, 2004). Unfortunately, Black and African American students who already lack important socioeconomic resources are more likely to receive inadequate instruction which creates and nurtures the racial academic achievement gap (Cooper, 2003).

Research on student behavior and discipline found no evidence that Black and African American overrepresentation in exclusionary type discipline (e.g., out-of-school suspension) is due to those students having higher rates of bad behavior (Gilliam et. al., 2016). There is evidence that argues several individual-level explanations for the racial disparity that we see in school discipline. Black and African American students are frequently misperceived as misbehaving which results from racial biases that impact perception of Black students (Nichols, 2004). More research has shown that Black and African American children are often victims of “adultification”, where Black and African American students are perceived to be older than their age compared to their counterparts which results in the hypervigilance to punish these students (Ferguson, 2000). Other work has found that schools that had larger percentages of Black students were more likely to use punitive disciplinary responses and more likely to use subjective discipline practices (Welch & Payne, 2010).

Scholars have asserted that the racial disproportionalities that we see is not simply the result of intentional discrimination (Morrison & Skiba, 2001). Instead, the disproportions in the numbers we see and the differential patterns of institutional decision-making is due to complex interactions with scholars identifying two key points in the discipline process (1) the differential selection of students of colors for office disciplinary referrals and, (2) the differential processing of racial minority students for discipline resolutions, particularly exclusionary infractions like out-of-school suspension, law enforcement referrals, and expulsion (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). The differential selection in school discipline processes generally begin with an office referral that is made by the classroom teacher (Anyon et. al., 2014). Those referrals tend to be driven by minor infractions and subjective categories of what is perceived as student misconduct, such as defiance, disobedience, disrespectful behavior, rather than more objective and serious

behaviors like bringing a firearm to school (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Bradshaw, Mitchell, O'Brennan, & Leaf, 2010; Nichols, 2004). Teachers typically initiate discipline referrals in response to disruptive externalizing behaviors or challenges to their authority (Bradshaw, Mitchell, O'Brennan, & Leaf, 2010). This general pattern may exacerbate the problem of racial disparities in school discipline outcomes since we know that perceptions of student's behavioral problems are often racially biased (Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Polluck, 2016). These biases in perception of student behavior contributes to differential selection for office referrals and racial disproportions in the distribution of referral rationales.

The differential processing and school discipline process starts after the office disciplinary referral has been made by the teacher. The school administrators are mainly responsible for the decisions made about the consequences for the misconduct reported in the referral (Anyon et. al., 2014). Decisions about serious and objective infractions, such as bringing a weapon to school is often already dictated by the state, federal, or district's policy (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). However, consequences for more common forms of misconduct such as defiance or disruptive behavior are typically left to the discretion of the school administrators and are rarely applied consistently for the same behaviors based on research findings (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Bradshaw, Mitchell, O'Brennan, & Leaf, 2010; Nichols, 2004; Coles & Powell, 2020). Subjective discipline practices, where students may disrupt the implicit norm or perceptions among school teachers and administrators, have the greatest potential for implicit racial bias in processing and decision-making because behavioral expectations are shaped by an individual's culture, context, and perceptions (Monroe, 2005; Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Polluck, 2016; Nichols, 2004; Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010).

Historical Context of School Discipline

In the United States, there is historical context that should be noted as it relates to education policies, their implementation, and the marginalization that has occurred over time with Black and African American individuals. Prior to the landmark case, *Brown v. Board of Education* in the 1950's, Black students were not allowed to attend the same schools as White students, as educational segregation was legal during the time period (Triplett, Allen, & Lewis, 2014). Once integration had begun, various schools' ideas of disciplinary action had been the means of corporal punishment (physical punishment) which was promoted and further protected by law (Triplett, Allen, & Lewis, 2014). Because of the law, educators and administrators were protected from criminal offenses, but parents and students had the option of challenging school disciplinary actions through civil law (Hanson, 2005). By the 1960's in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions were being introduced as the alternative to the long enforced corporal punishment forms of discipline for students (Triplett, Allen, & Lewis, 2014). In-school suspension grew in popularity because it was assumed to be a form of disciplinary action taken for a student while not impeding their academic achievement or performance (Hanson, 2005). However, more studies showed that in school suspensions were also impeding the progress of students (Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Polluck, 2016).

Starting around the early 1990's, school discipline became defined in terms of zero tolerance, which as it currently exists, leaves teachers with making subjective discipline decisions that has resulted in the inequity of Black and African American students being excluded from educational attainment and access (Hanson, 2005; Martin & Smith, 2017). Newer research suggested the zero tolerance policy and subjective discipline practices have perpetuated yet another form of marginalization on students of color (Skiba & Knesting, 2001). After more than 60 years, the same educational exclusion and disenfranchisement of Black and African

American students still exist through means of subjective discipline and exclusionary forms of discipline (Hanson, 2005). These historical inequities have existed for so long that on January of 2014, the United States Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan and Attorney General, Eric Holder released a series of guidelines to the American government and public that urged all schools to abandoned and discontinue the use of zero tolerance type policies that are often known to be policies filled with subjection (Triplett, Allen & Lewis, 2014; Hanson, 2005). These government officials, on record, contended that these types of policies that exist do not promote democratic principles of equal educational opportunity (Triplett, Allen & Lewis, 2014; Hanson, 2005).

Many scholars have discussed how forms of school discipline have not evolved for betterment of students, but rather evolved to further oppress Black and African American students by still enforcing means of excluding students from school systems by lengthened suspensions and expulsions (Hanson, 2005). During the 1970's, there was a rise in considering in-school-suspensions as an alternative means to discipline acknowledging that being in school was more humane than expelling a student and completely removing them from the school, with no options of returning. This also allowed students to continue their academic assignments during the period of their punishment, not altering their opportunity to continue to learn (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). However, this was not adopted or considered by many school districts. Furthermore, Black and African American students historically have faced educational inequity for generations; their educational reality has always been one that has systemic injustice embedded in its fabric.

Subjective Discipline Demographic Differences

Subjective discipline has facilitated various approaches to problematic behavior within school settings. Studies have found that even when objective discipline infractions were clear,

school administrators still interpreted and made very different decisions for consequences (Dohy & Tachelle, 2018). Additionally, if we are able to see a variation in how objective discipline policies are enforced, then we should acknowledge that this would definitely be the case for more subjective discipline cases. Urban and rural administrators have differing interpretations of the subjective discipline practices and their utilization (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). Using a policy analysis framework, Dunbar & Villarruel (2004) discussed how rural administrators and urban administrators practiced subjective discipline very differently, facilitating different long-term outcomes for those students. Rural administrators were more likely to overlook school violations as opposed to urban school administrators (Dunbar & Villarruel, 2004). These researchers bring into context the influence of cultural context and cultural norms (Dunbar & Villarruel, 2004). A rural administrator had excused a student to return home to remove a weapon that was in his car, as well as another rural administrator excusing a student for having a hunting rifle in his car on school premises with the justification that hunting was embedded in the community's culture (Dunbar & Villarruel, 2004). On the other hand, research found that urban administrators expressed that creating safe environments was at the forefront of their decision-making and considered administering punishment as the top priority, resulting in the implementation of the policy with harsher outcomes for students (Dunbar & Villarruel, 2004). The larger context that is challenging is that rural administrators did not seem to view the possession of weapons as interpersonal threats, while urban administrators did (Dunbar & Villarruel, 2004). This leads to opposing outcomes for a rural student compared to an urban student (Dunbar & Villarruel, 2004).

Black and African American Students and Subjective Discipline

Studies have shown that Black and African American students are disproportionately targeted by subjective discipline policies, implicating unfavorable and harsh outcomes post-school (Skiba & Knesting, 2001). It is no secret that all racial minority students, specifically students that are Black and African American experience disciplinary action at much higher rates when looking at their total school population (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). More studies indicated there were a number of factors that facilitated the disparity in numbers with Black and African American students being introduced to the juvenile justice system (Dohy & Tachelle, 2018; Teske, 2011). These factors include racial biases and a general marginalization by having lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Skiba & Knesting, 2001). Possibly, Black students are being disciplined at might higher rates because of the intersection they face with class bias and racial bias (Moore & Karpinski, 2019). Over time, research has proven that race seems to contribute to disciplinary outcomes independently of socioeconomic status, meaning that race is a significant contributor to who is disciplined, as well as how (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Moore & Karpinski, 2019).

Within the subjective discipline practices, not only are Black students being disciplined at much higher rates than White students, but they are also faced with much harsher punishments leading to further harsher outcomes compared to White students (Hanson, 2005; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). This practice soon created what is known as the discipline gap (Monroe, 2005). Research starting as early as 1975 collected national data revealing that Black students were suspended from school at much higher rates and were also more likely to be suspended more than once, even when the conduct was the same as White students (Glackman, 1978). Since then, research has been very consistent finding that there is a significant disproportionality of Black and African American students being suspended, severely

punished, and filtered into the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems at much higher rates compared to White students (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). Specifically, studies have shown that Black students are more frequently exposed to forms of corporal punishment, and less likely to receive mild disciplinary alternatives when being referred for a disciplinary problem compared to White students (Shaw & Braden, 1990; McFadden, Marsh, Price, & Hwang, 1992).

Qualitative research established critical themes that African American and Black men identified as problematic within the current school climates that implement the Zero-tolerance policy (Canton, 2012). In her 2012 research, Canton interviewed 10 Black and African American men who had identified as dropping out of high school due to school suspensions and expulsions. Many of the participants expressed discomfort when attending school and compared their high schools to entering a prison system because of the presence of police officers and metal detectors (Canton, 2012). A key factor that promotes the school-to prison pipeline is the considerable number of Black students that have not graduated from high school (Monahan et. al., 2014). Data shows that because of Black students being suspended and expelled from school at much higher rates, their chances of graduation decreases, which inevitably creates a pipeline to the prison system (Teske, 2011; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). More so, there is no research that demonstrates that out-of-school suspensions reduces the rate of student discipline, nor deter other students from prohibited behaviors (Green, Maynard, & Stegenga, 2017). Yet the United States Education System continues to operate under subjective discipline policies that have been proven to be more detrimental than helpful, and more marginalizing and socially injustice than equitable (Mongan & Walker, 2012; Monahan et. al., 2014; Gupta-Kagan, 2018).

Subjective discipline and its challenging features are of importance, but what is more shattering is the overall increase in the perpetuation of a pipeline that facilitates Black and African American students into the American prison system (Gupta-Kagan, 2018). For some time, research has attempted to focus on implicit racial bias and its effects on the discipline gap, the school-to-prison pipeline, and the impacts of the zero-tolerance type policies; however, the difficulty surrounds capturing a person's implicit attitudes (Curran, 2017). Direct measures of racial attitudes have been questioned on validity based on social desirability; in general, most individuals would not want to expose their racial biases or may not be aware that those racial biases exist within them (Green et. al., 2007; Chapman, Kaatz, & Carnes, 2013). Demonstrating that the disproportion of Black and African American students being severely impacted by a policy because of a person's implicit biases is difficult. At best, the research has been directed in paths to rule out alternative hypotheses that might account for the overrepresentation of Black and African American students being impacted, and consistently being a marginalized group in a variety of other contexts (van Ryn et. al., 2011; Banaji & Hardin, 1996; Peek et. al., 2010).

Because race obviously plays a significant role in why Black and African American students seem to be punished at a much higher rates, studies have started to consider how cultural factors, multicultural dynamics, and a lack of cultural competency may be contributing to the disproportionality that we have seen consistently for 40 plus years (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992, Banaji & Hardin, 1996, Devine, 1989; Nelson et. al., 2008). One study suggests that Black and African American students often share a cultural mismatch in the classroom with their teachers (Dukes & Ming, 2008; Johnson, 2006). One function of cultural mismatch is that students' education is approached without the use of culturally adaptive responses from educators and administrators (Monroe, 2005). More studies suggest that understanding cultural diversity

and developing a cultural competency from multicultural education is beneficial to the educational system with potential to create societal level impacts (Johnson, 2006; Montez et. al., 2019; Morettini, Brown, & Viator, 2018). When the United States healthcare system started to research its health disparities among races, part of the consensus was a general lack of culturally competent care of patients provided by healthcare personnel (Weech-Maldonado et. al., 2018).

Zero Tolerance Policy: Subjective Discipline Example

Subjective discipline and its impacts are most often seen through zero tolerance type policies. The American educational system, over time, has adapted various versions of their own zero tolerance policies (Martinez, 2009). These policies can look differently depending on the school district or system they exist in. Although the zero-tolerance policy can appear with clarity, the policy itself is vague and leaves an extensive amount of room for school administrators' interpretation. The zero-tolerance policy is only enforced if the school system and school administrators choose to adopt it (Skiba & Knesting, 2001). Along with its adoption, school administrators also have the ability to interpret how to manage problematic behavior (Skiba & Knesting, 2001). One common way that student misbehavior is punished is through suspension (Green, Maynard, & Stegenga, 2017). Suspension is removing the student from the physical school setting, sometimes for days at a time (Hanson, 2005). While many school systems, parents, and administrators believe that removing problematic students from the school is beneficial to other students, there is no research to support the claim (Skiba & Knesting, 2001). Unfortunately, the problematic students, and those students' parents, become overly burdened by the use of suspensions (Losen & Martinez, 2013). Furthermore, exclusionary practices such as the use of suspension as a disciplinary tool is frequently utilized despite the vast amount of

research that suggests poorer outcomes for those students (Losen & Martinez, 2013; Dohy & Tachelle, 2018; Green, Maynard, & Stegenga, 2017).

Historically, suspensions have been viewed as a way to get the attention of parents (Taras et al., 2003). The zero-tolerance policy, at its origin, required school administrators to expel and suspend students who were involved or suspected to be involved with any on-campus drug violence, use, or drug gang-related activity (Martinez, 2009). As time progressed, the policy began to be applied to a much broader range of behaviors, now extending to justifiable suspension or expulsion for cigarette smoking, class disruption, or swearing (Skiba & Knesting, 2001). Policies like the zero tolerance policy allows teachers the flexibility of determining a student's disciplinary action if their behavior is covered under their school policy (Hanson, 2005). For example, if a student is perceived as being disrespectful, and the standing school policy is there is a zero tolerance for disrespect, a student can potentially be severely disciplined based on a subjective concept such as disrespect. Inevitably, what one teacher determines as disrespect may not be viewed as disrespect by another teacher. To punish a student on based on subjective disciplinary practices is detrimental and harmful to all students it impacts.

Outcomes of Subjective Discipline in Education

As mentioned earlier, the use of subjective discipline and enforcing policies like the zero tolerance policy hopes to deter future problematic behavior; however, research suggests that this ideology has adverse effects (Teske, 2011; DeMatthew, Carey, Olivarez, & Saeedi, 2017). Although subjective discipline and exclusionary practices have been utilized continuously throughout the educational system, there is research that indicates that the overuse of suspensions and sending students to juvenile facilities decreases their chances of graduation and is counterproductive to promoting school and community safety (Teske, 2011; Martin & Smith,

2017). Often, the use of subjective discipline on Black and African American students leads to out-of-school suspensions (Martin & Smith, 2017; Caton, 2012). Research has found correlations indicating that students with higher levels of suspensions also had much lower levels of academic achievement and students with higher school suspensions are more likely to be arrested (Skiba & Raush, 2006; Monahan, VanDerhei, Bechtold & Cauffman, 2014). The idea that suspension will correct problematic student behavior does not seem to be supported through research. Furthermore, it seems to indicate that students who are suspended are actually more likely to be suspended in the future with 50% of those students experiencing another suspension in the same school year, and 70% of them still experiencing some other form of school punishment (Massar, McIntosh, & Eliason, 2015).

When students are not in school, they inevitably have more time to engage in problem behavior due to unstructured and unsupervised environments, based on the Routine Activity Theory (Bleakley & Bleakly, 2018). This theory further suggests that forcing students out of the school due to suspension only facilitates the opportunity for them to engage in behaviors that warrant disciplinary actions (Monahan et. al., 2014). Out-of-school suspensions efficacy have been called into question based on students' social development with research showing that social development in the school system is a protective factor against developing antisocial behaviors (Monahan, Steinberg, & Cauffman, 2013). Research has also established that associating and being involved with delinquent peers increases the chances of developing antisocial behavior as well (Losen & Martinez, 2013). This infers that out-of-school suspensions increase any students' chances of being involved with other delinquents, even when considered a low-risk student (Laird, Pettit, Dodge, & Bates, 2005).

School-to-Prison Pipeline

A result of subjective discipline and its ambiguity around educational policies allowed for the introduction of school resource officers, who are essentially public police officers designated to police students within a school setting (Dohy & Tachelle, 2018). This is notably how the school-to prison pipeline was instantaneously created (Gupta-Kagan, 2018). The American Psychological Association along with other organizations, educational leaders, and policy makers have questioned the effectiveness of subjective discipline in schools while also discussing the social injustice that various school policies perpetuate (2008; Losen & Martinez, 2013). The introduction of police officers within school systems created an increase in student suspensions, as well as an increase in students being funneled into juvenile facilities (Skiba & Knesting, 2001). School resource officers are the visible representation of the link between schooling and policing, with many United States school systems operating similarly to the U.S. prison system (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). Traditionally, student behavior was handled by teachers and school administrators who hold advanced academic credentials and are supervised by their local school boards (Brown, 2006). In recent years, there has been a noticeable transition where student behavior is not handled by school educators and administrators but rather school resources officers.

The use of school resource officers has subjected school systems and policy makers to questions surrounding the appropriateness of police officers in the school system (Martinez, 2009). Officers have minimal, if any training in education, developmental psychology, and other beneficial credentials necessary to work with children and adolescents in the United States (Brown, 2006). Data has shown that students at schools with school resource officers present are five times more likely to be arrested for disorderly conduct compared to students without school resource officers present (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). Additionally, the presence of school

resource officers facilitates student behaviors as being criminalized, therefore needing to be dealt with in the criminal justice system (Theriot, 2009). Consistently, research findings indicated that having school resource officers integrated within the school system increase the chances of any student being introduced to the juvenile justice system (Brown, 2006; Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018; Gupta-Kagan, 2018). Moreover, research has shown that Black and African American students have been targeted at much higher rates by school resource officers compared to White students and Black and African American students are highly concentrated in schools that have school resource officers present (Brown, 2006).

Qualitative research established critical themes that African American and Black men identified as problematic within the current school climates that utilize subjective discipline practices (Canton, 2012). In her 2012 research, Caton interviewed 10 Black and African American men who had identified as dropping out of high school due to school suspensions and expulsions from subjective discipline related offenses. Many of the participants expressed discomfort when attending school and compared their high schools to entering a prison system because of the presence of police officers and metal detectors (Canton, 2012). A key factor that promotes the school-to prison pipeline is the considerable number of Black students that have not graduated from high school because of exclusionary practices (Monahan et. al., 2014). Data shows that because of Black students being suspended and expelled from school at much higher rates, their chances of graduation decreases, which inevitably creates a pipeline to the prison system (Teske, 2011; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). More so, there is no research that demonstrates that out-of-school suspensions reduces the rate of student discipline, nor deter other students from prohibited behaviors (Green, Maynard, & Stegenga, 2017). Yet the United States Education System continues to operate under policies that have been proven to be more

detrimental than helpful, and more marginalizing and socially injustice than equitable (Mongan & Walker, 2012; Monahan et. al., 2014; Gupta-Kagan, 2018).

Subjective Discipline and Mental Health

Subjective discipline and exclusionary practices in the educational system has shown to have its impacts on Black and African American students and their mental health (Shakar et. al., 2013). Facing exclusionary practices and punitive type disciplines has shown to have long-term emotional effect on students as well (Shankar et. al., 2013). Being suspended from school has shown strong correlations with future delinquency and substance use and abuse (Cameron & Sheppard, 2006). Research has been clear that education, and a student's experience in education can either help or harm student's matriculation through its system. Studies have found that students who are subjected to school discipline may react to it with strong, but unprocessed emotions such as anger, humiliation, shame, and anxiety (Cameron & Sheppard, 2006). Additionally, school discipline sometimes reflects a message to Black and African American students that they are untrustworthy or not competent which can impact self-esteem and increase disengagement (Cameron & Sheppard, 2006).

Decision-making

The process of decision-making is a cognitive process that has been researched well in the literature, lending itself to various definitions. Generally, the decision-making process is described as a cognitive process that includes options that an individual may select from, along with the potential outcomes of the selected decision, and the probability of the direct consequences from the selected decision (Gomez & Young, 2018). Decision-making is 1 of 37 fundamental cognitive processes that has been identified as occurring as little as every few seconds both consciously and unconsciously (Wang & Ruhe, 2007). Research surrounding the

cognitive process of decision-making has suggested that various factors can impact a person's ability when making decisions such as emotions, heuristics, social categorizations, and biases (Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003; Fiske, 1998). In order to fully understand the process of decision-making, there lies importance of how a person may arrive at the decision that they choose, as well as what factors may helped influenced the "how". Literature surrounding decision-making and judgment focuses on how individuals utilize their personal desires and beliefs when selecting a decision (Wang & Ruhe, 2007). The conceptual template for decision-making has been determined by scholars as having three main components, (1) courses of action (considering options and alternatives), (2) the individual's beliefs about objective states, processes, and events in the world, and (3) personal desires, values, or utilities that describe the consequences associated with the potential outcomes of each action, if implemented (Hastie, 2001).

Some of the earlier research in cognition and heuristics help explain how individuals may arrive at their decisions, based on using mental shortcuts. Tversky and Kahneman (1974) published a paper that discussed how heuristics and biases are often involved in how we make decisions. Specifically, they discussed that individuals may utilize one of three types of heuristics to help them arrive at a decision: these three heuristics as representativeness, availability, and adjustment and anchoring. Heuristics have been described as quick mental shortcuts to help individuals arrive at decisions quickly and intended to be accurate. However, research has also established that as effective as heuristics may be in helping individuals make quick decisions, heuristics also are subject to systematic errors (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Since Tversky and Kahneman's work, along with other scholars, the research surrounding biases and heuristics has expanded with various heuristics and biases being named and defined, while also acknowledging the error that occurs in our decision-making and use of these biases and

heuristics. Blumenthal-Barby (2016) makes the claim that all biases impact a person's intentionality and although biases and heuristics are psychological tendencies, it is also acknowledged that they are not easy to eradicate. Heuristics, in their usefulness, also require a level of awareness, because heuristics can be harmful to autonomous decision-making.

Researching, defining, and understanding the ways in which individuals engage in decision-making has been of importance to all fields. Mathematically, it has been established on various pathways to decision-making. However, studying unconscious influences on decision-making has been difficult because of its implicitness. Furthermore, the introduction of implicit biases on decision-making was introduced. In Psychology, the idea of the "unconscious" is what helped established various ideas of thoughts relating to psychology, judgment, and decision-making. Sigmund Freud identified the unconscious as a cognitive process that is, essentially happening, without our attention or awareness. Acknowledging that unconscious processes on decision-making are just as detrimental to decision-making as conscious processes were, research began to expand on the impacts of unconscious processes facilitating conversation and pedagogy around implicit biases and implicit beliefs (Newell & Shanks, 2014).

Emotions, just like heuristics, is another way that decision-making can be impacted. Decision-making is a complex process, and depending on the potential outcomes, decision-making can involve a great deal of cognitive activity, with emotions having a significant role. Furthermore, the impacts of a person's emotions on decision-making can be known or unknown to that individual. In other words, individuals' emotions can unknowingly facilitate how a person's makes a decision (Gomez & Young, 2018). An individual's emotions can impact decision-making based on the type of emotion and the severity of the emotion, with research establishing that certain emotions and emotions severity can impact cognitive processes and

deliberate decision-making altogether (Lowenstein & Lerner, 2003). Frameworks developed from the lens model attempts to explain how decision making can be influenced by unconscious processes, such as implicit racial biases. The lens model is based on the premise that decision-makers view the world through a “lens” receiving cues that mediate between a stimulus in the environment and the internal perceptions of the decision-maker. The individual uses cues along with judgment to make a decision (Brunswick, 1956). The lens model suggests that individuals have multiple pieces of information that they may use to make a decision, some of which can be unknown to the decision-maker (Newell & Shanks, 2014)

Research has established that everyone engages in decision-making with the vulnerability of having one or multiple unconscious influences. The unconscious influences shape a person’s attitudes, which inevitably impacts the way a person engages in decision making each time (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). Research has established that unconscious thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs impact the way in which a person interacts with another individual (Hastie, 2001). Furthermore, individuals fail to realize that unconscious thoughts can be intrusive much earlier, as cognitive process-based errors with judgment subtly distort objective data prior to any decisions being made (Hart, 2005). Simply put, by the time an educator decides to expel a student, the educator may firmly believe that the student of color is a more problematic student needing punishment as opposed to a white student, with this belief being informed by previous unconscious attitudes. Inevitably, students of color face more harshness when decisions are made for them, simply because unconscious processes were existing for the educator far beyond the student was entered into trouble.

Many studies have explored the link between aversive racism and decision making, explaining how aversive racism, in its implicitness, can inform decision-making. The aversive

racism framework is used to describe the conflict that exist between a white individual's belief in egalitarian values and their unacknowledged negative feelings towards minority groups (Esses, Haddock, & Zanna, 1993). People who engage in aversive racism are not consciously aware, and also are strongly motivated to protect a nonprejudiced self-image. Furthermore, the aversive racism framework suggests that racial bias is expressed in indirect ways that do not threaten the individuals nonprejudiced view of themselves. Because a person who is an aversive racist does consciously recognize and endorse egalitarian values, they will not discriminate in situations in which they would recognize as discrimination, where it would be obvious to them and others. Because these individuals still possess negative attitudes and feelings towards minority groups, often unconsciously, discrimination occurs when bias itself is not obvious to that individual or can be rationalized on the basis of another factor besides race (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Dovidio & Fiske, 2012; Hastie, 2001). Aversive racism is only one of various mechanisms that inform decision making, introducing a totally new perspective, establishing that individuals' explicit values and implicit attitudes do not always align. Furthermore, the conflict between explicit values and implicit attitudes are not always apparent to that individual, with a person expressing the highest regards to egalitarian views but also carrying demeaning racist attitudes unconsciously.

Implicit Racial Bias

What is Implicit Racial Bias?

Implicit racial bias is defined in various ways, with the most common definition being the process that involves perceiving someone differently based on the social construct of race (Gravett, 2017). Implicit racial biases are subconscious associations that are made about a racial group involuntarily with associations occurring automatically in response to various

environmental factors or cues (Nance, 2019). Implicit racial bias can be explained through general implicit cognition, being based on traces of past experiences impacting behavior, even when the earlier influential experience itself cannot be remembered (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Social Psychologists since the early 1930's assumed that individuals' attitudes and stereotypes existed within the conscious mind (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Because of this hypothesis, the universal practice of operationalizing attitudes, stereotypes, and other related constructs such as self-worth, were all based on the premise that all thoughts are evident and able to be accurately self-reported (Nosek, Hawkins, & Frazier, 2011).

The word bias is denoted as a displacement of an individual's responses along a continuum of possible judgements (Greenwald & Krieger, 2006). Implicit biases, in general, can be associated with race, gender, disability status, age, and other identities or characteristics. Because our implicit biases are unknown, they have the ability to impact psychological phenomenon such as the misuse of stereotypes (Rynder, 2019). Noted as the most remarkable feature of implicit bias, it is a grave possibility that people are not even aware of their own biases (Gravett, 2017). Implicit biases and associations, like stereotypes, can be helpful to humans to manage information and make decisions quickly and effectively (Nosek, Hawkins, & Frazier, 2011). This is accomplished by humans quickly filtering information while categorizing individuals according to cultural stereotypes (Nance, 2019). Additionally, everyone has implicit biases, whether known or unknown to the individual, because our brains automatically organize information through schemas, or cognitive shortcuts (Nosek, Hawkins, & Frazier, 2011). Schemas are helpful to individuals, but also result in vast inaccuracies (Rynders, 2019). Studies show that implicit associations take place for all individuals, and despite any individual's best intentions, the human mind automatically categorizes information in racial categories and against

disfavored social groups (Gravett, 2017). A social stereotype is a mental association between a social group or category and a trait (Greenwald & Krieger, 2006). As mentioned before, stereotypes can be helpful to humans, providing information quickly. However, stereotypes can be inaccurate, or not reflect a statistical reality (Greenwald & Krieger, 2006). An example of this would be having the belief that all cats are black, when in actuality, cats come in a variety of colors. Stereotypes yield themselves to associations that may be favorable or unfavorable traits within that particular group. Both attitudes and stereotypes facilitate causes of discriminatory biases (Greenwald & Krieger, 2006).

Many scholars have taken the work of Greenwald & Krieger explaining that because we live in a world where our implicit mental processes (including implicit memories, perceptions, attitudes, and stereotypes) can be highly influenced by our social and environmental context (2006), this allows us to also acknowledge that monoculturalism and ethnocentrism is so embedded within the American school system that it becomes difficult to address problematic features, and how that hurts the students who do not fit into that monoculture. Monoculturalism and the invisibility of its effects, is in fact, a major culprit that works against cultural competence in the American society (Sue, 2001). A feature of monoculturalism is the strong, unspoken belief in the superiority of one group's cultural heritage, in terms of their values, traditions, dress, art, craft, and more (Sue, 2004). In many cases, members of this group possess conscious and unconscious feelings of superiority that may actually be reflected in the way they engage with others, along with decisions they make (Sue, 2004; Ogbu, 1992).

In monocultural societies, the dominant group possesses power to impose its standards and beliefs on the less powerful group. All groups to some extent do share ethnocentrism but if those groups do not possess the power within the context of that society, then hypothetically,

they cannot impose those values oppressively (Sue, 2004). Implicit racial bias and its impacts are not intended to create harm but understanding the context of monoculturalism helps individuals acknowledge that most systems and institutions in our society are also very monocultural in nature. Because these systems fail to recognize this monocultural climate, many minority groups will always face forms of oppression and inequity.

Implicit vs Explicit Bias

Greenwald & Banaji distinguish in their literature the difference between what they describe as indirect, unconscious, or implicit mode of operation for attitudes and stereotypes (1995). Past research depicts the illustration of implicit cognition is depicted through a word-completion task (Tulving, Schacter, & Stark, 1982). During this task, participants were asked to complete words in response to incomplete letter strings in the form of word stems or word fragments (Tulving, Schacter, & Stark, 1982). The researchers found that the words the participants chose to respond with were more likely to be words from a list that they were causally exposed to earlier in the experiment, rather than words that were not priorly presented to the individuals (Tulving, Schacter, & Stark, 1982). The effect of prior exposure occurs despite the individual's poor ability to recall or recognize words from the earlier list (Tulving, Schacter, & Stark, 1982). This indicates that although the individual is not instructed to retrieve the earlier presented words, and may not be able to recall them, the individual's response still indicates a residual effect (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Greenwald & Banaji established that unconscious thoughts could still have impacts on how humans arrive at decisions, no differently than the word-completion task (1995). The fact that implicit racial biases exist creates a challenge for proving how it can facilitate racial discrimination. Discrimination is based on the assumption that all individuals are guided by their explicit beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes, obviously not

accounting for the fact that these beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes can be informed implicitly as well (Greenwald & Krieger, 2006).

As memory began to be studied, research also developed around explicit and implicit memories (Nosek & Smyth, 2007). The understanding of implicit memories aided the research around implicit associations and biases. Explicit memories are those memories that an individual can consciously recollect from a past experience, and can be proven by a means of free recall, recognition tasks, or cued recall that make a clear reference to some prior experience or event while asking the individual to deliberately recall some aspect of that particular experience (Graf & Schacter, 1985). Implicit memories are demonstrated by any change in thoughts, experience, or action that is attributed to some past experience, even in the absence of conscious recollection of the particular event (Nosek & Smyth, 2007).

Explicit and implicit memories are distinguishable in two senses (1) implicit memories can be spared while explicit memories can be impaired, and (2) certain variables that pertain to encoding, storage, or retrieval have different effects on explicit and implicit memory performance (Kihlstrom, Barnhardt, & Tatarzyn, 1992). Research conducted on memory and implicit biases suggested that memory can be encoded in racially bias ways, and explicit racial preferences were not always related to implicit racial preferences (Levinson, 2007). Furthermore, a person with implicit racial biases can remember things in racially unfavorable ways because of their implicit attitudes and beliefs, even unknowingly (Greenwald & Krieger, 2006). Levinson's 2007 study results revealed that participants who read about an African American individual through a vignette were significantly more likely to remember aggressive facts from the story than participants who read about a White individual with the same vignette (Levinson, 2007).

Racial Prejudice Trends in the United States

Implicit racial bias has shown to be one of the causes of persistent trends of racial prejudice in the United States with Blacks and African Americans facing continuing discrimination and facing more adverse outcomes than their White counterparts (Purkiss et. al., 2006; Ziegert & Hanges, 2005; Burgess et. al., 2007). The prejudices are evident in a variety of domains including healthcare, education, employment, and in the justice system (Green et al., 2007; Bertrand & Malainathan, 2004; Levinson, 2007).

Healthcare. In healthcare, vast studies have been published indicating that Black and African American people receive poorer treatment in healthcare settings (Hall et. al., 2015; Blair, Steiner, & Havranek, 2011; Blair et. al., 2013; Betancourt, Green, Carrillo, & Ananeh-Firempong, 2003). From a meta-analysis of fourteen studies, thirteen studies found that healthcare professionals were more likely to associate Black Americans with negative words compared to White Americans (Hall et al., 2015). The racial healthcare disparity in the United States is increasing but has been the consistent trend for some time facilitating an abundance of research on the causes of healthcare racial disparities (Betancourt, Green, Carrillo, & Ananeh-Firempong, 2003; Galea et. al., 2011).

Studies found that there were a variety of explanations for racial health disparities (Galea et. al., 2011; Hall et. al., 2015). Healthcare professionals of all races are culprits of implicit racial biases, which influences the type of care being facilitated (Chapman, Kaatz & Carnes, 2013). Medical physicians are humans, and therefore capable of making decisions on their job that could be influenced by implicit racial biases that they possess. One research study that investigated the explicit and implicit racial biases among medical staff, emergency room staff, and residents of all races found that the staff possessed a significant pro-White bias, despite no explicitly reported preference for White individuals over Black individuals (Green et. al., 2007).

The study's participants also implicitly associated Black individuals with uncooperativeness, particularly regarding procedures (Green et al., 2007). Although a physician may not knowingly or explicitly think of Black individuals as uncooperative, their implicit thoughts about Black individuals may facilitate how the physician interacts and cares for that individual (Green et. al., 2007). Additionally, research further supports the relationship between patient care and medical professional and physician bias in ways that perpetuate and facilitate the racial healthcare disparities that exist (Green et. al., 2007; Blair et. al., 2013; Hall et. al., 2015). One study found that black patients were less satisfied with physicians who possessed low explicit racial biases but high implicit racial biases. The black patients endorsed the healthcare physicians as less warm compared to physicians who had both equal degrees of implicit and explicit levels of racial bias (Penner et. al., 2010).

As mentioned previously, a remarkable feature of implicit biases is that individuals are unaware that they possess those biases, as well as not being aware of how those implicit biases informs their decision-making process. Past studies have found that Hispanic patients were less likely to receive opioids in emergency room care compared to non-Hispanic patients with very similar injuries (Todd & Samaroo, 1993). There is more research that supports this same outcome within the Black patient population with research showing that Black patients were significantly less likely to be prescribed pain medications in the emergency room (Todd, Lee, & Hoffman, 1994). Many scholars questioned how implicit racial bias has actual impacts on an individual's healthcare outcomes, and studies reveal that implicit racial biases may facilitate treatment decisions (Hall et. al., 2015; Hagiwara, Dovidio, Egely, & Penner, 2016). One study evidenced that healthcare physicians that demonstrated a pro-White bias were less likely to recommend a treatment of thrombolysis to their Black patients compared to their White patients

(Green et. al., 2007). Implicit racial bias has shown to be significantly related to patient-provider interactions, treatment decisions, and patient health outcomes (Hall et. al., 2015; Hagiwara, Dovidio, Eggly, & Penner, 2016). More studies have discussed how implicit racial biases may impact how *healthcare professionals of White, Asian, Indian, & Pakistani identities* interact with Black patients facilitating less productive medical interactions (Penner et. al., 2010). Blair et al. suggested that healthcare physicians' implicit racial biases may jeopardize their clinical relationships with Black patients, further leading to negative effects on other care processes (2013). Simply, physicians with greater implicit bias against Black individuals were consistently evaluated as providing less patient-centered care by their Black patients compared to physicians who showed little or no implicit racial biases (Blair et al., 2013).

Employment. Like healthcare, implicit racial bias has shown to have its impacts on employment opportunities and employment rates for Blacks and African Americans across the United States (Purkiss et. al., 2006). Past research revealed that Black applicants are rated much lower for employment compared to their White counterparts, when all other factors are consistent (Roberson & Block, 2001). Additionally, the research indicates that the amount of discrimination a Black individual would receive was greater for those participants who possessed more implicitly racist attitudes and beliefs (Ziegert & Hanges, 2005). Another study found that the more ethnic a job applicant appeared, the less favorable they were ranked among interviewers (Norton et. al., 2006). They found that non-ethnic named applicants with no accent were the most preferred group compared to individuals who either had an ethnic name, spoke with an accent, or both (Purkiss et. al., 2006). These results provided data to acknowledge that although interviewers were not intentionally being biased towards persons of color, the less ethnic an applicant appeared or sounded to be, the more favorable they were with interviewers,

which impacted hiring decisions (Purkiss et. al., 2006). Subtle cues about each applicant played a role in triggering implicit racial biases leading to discriminatory responses (Purkiss et. al., 2006).

Criminal Justice System. Implicit racial bias has also shown its impacts within the United States criminal justice system. Research surrounding the role that implicit racial bias plays within the criminal justice system and prosecutorial proceedings suggest that implicit biases are real, pervasive, and nonetheless, difficult to change (Levinson, 2007). Notably, it has been long established that implicit racial biases could potentially impact how often prosecutors decide to seek the death penalty for defendants of color (Petersen, 2017). Research supports that prosecutors seek the death penalty at significantly higher rates for Black men compared to White men (Radelet, 1981). Broadly, research has discussed various dynamics that occur within the criminal justice system and how implicit racial biases perpetuate discriminatory decision-making. Even after controlling for a host of characteristics, one study found that defendants accused of killing White victims are more likely to be charged with a death-eligible offense compared to those accused of killing victims of minority racial statuses (Peterson, 2017). This study supports past research that suggested that prosecutors' decision to seek the death penalty was impacted more by the race of the victim than the race of the defendant (Baldus, Pulaski, & Woodworth, 1983).

Other research suggest that implicit racial bias takes place outside of the courtroom, suggesting that defendant race does impact criminal charges to the extent that police officers and prosecutors, regardless of race, more aggressively investigate cases that involve White victims, therefore impacting how court proceedings take place (Petersen, 2017). Oftentimes in court proceedings, individuals may be brought in as eye-witnesses for testimony. Because eye-witness

testimony warrants an individual to recall events from memory, credibility and reliability of eye-witness testimony has been a long-standing question (Kleider, Knuycky, & Cavrak, 2012).

Research has proven that implicit racial biases can impact the way in which we remember events (Kleider, Knuycky, & Cavrak, 2012). Events that are recalled are more likely to be unfavorable for defendants of color (Albonetti, 1987). At this point in time, research has well-established that racial bias occurs within prosecutorial proceedings and court trials in both subtle and overt forms (Kleider, Knuycky, & Cavrak, 2012; Petersen, 2017; Bishop & Frazier, 1996). Subtle biases, or implicit biases can operate through the entirety of case proceedings such as plea agreements and bail amounts, having indirect, but detrimental effects on those individuals (Zatz, 1987).

Education. Racial educational disparities have been discussed within educational literature and research drawing attention to subtle forms of bias that have impacted the educational system for students of color (Montez et. al., 2019). This includes the existence of implicit racial biases, colorblindness (not acknowledging oppression that is rooted in racial context), and microaggressions (Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Pollock, 2016; Sue 2001). The educational system is considered one of the most important societal institutions; it is the only institution in the United States that holds the responsibility of the development and preparation of the individuals that are introduced into society post high school (Skiba & Knesting, 2001). Thus, disparities in education directly impact lifetime earning opportunities and potential (Blank, 2001; Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). Implicit racial biases have been discussed as one of the reasons there is a disproportion of surveillance measures taken at schools where there is a higher concentration of minority students (Nance, 2019). Studies based on data from Texas showed that school districts that served higher concentrations of minority students also spent more on average on security measures than any other school district, even after accounting for specific school

district characteristics like socioeconomic status, enrollment, attendance, and urbanicity (DeAngelis, Brent, & Ianni, 2011).

Implicit racial bias has also been suggested as possibly facilitating the disproportion of African American and Black students being misdiagnosed with certain diagnosis that facilitate different school-based interventions (Mandell, Ittenbach, Levy, & Pinto-Martin, 2007). One study found that African American students were 5.1 times more likely to receive a diagnosis of Adjustment Disorder rather than ADHD when compared to White students (Mandell, Ittenbach, Levy, & Pinto-Martin, 2007). African American and Black students were 2.4 times more likely to receive a diagnosis of Conduct Disorder rather than ADHD compared to White students (Mandell, Ittenbach, Levy, & Pinto-Martin, 2007). The obvious difference in diagnostic patterns by race and ethnicity suggest that implicit racial biases may inadvertently prompt school teachers, school administrators, and clinicians to interpret behaviors in unfavorable ways for minority students (Mandell, Ittenbach, Levy, & Pinto-Martin, 2007). Whereas misbehavior in the classroom for a White student may be seen rooted in attention deficit concerns, misbehavior in the classroom for a Black student may be seen as rooted in aggressive characteristics (Monroe, 2005). Research has shown that many Americans express forms of implicit racial bias, with one study showing that many people unconsciously associate African American and Black individuals with traits like aggression, violence, danger, and crime (Eberhardt, Goff, Purdie, & Davies, 2004). African American and Black students are also placed into special education classes and receive more special education referrals at significantly higher rates compared to White students (Rynder, 2019). The theme is consistent; implicit biases impact and significantly influence the decision-making process for individuals, whether it be conscious to that individual, or not.

Implicit Association Test

Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz introduced the Implicit Association Test (IAT) as a measure that could capture a person's implicit biases by examining the automatic associations between various objects and various evaluative attributes (1998). The IAT measures how closely associated any given object (e.g. butterfly or flower) is with an evaluative attribute with pleasant or unpleasant words (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). With this, the IAT assumes that the more closely related those objects and attributes are, the stronger the implicit attitudes that exist (Karpinski & Hilton, 2001). The race IAT is a timed cognitive measurement that evaluates the relative association strength between two pairs of concepts, like race (e.g. Black American vs. White American) and an evaluation (e.g. good vs. bad) (Sabin et. al., 2009; Greenwald & Krieger, 2006). The IAT is unique in that its methods prevent the operation of response factors such as demand characteristics, faking, or social desirability (Nosek & Smyth, 2007). It also is able to effectively distinguish between an explicit and an implicit mode of processing (Greenwald & Krieger, 2006). With over one million American individuals completing the race IAT, more than 70% of those individuals show some degree of an implicit preference for White Americans compared to Black Americans, even when that is not reflected in explicit measures (Nosek & Smyth, 2007). Additional research suggests that, despite explicit reports of egalitarian beliefs, when under stress (e.g. higher cognitive load, time limits, etc.) individuals may engage in more prejudicial behaviors when the situation relies on "judgement calls" rather than objective measures (Burgess et. al., 2014; Johnson, Cesario, & Pleskac, 2018; Devine, & Monteith, 1999).

The race IAT has been widely accepted because it has established great reliability and validity in comparison to other implicit measures and has also shown to capture evaluations that are distinctly different from self-report (Nosek, Greenwald, & Banaji, 2007; Cunningham,

Preacher, & Banaji, 2001). The race IAT has been used across various fields of research, including the healthcare field, the criminal justice system, and more recently in education (Norton et. al., 2006; Levinson, 2007; Rynders, 2019). Moreover, the IAT has been consistently used in studies that are researching ways in which implicit racial bias can be combatted in various settings and contexts by individuals (Nosek & Smyth, 2007). The use of overt biases can have adverse outcomes for individuals who are victimized, but many scholars suggest that implicit racial biases unknowingly perpetuate discriminatory-type behaviors in a multitude of setting, and it is more damaging for the minorities they impact (Burgess, van Ryn, M., Dovidio, & Saha, 2007). Because implicit racial bias gained much attention across various fields, the new and noteworthy resolution seems to be the introduction of cultural competency to each of the respective fields (Sue, 2001). Being introduced to cultural competency has been shown to help individuals develop the skills necessary to combat impacts of implicit racial bias (Weech-Maldonado et. al., 2018). Although the idea of cultural competency was only introduced within the last few decades, various studies have suggested that it plays an increasingly important role in the way all individuals navigate interactions with others (Sue, 2001; Nelson et. al., 2008; Bustamante, Nelson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). Development in cultural competency has further shown to increase sensitivity with minority groups and patients and decrease unintentional acts of discriminatory behavior (Stone & Moskowitz, 2011; McElfish et. al., 2017).

Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is regarded as one of the most discussed concepts among scholars, practitioners, and leadership in ethnic minority concerns while trying to understand and distinguish ways in which cultural competency is most effective (Sue, 2001). Within psychology, various organizations and national groups voiced concerns surrounding the various health,

employment, and educational disparities involving ethnic minority populations in the United States (American Psychological Association, 2008; Nance, 2019, Purkiss et. al., 2006). As a result, many scholars found it necessary to consider the impacts of cultural dynamics that exist so that organizations could provide more effective services. The definition of cultural competence has been described in various ways across scholars; with an evolving definition and various cultural competence models, it reflects the complexity and multidimensional view of how culture and ethnicity shape individuals' attitudes and beliefs. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2001) defines cultural competence as the ability to maintain a set of attitudes, perspectives, behaviors, and policies, both individually and organizationally that promote positive and effective interactions with diverse cultures. Cultural competence is also described in literature as the belief that people should not only appreciate and recognize other cultural groups, but also be able to effectively work with them (Sue, 1998). The collective and the most universally accepted definition of cultural competence is defined as a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enable the system, agency, or professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989).

A model of cultural competence, and most noted framework presented by Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis (1992) is divided into three categories (1) attitudes and beliefs, (2) knowledge, and (3) skills. Each of the three components are thought to be important factors in the establishment of cultural competence for individuals. The attitudes and beliefs component is described as the understanding of one's own cultural conditioning that affects one's personal beliefs, values, and attitudes. The second component, knowledge, is the understanding and knowledge of the worldviews of culturally different individuals and groups. The last component,

skill, is the use of culturally appropriate interventions and communications skills. Widely used within Counseling Psychology, this cultural competence model is parallel to what many scholars, education administrators, and educators suggest is lacking within the educational system, perhaps nationwide (Hayes & Juarez, 2012). An impetus for the development, understanding, and continuing exploration of cultural competence has been motivated by the harsh realities that ethnic minority individuals face in the United States, across various domains from the type of healthcare they receive to the type of punishment they are prescribed within school settings (Ogbu, 1992; Sue, 2001).

To be effectively engaging in cultural competency, it would require a person to examine another person as an individual, as opposed to being a part of a system (Sue, Arredondo, McDavis, 1992). To date, most of the work surrounding cultural competence, across various fields, has focused on the micro level and individual basis. For example, many fields, such as counseling, psychology, and various healthcare affiliated fields has placed an emphasis on cultural competency training which starts individually, with each person having the ultimate goal of increasing their own level of self-awareness, acquiring knowledge of historical contexts, culture, and general life experiences of various minority groups, and developing interpersonal skills to work with individuals with minority statuses (Sue, 2001). Less emphasis is placed on the organizational or macro level with scholars suggesting that cultural competence, in some ways, has been discouraged because the organizational level is not culturally competent, as well as not supporting the value of developing a cross-cultural competency (Sue, 1998). Furthermore, it has been suggested that cultural competency on an individual basis is not enough to see positive societal changes for individuals of minority statuses. Cultural competence should take place

individually, professionally, organizationally, and societally in order for it to be effective. (Sue, 2001).

The need for a societal shift on a national level with cultural concerns was addressed first by President Clinton in 1997 with the creation and establishment of the Race Advisory Board who had the purpose of examining race relations across the nation. The advisory board determined that racial intolerance and racism continues to be divisive forces in society. From the advisory board's report to the President, the board concluded that (1) the need to address cultural issues in regards to race, culture, and ethnicity is most urgent, (2) most citizens do not seem equipped to deal with topics such as race and ethnicity, (3) historical context, and past racial ideologies continue to affect and impact current policies and practices that creates and further perpetuate unfair and harsh disparities between racial minority groups, (4) these racial ideologies are so engrained in the American culture that it is nearly invisible, and lastly (5) critical and constructive dialogue has to occur (President's Initiative on Race, 1997). The race advisory board, in their report, encourages all individuals to become culturally aware, culturally sensitive, and creating awareness around their ideas and beliefs about race. They also suggest that societal shifts must take place on macro levels, with this shift needing to be supported by society's pivotal industries, companies, and organizations (President's Initiative on Race, 1997).

The framework of cultural competence requires work to be done on various levels, which present various barriers that must be addressed before progressing towards an authentic cultural competence. The multidimensional model of cultural competence presented by Derald Wing Sue (2001) distinguishes the various barriers to address in order to achieve a more holistic cultural competence, that is, one that is fluid on individual, organizational, and societal levels. Most people perceive themselves as being morally decent free of any biases or prejudices.

However, being without bias cannot be true of any human, yet people navigate on the assumption that they are always fair. Acknowledging that a person can engage in racial biases and prejudicial decision-making is threatening to any individual, as most people do not want to be introduced into a reality where they are not their ideal self. Self-acknowledgement of one's own biases and prejudicial attitudes and beliefs that contribute to a world of injustice may become apparent, and when it does, the individual can no longer escape their own personal responsibility for change. On the individual level, a person has to honestly engage in their biases, causing them to explore deeply rooted ideas, beliefs, and stereotypes, raising a grave awareness to their implicit attitudes and beliefs that may be more influential in their behavior and decision-making day to day. Personal resistance to cultural competence is not uncommon, as it is difficult for any individual to admit to perpetuating a system and society of injustice (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992).

The multidimensional model of cultural competence discusses the barriers from an organizational level suggesting that multiculturalism should be representative and embedded in the culture of organizations such as healthcare and mental health care delivery systems, government agencies, schools, universities, and businesses (Sue, 2001). Furthermore, studies have shown the lack of cultural competence existing on organizational levels, with that being very apparent in policies and implementation of those policies. Additionally, many organizations do not have any standards, protocol, or policies related to the development of cultural competence of its employees and at the organizational level (Mays, de Leon Siantz, & Viehweg, 2002). Along with other fields, education has drawn attention surrounding the need for cultural competence being introduced into school settings. Education began to focus on cultural-related pedagogy with the goal of delivering education in ways that are more effective for ethnic

minority students (Delpit, 1995). Cultural competence was considered a way to start addressing the educational disparities that seem to occur within school settings nationally. However, there is still very limited research that has been established on the use of cultural competence, its skills, and its effectiveness on education policy and its implementation, such as how to approach the conduct of students. The research seems to focus on cultural factors that impact education and education delivery.

There is vast research that discusses the usefulness of culturally responsive teaching, with it being the most notable approach developed to address cultural mismatches that seem to occur in the academic settings for minority students. It is defined as being an approach to teaching with using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as instruments for teaching and learning to occur more effectively (Gay, 2002). Culturally responsive teaching approach assumes that when academic knowledge and skills are presented within the cultural lens, lived experiences, and cultural frame of reference for students, then students are more likely to engage having a higher interest, with learning occurring more easily and thoroughly (Gay, 2000). As a result, academic achievement is expected to improve.

Culturally responsive teaching has five essential elements that's required in teacher education including (1) developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity, including ethnic and cultural diversity content in curriculum, (2) demonstrating caring and building learning communities, (3) communicating with ethnically diverse students, and (4) responding to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction (Gay, 2002). Training for teachers surrounding cultural competence, has reflected that of a culturally responsive teaching approach. However, there is not much literature that is established about a cultural framework when approaching student behavior and conduct, and student affairs. There seems to be a gap, with literature focusing

solely on the teaching that takes place. Although education delivery is indeed important, many studies suggests that student's educational attainment and adult outcomes are based on many dynamics that occur within the educational system, independent of knowledge delivery (Buehler, Gere, Dallavis, & Haviland, 2009).

Scholars in the education field determined that an educator is headed to cultural competence if they are able to demonstrate a number of qualities within their teaching, relationships, and personal reflections. Furthermore, they suggest that to be culturally competent within the public education system, educators, leadership, and administrators should be able to adequately demonstrate (1) an understanding of how the past impacts individuals and institutional phenomenon that's present, (2) understanding the connection between their personal beliefs, actions, and the student's performance, (3) understanding the central value of culture with respect to human relationships, (4) viewing children and students as assets to the educational system as opposed to being liabilities or entities that have barriers to learning, (5) holding all educators accountable for their own actions regarding the promulgation of cultural competence in the educational setting, (6) seeking to understand where children come from in regards to their community, history, and racial/ethnic legacy, (7) promoting and understanding the significance of democratic and inclusive educational decision-making settings in the classroom, school building, district offices, and state agency system, and lastly (8) developing cultural proficiency measures that allow for an engagement in ongoing assessment and self-reflection around the purpose and implementation of cultural competence throughout the entire institution (Jones & Nichols, 2013).

Failing to consider cultural competence more holistically within the educational system, is continuing to place its minority students at risk of unfavorable conditions and outcomes.

Notable research found that the estimated number of deaths attributable to social factors in the United States was comparable to the number attributed to pathophysiological and behavioral causes. Simply, social concerns such as a lack of culturally competent educational systems and policies is just as attributable to death as physical concerns. Because of various definitions, cultural competence has been measured in a variety of ways, but not consistently. There is more work needed to develop empirically supported instruments to measure cultural competency within the educational system. Because of the lack of consistent measures used within the educational system, cultural competence has been assessed in various ways with no consensus on how cultural competence can be measured, developed, or achieved. While some scholars argue that an educator's cultural competence increases through service-learning activities, other scholars suggests that cultural competence is achieved through school-based interventions (Meaney et. al., 2008; Dukes & Ming, 2008).

Subjective discipline practices and the inequity that has resulted from its impact has many scholars calling for educational systems to engage in specific activities to create more proactive and equitable discipline practices with one of their suggestions being the provision of a schoolwide professional development to help promote cultural competence, particularly around issues of classroom management and teacher-to-student interchanges (Fenning & Rose, 2007). These scholars also suggested the development of more proactive school discipline policies for all students equitably, basing the models on positive behavior support (Fenning & Rose, 2007).

The most widely used measure for assessing cultural competence in education was developed in 1986, referred to as the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory. This scale asks educators about their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors towards students who were racially and ethnically different from them (Henry, 1986). As the framework and ideas surrounding cultural

competence gained more attention in research, the definition has been adapted and consider having more existing dynamics more than personal beliefs and attitudes. The Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey was developed to measure the cultural competence of pre-service teachers based on their cultural awareness and sensitivity (Ramos et. al., 2015). Although we have various scales for assessing cultural competence, each measure has varying interpretations and definitions of cultural competence. Furthermore, there are no existing scales that assess for cultural competence system wide in education, despite the vast research that calls for a shift of cultural competency throughout the public educational system, needing to take place institutionally (Jones & Nichols, 2013).

Social Determinants of Health

The field of healthcare had established that Black and African American patients existing within the healthcare system faced organizational, clinical, and systemic barriers that preclude them from fully benefiting from the developments within healthcare promotion and disease prevention that have benefited the majority of Americans (Hall et. al., 2015; Chapman, Kaatz, & Carnes, 2013). Since then, the focus has shifted to making access to healthcare services and quality equitable to its consumers including considering its approaches and addressing policy that creates access barriers (Betancourt, Green, Carrillo, & Ananeh- Firempong, 2003; Buki, 2007). Newer research in education has started to call for a look into the educational system and its approach to how we think about education, as well as the policies that impact education.

The World Health Organization's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health has provided evidence that an individual's quality of life, physical health, and mental health are socially determined (2008). Furthermore, they have provided incredibly strong evidence that shows health inequities among individuals originate not so much from a lack of hospital or

community based services but rather exist from the failure of the American government, systems, and institutions to address the social determinants of health (Braveman, Egerter, & Williams, 2011). While healthcare services, food, and housing are important social determinants of health, research shows that levels of educational attainment is a strong predictor of long-term health and quality of life (DeWalt et. al., 2004).

Educational attainment and access are linked with health through various interconnected pathways. Educational attainment and access shape what employment opportunities will be available to individuals, and employment opportunities which is a major determinant of what economic resources will be available to that individual as well (DeWalt et. al., 2004). The more educated an individual is, the less likely they are to experience unemployment (Bartley, & Plewis, 2002). Unemployment is significantly related to worse health outcomes and higher mortality rates (Bartley, & Plewis, 2002). Research has shown that better educational attainment and access influences individuals social and psychological factors such as greater perceived personal control which is related to health-related behaviors and overall better health outcomes (Leganger, & Kraft, 2003; DeWalt et. al., 2004). Greater perceived personal control is also related to having higher quality interpersonal relationships and increased social support (Leganger, & Kraft, 2003). All of these various factors are associated with physical and mental health.

It is important to note that higher educational attainment plays a significant role in the employment opportunities that are available to individuals, but educational attainment and access also provides the scope or lack thereof, for better decision-making regarding one's health, and provide scope for increasing social and personal resources that are vital for physical and mental health (Shankar et. al., 2013). Equitable attainment and access to education is not afforded to

many Black and African American students the same way it is to White students due to exclusionary forms of discipline that are being determined through subjective discipline practices (Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Pollock, 2016). Various studies have shown the linkage between educational quality and mental health showing that educational disparities have significant effects on a wide range of mental health outcomes that often persist and even accumulate across the lifespan decreasing overall life quality (Zahodne et. al., 2017). Both educational attainment and quality of education are associated with important factors needed to navigate society such as financial stability (Hall et. al., 2015).

Furthermore, studies have related lower education quality to lower paying employment opportunities, hence the lower quality education a person may have, the lower employment opportunities are available to them (Assari, 2018). Because financial stability predicates access to mental health care, studies have suggested that there are direct impacts on a person mental health care facilitated by a combination of lower educational quality and lower rate of employment opportunities (Levinson, 2007; Purkiss et. al., 2006; Zahodne et. al., 2017). Because education is a clear social determinant of health, the racial inequities that we see exist within subjective discipline problems should be handled with a sense of urgency as these societal and educational determinants are determining quality and length of life (Zahodne et. al., 2017).

Chapter III

Method

The current study's goal was to explore how individual levels of cultural competence and levels of implicit racial bias may impact the decision of teachers when faced with a subjective discipline decision.

Research Questions & Hypotheses

1. Did levels of cultural competence of a teacher relate to levels of implicit racial bias?
 - a. It was hypothesized that the less cultural competence an individual had, the more likely they were to express implicit racial bias.
2. Did levels of cultural competence of a teacher relate to levels of discriminatory attitudes?
 - a. It was hypothesized that the less cultural competence an individual had, the more likely they were to express discriminatory attitudes.
3. Did educators with higher levels of implicit racial bias express lower levels of discriminatory attitudes?
 - a. It was hypothesized that individuals with higher levels of implicit racial bias express lower levels of discriminatory attitudes.
4. Did levels of implicit racial bias and discriminatory attitudes impact subjective discipline decisions of teachers?
 - a. It was hypothesized that the higher the level of implicit racial bias and discriminatory attitudes a teacher possessed, the more severe the prescribed punishment.

- b. It was hypothesized higher levels of implicit racial bias and discriminatory attitudes would be stronger predictors of punishment for the Black racial identity vignette compared with the White or No racial identity.
- 5. Did the racial identity of students impact the subjective discipline decision for teachers?
 - a. It was hypothesized that teachers would indicate a decision representative of more severe punishment for students of Black racial identity compared to students of White racial identity or with no identity indicators.
- 6. Did priming with cultural competence knowledge influence the subjective discipline decision for teachers?
 - a. It was hypothesized that teachers primed with cultural competence knowledge would indicate less severe punishment across student groups.
 - b. It was hypothesized that priming cultural competence decreased the influence of racial identity in subjective discipline decisions.

Participants

Participants for this study were 18 years old and older and consented to study participation. Participants had at least one full semester of teaching experience in the 6th through 12th grade. Previous studies in disparities and cultural competence have shown that implicit racial bias is related to discipline severity with effects ranging from .15 to .37 (Peek et. al., 2010; Stepanikova, Triplett, & Simpson, 2009). To obtain an acceptable effect size of .15, a G* Power 3.1.5. analysis was used to determine a minimum sample size of 200 is required to obtain adequate power in this study.

Procedures

The principle investigator gained approval from the Auburn University Institutional Review Board to conduct this study. Participants were recruited through social media. All participants were able to access the study online utilizing Qualtrics. All surveys were anonymous, and participants were informed that they could stop at any time. Upon completion of the survey, participants were able to enter their email address to get a \$10 gift card for their time. Prior to participating in the study, each participant viewed a unique information letter (Appendix G), informing participants that their participation was voluntary, anonymous, and they could end at any time. Participants were able to indicate their consent to participate by clicking an arrow to confirm they read the information letter and chose to participate in the study. Participants were directed to answer study eligibility questions confirming that they are above the age of 18 and had at least one full semester of teaching experience for 6th through 12th grades.

Once confirmed, participants were randomly assigned to one of six study groups. Study groups included participants primed or not primed for cultural competence across three case vignettes of varying the racial identity of the vignette actor (African American, White, or No Indicators). All participants were asked to read their assigned case vignette. Following the case vignette, participants were asked to answer 7 questions. The seven questions are categorized into punitive discipline outcome or rehabilitative outcome. These categories were unknown to participants. Participants will respond to various other measures in the study in randomized order (see measures section). Lastly, participants will respond to demographic questions about their race/ethnicity, age, and teaching status.

There will be four attention checks throughout the measures and only participants who had zero missed attention checks will be included in the final sample. Attention checks will be

questions placed randomly throughout the duration of the study. These questions will be questions that every participant can answer if paying attention (e.g. What planet are we on? [Saturn, Earth, Pluto, Neptune], What color is the sky [Green, Yellow, Blue, Red]). After completion, participants will be thanked for their time, debriefed about the purpose of the study, and offered resources should they need more support or more tools regarding multicultural competence (Appendix J). This page will also include information for the primary investigator, faculty research advisor, and the Institutional Review Board should the participant have further questions. It is anticipated that the total time commitment for the study is no more than 30 minutes for completion.

Measures

Demographics Questionnaire (Appendix A). A demographics questionnaire will be used to assess information valuable to the study (and presented last in the study). This will include questions about their age, race, ethnicity, and teaching status (grade, subject), and how long the participant has been teaching or have taught in the past. Those who are not recruited through Auburn University will be asked to indicate their Prolific ID number.

Cultural Competence Primer (Appendix B). Participants will read (and hear via voice recording) a short reading about cultural competence that includes a general definition, its importance, and relativeness to education. The primer used for this study was developed and adapted by the principle investigator utilizing information provided by the American Psychological Association, the Council on Social Work Education, and the National Education Association that can be readily found online.

Case Vignettes (Appendix C). Participants will be randomly assigned to read one of three case vignettes that presents them a student of either no racial indicators, Black racial

identification, or White racial identification. From the case vignette, they will be asked to answer 7 questions on subjective discipline decisions they would make regarding the case vignette presented.

Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (Appendix D). The Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS) is a 20-item self-report measure of teacher's multicultural awareness and sensitivity that utilizes a 5-point Likert type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). For this measure, higher scores indicate more positive attitudes and higher awareness. Construct validity of this inventory was established through convergent correlations with related instruments as well as multiple studies that established internal consistency and reliability. This measure reports a Cronbach's alpha of .86 (Ponterotto, Baluch, Greig, & Rivera, 1998). This measure will be used to assess individual's levels of cultural competence, with cultural competence being defined by multicultural awareness and sensitivity to diversity and inclusion.

Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale (Appendix E). The Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale (MTCS) is a 16-item two factor scale that assessing (1) multicultural teaching skills and (2) multicultural teaching knowledge. This scale is a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) with higher scores indicating higher levels of multicultural teaching competence. The measure has scores that range from 16- 96 with higher scores indicating greater levels of multicultural teaching competency. Validity and reliability have been established through confirmatory factor analysis and various studies with the original developers reporting a Cronbach's alpha of .88 (Spanierman et. al., 2011). This measure has shown to be positively correlated with other well-established measures such as the TMAS (Spanierman et. al., 2011).

Race Attitude Implicit Association Test. The Race Attitude Implicit Association Test (IAT) was developed in response to reports of low validity of explicit measure of attitudes, stereotypes, and prejudices. The IAT is a measure that captures implicit racial bias that individuals may encompass. Various studies have utilized the IAT as an implicit measure, and there are not any other implicit measures that have been well established with validity and reliability as it. For scoring, the IAT measures associations between two concepts (Asian American and European American) and two attributes (good and bad) (Rezaei, 2011). In this study, the participants will be required to sort stimuli representing four concepts using only two responses with the basic premise being if two concepts are highly associated, the sorting task will be easier and faster for the participant. The critical component of the IAT is the participants response time to associating a concept (e.g. old and young, Muslim and Christian) to good and bad attributes. The score is on a scale of -2.0 to 2.0 with all scores above 0.65 or below negative 0.65 indicating a “strong” link. The IAT assumes that the faster a response to the pairings of concepts (good and bad, Euro American and Black American), the stronger the two concepts are associated in the participant’s mind. Faster responses to stereotypical pairs such as Euro American/ good and Black American/bad and relatively slower responses to counter-stereotypical pairs such as Euro American/bad and Black American/good indicates implicit anti-black biases (Rezaei, 2011). The IAT has been reported as being reliable, having strong validity, and variably related to explicit attitude measures after completing a meta-analysis of 158 different samples (Nosek & Hansen, 2008). The Cronbach’s alpha has been reported ranging from .79 to .89 with various validation studies (Rezaei, 2011; Nosek & Hansen, 2008).

Quick Discrimination Scale (Appendix F). The Quick Discrimination (QDI) Scale is a 30-item, Likert type self-report measure from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The

QDI scores range from 30 to 150 with higher scores indicating more awareness, sensitivity, and receptivity to racial diversity. The QDI measures attitudes toward racial diversity (multiculturalism) and women's equality and is appropriate to be used for late adolescents and adults. The QDI is described by its authors as having three oblique factors: (1) general (cognitive) attitudes about racial diversity and multiculturalism, (2) affective attitudes regarding racial diversity related to one's personal life, and (3) general attitudes regarding women's equity issues (Ponterotto et. al., 1995). Higher scores on the QDI indicate nonracist and nonsexist attitudes with lower scores indicating negative attitudes towards racial minorities and women. As it relates to the study, discrimination is primarily characterized by negative behaviors towards select groups, with the QDI measuring attitudes of discrimination that underly potential discriminatory behaviors (Ponterotto, Potere, & Johansen, 2002). In the current study, this measure will be used to identify participant's level of discriminatory attitudes, with research showing that higher levels of discriminatory attitudes correlate with lower levels of multicultural competence, awareness, and sensitivity (Sue, 2001). An initial validation study established a Cronbach's alpha of .89.

Analytic Strategy

Correlation Analyses (*Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3*).

Descriptive and correlational analyses were assessed to examine relationships across demographic variables and study measures (specifically implicit racial bias, discriminatory attitudes, and cultural competence).

Binary Logistic Regression (*Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6*).

A binary logistic regression was used to examine the impact of implicit racial bias and discriminatory attitudes on subjective discipline decisions. The outcome variable of subjective

discipline decisions was dichotomized (punitive vs rehabilitative). The model contained two predictor variables (discriminatory attitudes, implicit racial bias). A binary logistic regression was performed to assess the impact of racial identity of students on the subjective discipline decisions for teachers. The model contained three predictor variables (discriminatory attitudes, implicit racial bias, and race of vignette). A binary logistic regression was performed to assess the impact of being primed with cultural competence knowledge on the subjective discipline decision for teachers. The model contained four predictor variables (discriminatory attitudes, implicit racial bias, and race of vignette, cultural competence primer).

Chapter IV

Results

Overview

The current study sought to explore how individual levels of cultural competence and levels of implicit racial bias may impact the decision of teachers when faced with a subjective discipline decision. This study utilized descriptive and correlational analyses to examine relationships across demographic variables and study measures (specifically implicit racial bias, discriminatory attitudes, and cultural competence). To examine whether implicit racial bias and discriminatory attitudes predict subjective discipline decisions, a binary logistic regression analysis was used. To explore how subjective discipline decisions differed based on racial identity, a general linear model was used. The following chapter reports the results of the analyses used to test the study hypotheses.

Sample Characteristics

Of the 362 participants included in the sample, 203 (56%) of the participants identified as White or European American and 64 (18%) identified as Black or African American with ages ranging between 18 years and 66 years plus. At the time of the study, 92 (25.5%) had 1-3 years of teaching experience, 86 (23.8%) had 4-6 years of teaching experience, 43 (11.9%) had 7-10 years of teaching experience, 61 (16.9%) had 10 years or more of teaching experience, and 79 (21.9%) had at least 6 months of teaching experience. At the time of the study, 99 (24%) were currently teaching 6th grade exclusively, 78 (18.9%) were currently teaching 7th grade exclusively, 78 (18.9%) were currently teaching high school (9th through 12th grade), 62 (15%) were currently teaching 8th grade exclusively, 55 (13.3%) were currently teaching 9th grade exclusively, 13 (3.2%) were currently teaching 11th grade exclusively, and 10 (2.4%) were currently teaching 12th grade exclusively. Of the study participants, 329 (79.9%) endorsed being

familiar with the term “school-to-prison-pipeline. Additional demographic information is reported in Table 1. Some participants were excluded from the IAT data ($n = 157$) due to having a score that fell outside of the normal range.

Correlation Analyses (*Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3*)

Correlations were examined among the four major variables of Cultural Competence (measured by the MCTS and TMAS; $n = 361$), Implicit Racial Bias (measured by the Implicit Association Test; $n = 157$), and Discriminatory Attitudes (measured by the Quick Discrimination Inventory, $n = 360$). Specifically, levels of Cultural Competence and levels of Implicit Racial Bias were tested for Hypothesis 1 which predicted that the less Cultural Competence an individual had, the more likely they were to express implicit racial bias. The correlations between Implicit Racial Bias and measures of Cultural Competence as measured by the MCTS ($r_{155} = -.074$) or the TMAS ($r_{155} = -.087$) were not significant.

Hypothesis 2 specified that lower levels of discriminatory attitudes would be positively correlated with the measures of Cultural Competence, and this hypothesis was supported. Specifically, a large positive correlation was found between the QDI and TMAS ($r_{357} = .50, p < .0001$) and a small-moderate positive correlation was obtained between the QDI and the MCTS ($r_{357} = .28, p < .0001$). As levels of Cultural Competence increased, scores indicated higher levels of sensitivity and awareness (discriminatory attitudes decreased).

Hypothesis 3 specified that Implicit Racial Bias would be negatively correlated with lower levels of discriminatory attitudes. The correlations between Implicit Racial Bias and Discriminatory Attitudes were not significant ($r_{155} = -.006$).

Binary Logistic Regression (*Hypothesis 4*)

Logistic regression was performed to assess the impact that implicit racial bias and discriminatory attitudes had on subjective discipline decisions for teachers. The outcome variable is the dichotomized subjective discipline decisions measure (punitive vs rehabilitative). The model contained two predictor variables (discriminatory attitudes and implicit racial bias). The full model was not statistically significant ($X^{2(2)} = 4.5, p = ns$)

Binary Logistic Regression (*Hypothesis 5*)

Logistic regression was performed to assess the impact of racial identity of students on the subjective discipline decisions for teachers. The outcome variable is the dichotomized subjective discipline decisions measure (punitive vs rehabilitative). The model contained three predictor variables (discriminatory attitudes, implicit racial bias, and race of vignette). The race of vignette was a categorical variable where participants were exposed to a vignette where the student had a disciplinary infraction. The student in the vignette was assigned one of three racial identities (no race identifier, White, Black). The full model was not statistically significant (omnibus chi square of model coefficients $\chi_4^2 = 9.4, p = .053$).

Binary Logistic Regression (*Hypothesis 6*)

Logistic regression was performed to assess the impact of being primed with cultural competence knowledge on the subjective discipline decision for teachers. The outcome variable is the dichotomized subjective discipline decisions measure (punitive vs rehabilitative). The model contained four predictor variables (discriminatory attitudes, implicit racial bias, and race of vignette, cultural competence primer). For the cultural competence primer, participants were exposed to one of two conditions (receiving the primer, not receiving the primer). The full model was not statistically significant (omnibus chi square of model coefficients $\chi_5^2 = 9.4, p = .092$).

Table 1

Frequencies

Demographic	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Race/Ethnicity		
White or European American	203	56%
Black or African American	64	18%
Native American	57	15.7%
East or Asian American	16	4.4%
Biracial	8	2.2%
Middle Eastern/Arab American	5	1.4%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	4	1.1%
Afro-Caribbean	3	.8%
Multiracial	2	.6%
Gender		
Cisgender male	192	53%
Cisgender female	163	45%
Prefer to self-describe	4	1.1%
Gender non-binary/Gender non-conforming	2	.6%
Transgender male	1	.3%
Age		
25-35 years of age	163	45%
36-45 years of age	96	26.5%
18-24 years of age	57	15.7%
46-55 years of age	28	7.7%
56-65 years of age	14	3.9%
66+ years of age	4	1.1%
Years of Teaching Experience		
1-3 years of teaching	92	25.5%
4-6 years of teaching	86	23.8%
At least 6 months or 1 semester	79	21.9%
10 years or more	61	16.9%
7-10 years of teaching	43	11.9%
Grade Level Currently Teaching		
6 th grade exclusively	99	24%
7 th grade exclusively	78	18.9%
8 th grade exclusively	62	15%
9 th grade exclusively	55	13.3%
10 th grade exclusively	14	3.4%
11 th grade exclusively	13	3.2%
12 th grade exclusively	10	2.4%
High school (9 th through 12 th)	78	18.9%

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

	Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1	Multicultural Teaching (CC)	68.73	12.12				
2	Teacher Multicultural Attitude (CC)	66.18	5.40	.626**			
3	Implicit Racial Bias	.381	.256	-.074	-.087		
4	Discriminatory Attitudes	93.05	13.70	.276**	.504**	-.006	

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .0001$

Chapter V

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine how individual levels of cultural competence and levels of implicit racial bias may impact the decision of teachers when faced with a subjective discipline decision. This study found a positive correlation between levels of sensitivity and awareness to gender and racial concerns and levels of cultural competence; as participants levels of cultural competence increased, levels of sensitivity and awareness were higher (discriminatory attitudes decreased). Although the hypotheses that were tested in this study were not all supported by the findings, the results were an indication of what future research should study as it pertains to cultural competence, implicit racial bias, and subjective discipline decisions.

Summary of Findings

While correlation analyses between the implicit racial bias construct and measures of cultural competence were not significant, the correlation between levels of discriminatory attitudes and cultural competence was significant. Hypothesis 2 stated that lower levels discriminatory attitudes would be positively correlated with measures of cultural competence which was supported by analyses. This study used the Quick Discrimination Scale (QDI) as a measure for discriminatory attitudes. Results indicated participants who had higher levels of cultural competence also had higher levels of sensitivity and awareness to gender and racial concerns (lower discriminatory attitudes). Notably, the Quick Discrimination Scale, Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey, and The Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale are all distinctly independent measures. Findings show the clear relationship between an individual's level of cultural competence (attitudes and teaching skills) and individual levels of awareness, sensitivity, and receptivity to gender and racial equity. As it relates to teachers, this study's

findings indicate that the teachers who had higher awareness, positive attitudes towards multiculturalism, and higher levels of multicultural teaching skill subsequently had significantly lower scores endorsing discriminatory attitudes against racial and gender equity. These findings support other research findings that show individuals with higher levels of cultural competence are less likely to engage in discriminatory behaviors (Sue, 2001; Johnson, 2006; Buehler, Gere, Dallavis, & Haviland, 2009).

Because the United States has been quickly diversifying for the last several years, many professions have decided to take a proactive stance to cultural competency (Betancourt, Green, Carrillo & Ananeh-Firempong, 2003). Other studies have found very similar findings as the current study that suggest that strengthening an individual's cultural competence is related to lowering discriminatory attitudes. Specifically, cultural competence training programs helps enhance pre-service teachers' insight into the needs of culturally diverse students and also assist in breaking down stereotypes (Meaney et. al., 2008). Studies have also shown the effectiveness of training professionals with cultural competence trainings that increase their knowledge and skills when working with culturally diverse clients (Betancourt, Green, Carrillo & Ananeh-Firempong, 2003).

Research is continuing to expand and show the relative connection between cultural competence and its impacts on how individuals engage with others. Studies have shown that individuals who have engaged in forms of cultural competency training and are able to advocate for their clients within the healthcare system as well as consider cultural context when providing care for their clients (Kagawa-Singer & Kassim-Lakha, 2003). A large component of cultural competence is having an individual acknowledge personal bias and realizing how one's own biases and actions may contribute and maintain a system of inequities (Sue, 2001). Bringing

personal and implicit biases into ones' own awareness helps perpetuate the opportunity for an individual to consistently intervene when they see their bias become impactful in undesiring circumstances. Strengthening an individual's level of cultural competence not only decreases bias, but also helps individuals cultivate skills that are necessary for cross-cultural communication (Govere & Govere, 2016).

Like this study, other studies discuss the positive impacts of cultural competence training. For example, research has shown that culturally competent educators are trained to tailor their teaching strategies to be specific to the needs of these students, allowing for cultural responsiveness, which promotes student academic success (Sunderman & Kim, 2005; National Education Association, 2009). Studies have also shown that educators who are culturally competent are able to acknowledge and understand cultural differences with their students which promotes better family and parent engagement (National Education Association, 2009). Better parent engagement has shown to have positive impacts on school attendance and students' tests scores (National Education Association, 2009). Student academic success, better family engagement, and improved attendance are all results of having culturally competent educators present. Corresponding to the current study, other studies have discussed various ways in which cultural competence can positively impact students' outcomes. Cultural competence addresses discriminatory attitudes by providing awareness, knowledge, and skills for educators, which inevitably creates positive environments for both students and educators to thrive.

As previously discussed, subjective discipline decisions within the national educational system created the school-to-prison pipeline (Skiba, Michael, Nardo & Peterson, 2002). It is no secret that Black and African American students are disproportionately punished, facing much harsher educational outcomes compared to their white counterparts (Coles & Powell, 2020).

Cultural competence has proven its effectiveness within education showing how students can be positively impacted by their educators being culturally aware and responsive. This study's results indicated that educators with higher levels of multicultural teaching skill had significantly lower scores endorsing discriminatory attitudes against race and gender. Other findings have shown that when teachers are culturally competent, they are more equipped to prepare pedagogy that is culturally relative to the students that are engaging in the content. When students engage in pedagogy that is culturally responsive, they are more likely to be engaged with the curriculum (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). This also decreases their chances of engaging in prohibited behaviors (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Montez et al., 2019). Many studies have found that when students feel connected to their teacher by means of their teaching intentionally connecting with students based on cultural and other identity factors, they are more likely to be engaged, motivation for learning is increased, and student attendance increases (Montez et al., 2019; Sunderman & Kim, 2005; Brown, 2004; Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005).

When an individual possesses discriminatory attitudes based on race or ethnicity, it can cause them to treat others or a group of people different, more often than not, negatively. These negative attitudes perpetuate negative behaviors that lead to individuals and groups of people being marginalized or oppressed (Sue, 2004; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). As seen in this study, the more multiculturally aware and sensitive an educator was, the less discriminatory attitudes they possessed. Cultural competence training directly approaches and addresses an individual's discriminatory attitudes, by creating awareness, developing knowledge, and building appropriate cultural skills. This unsurprisingly, leads to the decrease of negative attitudes and behaviors towards groups of people or students that have historically been

marginalized because of race or ethnicity (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992; Sue, 2004; Skiba & Knesting, 2001; Teske, 2011). Furthermore, this impacts their educational experience and overall academic outcomes.

Educators with cultural competence knowledge and skills are more likely to consider barriers that students of color or lower socio-economic students may face in their education which then facilitates how a teacher responds to student behaviors (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Dukes & Ming, 2008). For example, a student who is consistently late for school may be generally punished by facing severe consequences which results in time away from the classroom (i.e., suspension, detention, etc.) (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). However, the student being consistently late to school may actually be a reflection of a lack of steady and reliable transportation to school- which is no fault of the student. Having cultural competence knowledge and skills will impact how a teacher responds to such situations (Dukes & Ming, 2008; Morettini, Brown, & Viator, 2018). What we have seen is that discriminatory attitudes can often play a role when responding to a student's situation. Based on this study's findings, it is suggested that the more culturally competent an educator is, the greater the chance of decreasing and potentially eliminating discriminatory attitudes within that individual which then impacts how they treat, engage, and make decisions for students of color. Though this study did not show a direct effect on subjective discipline, it is consistent with the extant literature to suggest that decreased discriminatory attitudes likely have at least an indirect effect on the types of discipline outcomes students of color may face. Systemically, a school's policies may call for a student to be punished for consistently being late for a class. But studies have shown that even when a system has punitive policies in place, having culturally sensitive and responsive educators helps address the systemic policies by intervening within their own classroom (Teske,

2011; Monroe, 2005; Dohy & Tachelle, 2018; Forsyth, Biggar, Forsyth, & Howat, 2015). For example, the teacher mentioned previously may consider methods to engage the family on the concern of tardiness rather than forwarding the student to punishment which typically results in more time away from the classroom and learning environment.

Teachers who have cultural competence knowledge and skills may also advocate for their students and consider how to help address inequities found within education that operates outside of their classroom (Morettini, Brown, & Viator, 2018). The teacher mentioned previously may conceptualize the student concern of late arrival to school as a systemic disparity rather than an individual problem. Because of this approach, the student is not further negatively impacted in his education but rather steps are taken to help the student arrive at school on time, as opposed to continuously being punished. Cultural competence calls teachers to grow in their understanding and knowledge on structural and institutional racism by recognizing how systems may continuously oppress a student with exclusionary practices of suspension and expulsion (Teske, 2011). Furthermore, educators who are culturally competent are able to acknowledge and understand that they are operating in a fundamentally inequitable system that continues to uphold exclusionary and inequitable practices.

Educators with cultural competence knowledge and skills promote culturally supported experiences for students (Coles & Powell, 2020). Furthermore, cultural competence within education promotes positive student outcomes for students who historically have been marginalized (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005) Having more educators who have cultural competence knowledge and skills will inevitably help decrease the disproportion that exist with African American and Black students being facilitated into the prison system in several ways. Cultural competence totally disrupts westernized and Eurocentric forms of knowledge,

eliminating deficit-based thinking related to students of color (Buehler, Gere, Dallavis, & Haviland, 2009). Past studies have shown how implicit racial bias may impact the decision-making of educators when faced with subjective discipline decisions for students of color facilitating harsher outcomes (Gilliam et. al., 2016). However, cultural competence helps this concern by increasing a person's awareness around their biases they were previously unaware of, therefore creating critical thought while recognizing the complexity of culture (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). This helps educators become more aware of social injustices along with how they can continue to become culturally responsive to their students' educational needs.

Black and African American students are facilitated into the prison system more frequently due exclusionary forms of punishment (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). When students are suspended or expelled from school, they have more time to get involved in problematic behaviors, and because we see Black and African American students being suspended and expelled at much higher rates, inevitably, the chances of them going into the prison system is much higher (Hanson, 2005; Green, Maynard, & Stegenga, 2017). What we know is that Black and African American students often have their behaviors interpreted negatively by educators at a much higher rate compared to white students (Mandell, Ittenbach, Levy, & Pinto-Martin, 2007). Furthermore, the interpretation of student behavior, based on race, plays a role in what and how a teacher decides infractions (Mandell, Ittenbach, Levy, & Pinto-Martin, 2007). Cultural competence addresses how educators interpret student behavior by increasing their awareness around the fact that their interpretation could be racially motivated by underlying discriminatory attitudes or beliefs.

Educators and school administrators are able to change and decrease the facilitation of Black and African American students into the school- to- prison pipeline through at least 4 ways

as described by Coggshall, Osher, and Colombi (2013), (1) through relationships with their students, (2) through their attitudes and personal level of competence, (3) contributing to conditions for learning, and (4) through their specific responses to student behavior. It's not surprising that these four components are all addressed with the development of cultural competence skills and knowledge. Based on this knowledge and understanding, it is reasonable to conclude that educators who are culturally competent can help decrease and potentially stop the disproportion of Black and African American students being pipelined into American prison systems.

Because a person's beliefs, attitudes, and values are grounded in their personal life experiences, it is also reasonable to acknowledge that some individuals carry discriminatory attitudes against certain races inherently by being a by-product of a very racist and systemically racially oppressive society. That means that individuals can carry stereotypical ideas and discriminatory attitudes and beliefs that are a reflection of a racist society they were raised in. However, those same attitudes and beliefs cause them to interpret student behavior differently based on race which negatively impacts students who face negative stereotypes. Cultural competence training addresses this very issue- those racist attitudes and beliefs (that can impact behavior) are inherently functioning within all of us, and because of that, we must work at this concern by engaging in cultural competency training. Addressing discriminatory attitudes that an educator may have directly impacts how they respond to student behavior. Through cultural competence training, educators are able to address existing discriminatory attitudes by creating saliency around how those attitudes impact their decision-making and how they engage with students of color when addressing problem-behaviors.

Study results indicated that implicit racial bias was not related to discriminatory attitudes or levels of cultural competence. Implicit racial bias did not have an impact on the subjective discipline decisions of teachers in this study and the racial identity of students did not impact the subjective discipline decisions for teachers. Consistent with many other psychological studies on implicit bias, this study was not able to find a relationship between implicit bias and other explicit measures of the study. Notably, implicit bias has remained difficult to capture within research and does not show a strong relationship with discriminatory behaviors (Forscher et. al., 2019). Implicit bias also has very little evidence that shows it is related to a person's actual behavior, which continues to make this a challenge for research including this study (Forscher et. al., 2019). In the forementioned study, researchers synthesized evidence from 492 studies in a meta-analysis with the findings suggesting that changes in implicit measures are possible but does not necessarily translate into changes in explicit measures or behaviors (Forscher et. al., 2019). Many researchers have suggested that implicit bias operates beyond the conscious awareness of an individual, and therefore is simply too implicit to be connected with explicit measures. When thinking about cultural competence, the development of cultural competence takes place in a person's conscious awareness (White et. al., 2018). Cultural competence is a practice and a consistent engagement of knowledge and skill development which might make it difficult to relate to thoughts that are operating in our unconscious, such as implicit racial biases (White et. al., 2018; Forscher et. al., 2019).

The educators in this study were asked to make a decision about a student that they have no prior relationship with or context for, which may have impacted how they responded to the case vignette. Studies have found that student-teacher relationships can positively or negatively impact a student's educational experience (Agyekum, 2019; Caton, 2012; Losen & Martinez,

2013). Furthermore, teachers who have positive relationship with their students are less likely to take punitive discipline measures which may lead to longer term negative outcomes (Agyekum, 2019; Dohy & Tachelle, 2018). Many studies have shown that positive relationships between the teacher and student is central to positive academic outcomes for students (Hughes, Wu, Kwok, Villarreal, & Johnson, 2012). Having a positive relationship with an educator may also prevent students from entering the school to prison pipeline (Skiba, Michael, Nardo & Peterson, 2002; Bleakley & Bleakly, 2018; Monroe, 2005). Having a positive relationship with a teacher has shown to decrease dropout rates for students and decrease general high-risk behaviors (Hughes, Wu, Kwok, Villarreal, & Johnson, 2012; Agyekum, 2019; Dohy & Tachelle, 2018).

One of the most noted studies in educational outcomes for students was a longitudinal study that followed 179 children from kindergarten through eighth grade to explore the extent to which kindergarten teachers' perceptions of their relationships with students predict a range of student outcomes. They found that having a negative relationship in kindergarten marked by conflict and dependency was related to academic and behavioral outcomes through the eighth grade even after controlling for gender, ethnicity, cognitive ability, and behavior ratings (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Teachers who are able to form and develop positive relationships with their students help student's ability to overcome many challenges within the school system. When considering educators role in addressing the school-to -prison pipeline, in some cases, the educator may not be the decision-maker, or the person who determines the infraction for the student, however, that does not suggest that educators do not have the ability to impede or decrease the chances of a student falling into the school-to prison pipeline. Addressing discriminatory attitudes by means of increasing cultural competence may help foster more positive relationships, as opposed to negative ones, that are related to academic and behavioral

outcomes of students. Addressing discriminatory attitudes by means of cultural competence also helps educators develop more positive relationships with their students cross-culturally which decreases their chances of facing exclusionary practices that in some cases leads to prison time for students. Educators can have impact in several ways. For example, research indicates that students who are typically labeled as “at risk” are most effectively supported when the teacher promotes safety, social-emotional competence, and cultural competence (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Coggshall, Osher, & Colombi, 2013; Hughes, Wu, Kwok, Villarreal, & Johnson, 2012). When students feel safe, they are more attentive and engaged, and less likely to engage in problematic behaviors resulting in student infractions (Hughes, Wu, Kwok, Villarreal, & Johnson, 2012).

Cultural competence leads to more effective teaching (Morettini, Brown, & Viator, 2018). When educators are culturally competent, they are able to contextualize and connect to students’ everyday experiences which helps integrate classroom learning with students’ out of school experiences (National Education Association, 2008). Culturally competent educators are better equipped to reach out to students’ families, which has found to be integral in a students’ educational outcomes (Hughes, Wu, Kwok, Villarreal, & Johnson, 2012). Essentially, having culturally competent educators helps reduce culturally insensitive practices, decrease discriminatory attitudes, and helps address and dismantle culturally insensitive policies and practices that promote poor educational outcomes for students of color, such as policies like the zero-tolerance policy (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Coggshall, Osher, & Colombi, 2013; Hughes, Wu, Kwok, Villarreal, & Johnson, 2012; Morettini, Brown, & Viator, 2018). Furthermore, institutionalizing cultural knowledge and designing educational systems and services based on the understanding of students’ cultures helps promote learning environments that are culturally adaptive and better equipped to serve diverse students (National Education, Association, 2008).

Simply put, without cultural competence, you cannot adequately address a problem that is a result of clear and repetitive discriminatory attitudes and beliefs.

Priming participants with cultural competence knowledge prior to making a subjective discipline decision had no influence on the subjective discipline decision of teachers in this study. Cultural competence is not a new phenomenon but does have an American origin (Meaney et. al., 2008). Descriptive statistics for this study suggested that 28% of participants said the term cultural competence was never discussed or rarely discussed within their professional role of teaching. The study also included retired teachers and individuals who had prior teaching experience, but no longer worked within education. Priming is inserting subtle cues to hopefully exert large unconscious influences on behavior or response (Schmidt, Haberkamp, & Schmidt, 2011). However, whether someone attends to a stimulus through priming or not may be related to what is important to that person or not (Schmidt, Haberkamp, & Schmidt, 2011). Experts in priming research suggest the most common issue that arises within studies is the lack of establishing the strength of the prime. As for this study, it is reasonable to conclude that the prime had no effect due to the actual strength of the prime, which was not established prior to the study.

Various studies that have shown the positive impacts and the importance of having culturally competent individuals within the medical field. Evidence proves that cultural competency training for health care professionals can improve the medical providers knowledge, skills, and understanding for treating and caring for patients who may be culturally and linguistically different from the provider (Gallagher & Polanin, 2015; Govere & Govere, 2016). Healthcare providers who lack skills associated with cultural competence can inadvertently deliver a lower quality of care which impacts patients' health outcomes (Govere & Govere,

2016). For example, most notable research has proven that there are clear racial and ethnic disparities in emergency rooms across the United States (Tamayo-Sarver, Hinze, Cydulka, & Baker, 2003). The American Journal of Public Health has published various articles that highlight the detrimental impacts of ignoring cultural factors within healthcare. When comparing Black, Latinx, and White individuals, medical physicians were far less likely to prescribe opioids to Black individuals who were in pain (Tamayo-Sarver, Hinze, Cydulka, & Baker, 2003). Furthermore, the racial and ethnic disparities that are seen in the prescription of opioids and analgesics appear to be a widespread concern as studies have found that this is taking place across the entire nation (Tamayo-Sarver, Hinze, Cydulka, & Baker, 2003).

Cultural competence training for individuals working within healthcare focuses on three specific areas (1) developing the skills and knowledge that promote and value diversity, (2) increasing the awareness of the health care providers and organizational cultural norms, and (3) understanding and responding to cultural differences (Gallagher & Polanin, 2015). Increasing the cultural understanding and developing cultural skills and knowledge helps increase patient satisfaction and potentially improving patient health outcomes (Gallagher & Polanin, 2015; Govere & Govere, 2016). Because cultural competence helps cultivate safer environments for patients, patients may feel more comfortable speaking with their health care provider which then leads to better health outcomes (Truong, Paradies, & Priest, 2014; Gallagher & Polanin, 2015; Govere & Govere, 2016).

There is evidence of the effectiveness of cultural competence training and there is also evidence that cultural competence training can improve patient's satisfaction (Renzaho, Romios, Crock, & Sønderlund, 2013). Cultural competence has shown to benefit healthcare organizations and its patients as well (Truong, Paradies, & Priest, 2014; Gallagher & Polanin, 2015; Govere &

Govere, 2016; Renzaho, Romios, Crock, & Sønderlund, 2013). When patients are more satisfied with their care, it results in more patient engagement and participation which leads to improved patient outcomes (Govere & Govere, 2016). Cultural competence improves communication which undeniably keeps patients safer. When health care professionals are culturally competent, it allows for them to get more information from their patient which informs their medical care and decision-making. Some studies have concluded that cultural competence does not directly impact patient outcomes, however, cultural competence impacts the process of care within medicine that then impacts and influences health care outcomes (Renzaho, Romios, Crock, & Sønderlund, 2013). Furthermore, other studies have shown the vast impacts as a result of a lack of culturally competent health care providers.

The impact of the lack of cultural competence within a health care organization along with having healthcare professionals who lack cultural competence skills has been highlighted within one study that found patients who were not fluent in speaking English experienced more adverse safety events during their hospitalization when compared to individuals who speak English fluently (Divi, Koss, Schmaltz, & Loeb, 2007). Specifically, they reported that half of the individuals who had limited English proficiency experienced adverse events that involved some physical harm which they attribute to a lack of cultural competency skills of both healthcare professionals and the organization as a whole (Divi, Koss, Schmaltz, & Loeb, 2007). Other studies have shown improved patient outcomes when introducing bilingual healthcare professionals to patients who face language, communication, and cultural barriers. Russian-speaking patients who had faced previous barriers with their healthcare because of facing a language barrier showed a significant improvement in their blood pressure and cholesterol levels (Al Shamsi, Almutairi, Al Mashrafi, & Al Kalbani, 2020).

These findings are relevant for both the educational system and the field of psychology. As noted, before, cultural competence helps an individual develop a unique skillset that impacts how they engage within their professional role. More importantly, we must acknowledge the research that has proven that educational access, or the lack thereof, can have negative impacts on a student's mental health and quality of mental health (Shankar et. al., 2013; Anyon et al., 2014; Hummer & Hernandez, 2013; van der Heide et. al., 2013; Dohy & Tachelle, 2018). Highlighting the current study's findings, culturally competent educators have lower discriminatory attitudes which can impact student outcomes. Continuing to move towards an educational system that highlights cultural competence within its profession, organizations, and system is a direct way to address the disproportion of Black and African American students' educational access being diminished by policies that create phenomenon such as the school-to-prison pipeline- that inherently still exist. Furthermore, a culturally competent educational system will inevitably affirm and integrate inclusive values for students who will become professionals who possess cultural humility.

Cultural competence calls for education to be accessible and inclusive. For education to be both accessible and inclusive, that ensures that cultural factors, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, language, socio-economic status, country of origin, and other factors are not barriers to any individual receiving education. Exclusionary practices such as suspension and expulsion are in conflict with education being inclusive and accessible because it directly prevents students from continuing to have access to a learning environment. More so, when racial discriminatory attitudes are active, Black and African American students are being punished more harshly and severely and experiencing negative outcomes because of it. To be clear, Black and African American students are being filtered into the prison system because

their chances of being dismissed from the learning environment is increased by operating within an environment that is not inclusive of who they inherently are. Studies that explore cultural competence within education have demonstrated that the presence of cultural competence within an institution or organization, as well as having professionals trained with cultural competency skills, improves students' overall outcomes (National Education Association, 2009). More importantly, the research highlights that cultural competency training introduced to new environments results in improved outcomes for the students navigating those environments (Bustamante, Nelson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2009).

Methodological Strengths and Limitations

Due to the study's methods, there were some apparent constraints that may have impacted results. As previously mentioned, variability in the population characteristics may have impacted results. It is suspected that because there was such a high population variance, the overall power was reduced in the study. Future studies should limit their sample to increase generalizability of the study. A convenience sample was used for this study which means the results cannot be generalized beyond the sample. In general, having a more inclusive sample helps with the generalizability of results, however, because of the nature of this study, having a more restrictive sample may have helped show effects that were present.

Additionally, presenting a case vignette and asking teachers to make a decision does not mimic the actual classroom environment and other factors that may be impactful when making subjective discipline decisions. A case vignette also does not take into consideration teacher-student relationships and dynamics that potentially exist within a real case scenario. Past studies have shown that the teacher-student relationships impact how teachers engage with their students, as well as influences how they think about behavioral infractions for students (Forsyth,

Biggar, Forsyth, & Howat, 2015). Future research should consider how to consider dynamics of the teacher-student relationship and its impact on teachers' decision-making.

Implicit racial bias was not related to discriminatory attitudes or levels of cultural competence and did not have an impact on the subjective discipline decisions of teachers. The IAT captures a person's implicit biases by examining the automatic associations between various objects and various evaluative attributes (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). The IAT measures how closely associated any given object (e.g., butterfly or flower) is with an evaluative attribute with pleasant or unpleasant words (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). With this, the IAT assumes that the more closely related those objects and attributes are, the stronger the implicit attitudes that exist (Karpinski & Hilton, 2001). The race IAT has been widely accepted because it has established great reliability and validity in comparison to other implicit measures and has also shown to capture evaluations that are distinctly different from self-report (Nosek, Greenwald, & Banaji, 2007; Cunningham, Preacher, & Banaji, 2001).

The IAT is known as the gold standard for assessing implicit associations within research, however, the IAT has received much criticism. Blanton and Jaccard (2008) suggests that although the IAT has been used as the gold standard to measure implicitness, empirical evidence actually does not completely support its usefulness. As they explain, the ability of unconscious constructs such as implicit racial bias to predict discriminatory behavior above conscious constructs should be explored with greater scientific rigor (Blanton & Jaccard, 2008). The IAT has notably been the only measure consistently used across research to capture implicitness and unconscious associations (Rezaei, 2011). Blanton and Jaccard (2008) suggest that measures of unconscious racism with nonarbitrary metrics should be developed for researchers to gain a better way to assess the prevalence of unconscious racism and implicit

prejudices. They further suggest that the methodology for establishing given responses reflecting the workings of an unconscious attitude of implicit association is not well-developed.

Furthermore, they suggest that various mediators and moderators of unconscious influence needs to be better defined and could impact all IAT results (Blanton & Jaccard, 2008).

This study is one of a small collection of studies that are attempting to address how implicit racial bias may impact subjective discipline decisions for educators. More importantly, this study found that the more culturally competent an individual was, the less they endorsed discriminatory attitudes and behaviors against racial and gender minorities. Based on the findings of this study, it seems that lowering discriminatory attitudes is not related to implicit measures of racial bias. However, acknowledging that cultural competence plays a significant role in decreasing overall negative impacts to educational outcomes for students of color still highlights the importance of engaging in the development of these skills. Additionally, the development of cultural competence skills may help increase awareness around the subtle influences of implicit biases. There have been substantial additions made related to this subject area and this study can confirm that cultural competence is correlated to lower levels of endorsing discriminatory attitudes against racial and gender minorities. However, no other conclusive statements can be made. It is recommended that measures of implicit racial bias are developed to help adequately measure this concept in future research related to implicitness.

Implications for Theory, Practice and Research

Implicit racial bias was not detected within this research study, but this does not mean that implicit racial bias does not impact or influence how individuals engage in decision-making with individuals of color, particularly Black and African American individuals. Over five decades of studies have shown differential impacts of implicit racial bias within the healthcare

system, justice system, and within hiring processes (Hall et. Al., 2015; Purkiss et. Al., 2006; Levinson, 2007; Peterson, 2017). Research has shown that many Americans express forms of implicit racial bias, with one study showing that many people unconsciously associate African American and Black individuals with traits like aggression, violence, danger, and crime (Eberhardt, Goff, Purdie, & Davies, 2004). Because of the consistency of findings and the grave significance of this issue, measures of implicit racial bias should continue to be developed and validated for research purposes. Additionally, serious consideration and diligent effort should be given to the development of evidenced-based, racial bias reducing interventions as a core component of educator training.

The National Education Association suggest that cultural competence helps address student achievement gaps and other disproportionalities that exist within the American school system such as the school-to-prison pipeline (2008). Furthermore, cultural competence should be a core value and component that is established, integrated, and deeply embedded within the curriculum, training, and continuing education of all educators within American society. Culturally competent discipline practices should be the norm within understanding, teaching, and engaging with students, particularly when students are of different cultural context from their educators and administrators. Based on the findings about cultural competence in this study and others, it seems likely that all educators would benefit from increased training, continuing education, and skill development related to cultural competence. Furthermore, cultural competence should be considered as a core value that is increasingly and continually integrated and embedded within the professional training and instruction of educators and administrators.

Implications for Counseling Psychology

Facing exclusionary practices and punitive types of discipline has been shown to have long-term emotional effect on students (Shankar et. al., 2013). Research has been clear that a student's experience in education can either help or harm the student's matriculation through the education system (Meaney et. Al., 2008). Studies have found that students who are subjected to punitive school discipline may react to it with strong, but unprocessed emotions such as anger, humiliation, shame, and anxiety (Cameron & Sheppard, 2006). Additionally, school discipline sometimes reflects a message to Black and African American students that they are untrustworthy or not competent which can impact self-esteem and increase disengagement (Cameron & Sheppard, 2006).

As it relates to Counseling Psychology, it is important as a field to continue to adequately address issues related to racism, bias, and discrimination and to acknowledge that these factors can impact a person's life experience and are major contributors to one's mental health (Sue, 2001). Highlighting the core value of social justice, developing cultural competence among not only clinicians and mental and health care providers, but educators, other healthcare providers, and those in service-oriented fields is of grave importance and can lead to a decrease in poor outcomes of students that are related to implicit biases and discriminatory attitudes and behaviors (Gilliam et. Al., 2016; Buki, 2007; Brown, 2004; Sunderman & Kim, 2005).

Notable research found that the estimated number of deaths attributable to social factors in the United States was comparable to the number attributed to pathophysiological and behavioral causes (Galea et al., 2011). Simply, social concerns such as a lack cultural competence with education systems and polices may be just as likely to attribute to death via psychopathology as physical concerns. By conceptualizing educational disparities as a form of oppression, engaging in work that aims to decrease and reduce educational disparities is parallel

with the values of social justice as well as the ethics of promoting the welfare of those whom we serve.

The concern of educational disparities, the slow growth of individual cultural competence, and social inequities that seem to be embedded in our educational system nationwide should be recognized as a form of oppression on a historically marginalized population in American society. Although health disparities have gained much of the attention, educational disparities are too situated within a large, national context suggesting that Counseling Psychologists have an integral part of what should be a multidisciplinary and national effort. Counseling Psychologist, as scientist-practitioners, share a host of skills, abilities, and roles. Scholars and researchers have shared various roles, both formal and informal, that Counseling Psychologists may play to help address the systemic concern of educational disparities including but not limited to consulting, providing training, coordinating alongside community partners to promote overall awareness, research, client advocacy, and support group facilitator. Undoubtedly, there are various ways in which the field of Counseling Psychology can join in the revolution of addressing and ultimately changing the educational system to become a more equitable, and inclusive system.

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Appendix A

Demographic Questions

How old are you? [text entry]

What is your gender? [male, female, transgender male, transgender female, other]

How do you identify racially/ethnically? [Biracial, Multiracial (fill in), Black or African American, Afro-Caribbean, East or Asian American, Middle Eastern/Arab American, Native American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, White or European American, South Asian or Indian American, Other (text entry)]

What is your country of origin? [text entry]

Do you have 6 months or at least 1 full semester of teaching at the 6-12 level? [yes, no]

What grade level do you currently teach? []

What grade levels do you have experience teaching? Select all that apply. [Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6^h, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th]

How long have you been teaching/ have taught? [At least 6 months or 1 semester, 1- 3 years, 4-6 years, 7-10 years, 10 years or more]

Please select the description that fits best for the area that you teach in? Select all that apply [Urban city schools, suburban city schools, city school system, county school system, charter school system]

Rate yourself on a scale of 1- 10 with, 10 being the highest, on cultural competence related to education.

How often has the term cultural competence get discussed within your professional role in teaching? [All the time, often, rarely, never, I am not sure what that term means]

Were you familiar with the term School-to-Prison-pipeline prior to today? [Yes, No]

Do you think subjective discipline policies in schools help manage students' behavioral problems in school? [Yes, No]

Appendix B

Cultural Competence Primer

Cultural competence, in the context of education, is defined as the ability of educators to function successfully with people and students from different cultural backgrounds including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, age, and national origin. It is about having an awareness of one's own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to appreciate, learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of students and their families that may be different from your own, while also understanding differences that make each student unique. Educators who are inclusive view cultural competence as both a moral and ethical responsibility to create a welcoming environment for all students to succeed.

Based on the knowledge that our reality is socially constructed, it becomes clear that reality can be very different for each student and is shaped by their social, cultural, political, and historical contexts. The concept of cultural competence acknowledges that different cultures aren't necessarily comparable, but are appropriate in their own historic circumstances, which really matters. This view benefits educators and their students, if their own worldviews are respected and valued during their education and navigation and the Eurocentric value system and models are not imposed on them.

Appendix C

Case Vignettes

No Racial Indicators: You are watching an educational movie during class. A student, who consistently arrives late, walks into your room 10 min after the movie starts. He goes to his desk, greeting other students by name as he does so. After 5 min of watching the movie, he begins to throw paper balls into the trashcan that is on the other side of the room. You ask him to stop two times over a period of 5 min. Both times, he looks at you, laughs, and turns his back to you. After the second time, you walk over and take the balls from him. As you are walking away, you think you hear him mutter an expletive under his breath, and the students immediately next to him laugh. He takes out more paper and makes more balls. He continues throwing the balls across the room, and the other students are noticeably getting distracted and start laughing when he misses and cheering when he gets it in.

African American Racial Identity: You are watching an educational movie during class. An African American student, who consistently arrives late, walks into your room 10 min after the movie starts. He goes to his desk, greeting other students by name as he does so. After 5 min of watching the movie, he begins to throw paper balls into the trashcan that is on the other side of the room. You ask him to stop two times over a period of 5 min. Both times, he looks at you, laughs, and turns his back to you. After the second time, you walk over and take the balls from him. As you are walking away, you think you hear him mutter an expletive under his breath, and the students immediately next to him laugh. He takes out more paper and makes more balls. He continues throwing the balls across the room, and the other students are noticeably getting distracted and start laughing when he misses and cheering when he gets it in.

White Identification: You are watching an educational movie during class. A White student, who consistently arrives late, walks into your room 10 min after the movie starts. He goes to his desk, greeting other students by name as he does so. After 5 min of watching the movie, he begins to throw paper balls into the trashcan that is on the other side of the room. You ask him to stop two times over a period of 5 min. Both times, he looks at you, laughs, and turns his back to you. After the second time, you walk over and take the balls from him. As you are walking away, you think you hear him mutter an expletive under his breath, and the students immediately next to him laugh. He takes out more paper and makes more balls. He continues throwing the balls across the room, and the other students are noticeably getting distracted and start laughing when he misses and cheering when he gets it in.

Questions to follow the case vignettes:

1. How likely are you to ask him to sit in the hallway at this moment?
2. How likely are you to send him to a refocus area of the classroom (i.e., a designated desk or semi-isolated space within the classroom)?
3. How likely are you to send him to a buddy teacher's classroom (i.e., some schools allow a teacher to send a misbehaving student to another teacher's classroom to cool off)?

4. How likely are you to write him a disciplinary referral (i.e., a report to an administrator to address the behavior)?
5. How likely are you to refer him to a guidance counselor or school psychologist?
6. The student deserves at least 1 day of in-school suspension.
7. The student deserves at least 1 day of out-of-school suspension.

Appendix D

Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS)

Ponterotto, J. G., Baluch, S., Greig, T., & Rivera, L. (1998). Development and Initial Score Validation of the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 58(6), 1002–1016.

Using the scale below, please indicate the number that best corresponds to your level of agreement with each statement as honest as possible.

5= Strongly Agree

4= Agree

3= Undecided

2= Disagree

1= Strongly Disagree

1. I find teaching a culturally diverse student group to be challenging and rewarding.
2. I believe that teaching methods need to be adapted to meet the needs of a culturally diverse student group.
3. I believe there is too much emphasis placed on multicultural awareness and training for teachers.
4. I believe that it is the teacher's responsibility to be aware of their students' cultural backgrounds.
5. I frequently invite extended members to attend student/parent conferences.
6. It is not the teacher's responsibility to encourage pride in one's culture.
7. As classrooms become more culturally diverse, the instructor's job becomes increasingly challenging.
8. I believe that the instructor's role needs to be redefined to address the needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds.
9. When dealing with bilingual children, communication styles often are interpreted as behavioral problems.
10. As classrooms become more culturally diverse, the instructor's job becomes increasingly rewarding.
11. I feel I can learn a great deal from students with culturally different backgrounds.
12. I feel that being multiculturally aware is not relevant for the subject I teach.
13. I feel that multicultural awareness training would help me to work more effectively with a diverse student population.
14. I feel that multicultural training for teachers is not necessary.
15. I feel that in order for one to be an effective teacher, one needs to be aware of cultural differences present in the classroom.
16. I feel that multicultural awareness training can help me work more effectively with a diverse student population.
17. I feel that teaching students about cultural diversity will only create conflict in the classroom.

18. I believe that regardless of the racial and ethnic makeup of my class, it is important for all students to be aware of multicultural diversity.
19. I am fully aware of the diversity of cultural backgrounds in my classroom.
20. Teaching students about cultural diversity will only create conflict in the classroom.

Appendix E

Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale

Spanierman, L. B., Oh, E., Heppner, P. P., Neville, H. A., Mobley, M., Wright, C. V., Dillon, F. R., & Navarro, R. (2011). The Multicultural Teaching Competency Scale: Development and Initial Validation. *Urban Education, 46*(3), 440–464. <https://doi-org.spot.lib.auburn.edu/10.1177/0042085910377442>

1= Strongly Disagree

2= Moderately Disagree

3= Slightly Disagree

4= Slightly Agree

5= Moderately Agree

6= Strongly Agree

1. I plan many activities to celebrate diverse cultural practices in the classroom.
2. I understand the various communication styles among different racial and ethnic minority students in my classroom.
3. I consult regularly with other teachers or administrators to help me understand multicultural issues related to instruction.
4. I have a clear understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy.
5. I often include examples of the experiences and perspectives of racial and ethnic groups during my classroom lessons.
6. I plan school events to increase students' knowledge about cultural experiences of various racial and ethnic groups.
7. I am knowledgeable about racial and ethnic identity theories.
8. My curricula integrate topics and events from racial and ethnic minority populations.
9. I am knowledgeable of how historical experiences of various racial and ethnic minority groups may affect students' learning.
10. I make changes within the general school environment so racial and ethnic minority students will have an equal opportunity for success.
11. I am knowledgeable about the particular teaching strategies that affirm the racial and ethnic identities of all students.
12. I rarely examine the instructional materials I use in the classroom for racial and ethnic bias.
13. I integrate the cultural values and lifestyles of racial and ethnic minority groups into my teaching.
14. I am knowledgeable about the various community resources within the city that I teach.
15. I often promote diversity by the behaviors I exhibit.
16. I establish strong, supportive relationships with racial and ethnic minority parents.

Appendix F

Quick Discrimination Scale (QDI)

Ponterotto, J. G., Burkard, A., Rieger, B. P., Grieger, I., D'Onofrio, A., Dubuisson, A., Heenehan, M., Millstein, B., Parisi, M., Rath, J. F., & Sax, G. (1995). Development and initial validation of the Quick Discrimination Index (QDI). *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 55(6), 1016–1031. <https://doi-org.spot.lib.auburn.edu/10.1177/0013164495055006011>

Please respond to the items as honestly as possible.

- 1= Strongly Disagree
- 2= Disagree
- 3= Not sure
- 4= Agree
- 5= Strongly Agree

1. I do think it is more appropriate for the mother of a newborn baby, rather than the father, to stay home with the baby (not work) during the first year.
2. It is easy for women to succeed in business as it is for men.
3. I really think affirmative-action programs on college campuses constitute reverse discrimination.
4. I feel I could develop an intimate relationship with someone from a different race.
5. All Americans should learn to speak two languages.
6. It upsets (or angers) me that a woman has never been President of the United States.
7. Generally speaking, men work harder than women.
8. My friendship network is very racially mixed.
9. I am against affirmative-action programs in business.
10. Generally, men seem less concerned with building relationships than women.
11. I would feel OK about my son or daughter dating someone from a different race.
12. It upsets (or angers) me that a racial minority person has never been the President of the United States -WILL NOT INCLUDE
13. In the past few years, too much attention has been directed toward multicultural or minority issues in education.
14. I think feminist perspectives should be an integral part of the higher education curriculum.
15. Most of my close friends are from my own racial group.
16. I feel somewhat more secure that a man rather than a woman is currently the President of the United States.
17. I think that it is (or would be) important for my children to attend schools that are racially mixed.
18. In the past few years too much attention has been directed toward multicultural or minority issues in business.

19. Overall, I think racial minorities in America complain too much about racial discrimination.
20. I feel (or would feel) very comfortable having a woman as my primary physician.
21. I think the President of the United States should make a concerted effort to appoint more women and racial minorities to the country's Supreme Court.
22. I think white people's racism toward racial-minority groups still constitutes a major problem in America.
23. I think the school system, from elementary school through college, should encourage minority and immigrant children to learn and fully adopt traditional American values.
24. If I were to adopt a child, I would be happy to adopt a child of any race.
25. I think there is as much female physical violence toward men as there is male physical violence toward women.
26. I think the school system, from elementary school through college, should promote values representative of diverse cultures.
27. I believe that reading the autobiography of Malcolm X would be of value.
28. I would enjoy living in a neighborhood consisting of a racially diverse population (Asian, Black, Latinos, Whites).
29. I think it is better if people marry within their own race.
30. Women make too big a deal out of sexual harassment issues in the workplace.

Appendix G

Information Letter for a Research Study entitled *“Decisions in Education”*

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled *“Decisions in Education”* to explore the ways that educators make engage in decision-making. This study is being conducted by Donielle Fagan, MS, under the direction of Dr. Evelyn Hunter in the Auburn University Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling.

What will be involved if you participate?

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to read a brief exert and a case vignette and then asked to make a decision based on what you think you should do in the given scenario. You will also be asked to complete a few self-report surveys. Your total time commitment will be no longer than 30 minutes.

Are there are risks or discomforts?

The risks associated with participating in this study are minimal. To minimize risks, you survey responses will be completely anonymous and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. No identifying information will be asked or retained.

Are there any benefits to yourself or others?

If you participate in this study, there are no anticipated benefits. However, we believe that the results may benefit instructors and educators like yourself by informing research on how educators engage in decision-making.

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study by closing your browser. Your participation in completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data will be withdrawn from the study data. Your decision about whether or not to participate or stop participate will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University or the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling.

If you have any questions about this study, you can contact Donielle Fagan at dmc0041@auburn.edu or Dr. Evelyn Hunter at eac0006@auburn.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or email at IRBAdmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document from _____ to _____. Protocol _____.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, THE DATA YOU PROVIDE WILL SERVE AS YOUR AGREEMENT TO DO SO.

Appendix H

Social Media Invitation

The following invitation will be posted on general media sites:

Hello, my name is Donielle Fagan, M.S. and I am a Counseling Psychology Doctoral Student at Auburn University. I would love your help by participating in my study assessing decision-making in education. This survey will take about 30 minutes to complete and it is completely anonymous. There is no risk in participating and you can quit at any point if you desire to do so. Your participation is greatly appreciated! (Survey link attached).

Appendix I

Recruitment Email

Hello [name],

My name is Donielle Fagan, M.S. and I am a fourth-year doctoral student in Counseling Psychology at Auburn University. I am collecting data for my dissertation, which seeks to explore how educators engage in decision-making. This study could be especially valuable for both instructors and educators, and the educational system nationwide.

Below is a link to a survey which will gather information about the topic. To participate you must:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Have at least 1 full semester, or 6 months of teaching experience at the 6-12 level.

The survey is completely voluntary, and you can discontinue it at any time. The survey is also anonymous and will not collect any identifying information. The survey should take about 30 minutes to complete. If you are interested in being entered in a chance to win one of two \$50 gift cards, please share your email after completing the survey. The emails for the gift card will be kept in a separate place from the results of the survey.

I appreciate your time. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Very Respectfully,

Donielle Fagan, M.S.

Appendix J

Resources

Hi! Thank you so much for participating in the study. Here are a few resources available to you about multiculturalism and cultural competency.

Websites:

<https://nccc.georgetown.edu/curricula/culturalcompetence.html>

<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2015/03/cultural-competence>

<https://www.humanservicesedu.org/cultural-competency/>

<https://preemptivelove.org/blog/cultural-competence/>

Videos:

Cultural Competence – Gregg Learning

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlaCa8y-LiM>

Education System v. Cultural Competence- Garcia Bareti – Ted Talk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBJBWenIjY>

National Center for Cultural Competence- Georgetown University

<https://nccc.georgetown.edu/resources/title.php>