12-1-1991

The relationship between failure rates, discipline referrals, and teacher attitudes toward classroom management

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ABSTRACT

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAILURE RATES, DISCIPLINE REFERRALS, AND TEACHER ATTITUDE TOWARD CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Advisor: Dr. Olivia Boggs

Thesis dated December 1991

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teacher attitude and student failure rate, teacher attitude and teacher discipline referrals, and teacher discipline referrals and student failure rate.

Twenty Atlanta Public School teachers were selected to participate in the study. Consideration for selection was made on the basis of teacher discipline referrals, exemplary classroom management, and low and high failure rate.

Data were compiled for each teacher in three areas, namely, teacher attitude, the number of discipline referrals and their failure rates for one semester. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was the statistical procedure used to analyze data.

The findings of this study indicated that there was no significant correlation between teacher attitude and discipline
referrals; between teacher attitude and failure rate. However, the study did conclude that there was a significant positive correlation between student failure rate and discipline referrals.
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAILURE RATES, DISCIPLINE REFERRALS, AND TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF EDUCATION SPECIALIST

BY
PATRICIA BATTLE AUSTIN

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
DECEMBER 1991
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the teachers at one of the Atlanta public high schools who participated in this study.

I wish to express my thanks and gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Olivia Boggs, for her guidance and encouragement, and to Dr. Stanley Mims for his assistance.

Many thanks to my devoted husband and daughters, Patrice, Paquita and Paquel, for their understanding and support.

I wish to dedicate this study to Mr. Charles N. Hawk, Jr., my former principal, who provided me the experience and gave me the opportunity to pursue this goal.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Student behavior remains a troublesome aspect of schooling. Discipline and classroom management are the biggest problems facing teachers today. One of the greatest challenges facing the school administrator each day is promoting a wholesome and supportive learning atmosphere through the school (Grossnickle and Sesko 1985). Many educators blame problems in control on students, parents, and society. However, the principal and teachers can implement effective classroom management practices which can be categorized as prevention, response to misbehavior, and assistance for students with special needs (Miller 1991).

If teaching and learning are the objectives in the classroom, then students can not be allowed to interrupt the learning process. Administrators must spend more time coaching teachers and assisting students with learning than sequestered in the offices solving discipline problems.

According to the Atlanta Public Schools Student Parent Discipline Handbook (1990) which stated that:

Good order and discipline are indispensable ingredients in the educational process. The atmosphere for learning must be established and maintained unequivocally if learning objectives are to be achieved.
Gaff (1991) stated that:

Good discipline is a by-product of good instruction. When schools make student achievement a priority and organize the learning environment to support successful teaching and learning, discipline also benefits. Discipline is not an end in itself, but a tool to facilitate learning.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teacher attitude and student failure rate, teacher attitude and teacher discipline referrals, and teacher discipline referrals and student failure rate.

Background of the Problem

Ron Edmond (1982) and other educators have defined an effective school as one where the principal is the instructional leader. Other components of an effective school are safe and supportive environment, students on task, and an opportunity to learn.

Lane (1990, 109) stated that:

Effective discipline is an integral part of an effective school. It is a skill to be taught rather than a punishment. An effective school incorporates many of the strategies used to teach other disciplines into a comprehensive program designed to foster student self-discipline and responsibility.
Many educators question how it is possible to have an effective school if the majority of the school day of an administrator is spent solving teachers' discipline referrals and teachers spend the majority of the class time writing discipline referrals to the administration. Administrators should spend a large percentage of the school day in the classroom with teachers observing, coaching, and assisting teachers in classroom management. This much desired school climate will prevail only if teachers are allowed to teach, students are allowed to learn, and administrators are allowed to assist students and coach teachers. If this was done, it is believed that the number of discipline referrals would be reduced significantly; teachers' attitudes would improve and student achievement would increase.

Solving classroom discipline problems daily has created a level of frustration, stress, and job burn-out for teachers and administrators. The image or perception of the administrator has become tainted. Do schools need an administrator or a disciplinary officer?

The researcher reviewed the number of referrals sent by teachers in one school in one semester. Many of the referrals warranted an administrator's action, several could have been avoided, or even solved at the classroom level. They were trivial in nature and some initiated by the teacher due to inappropriate classroom management skills. Many of these students were seldom referred by other teachers. This eliminated the belief that
there was a group of problem students in the school who gave all teachers problems.

The researcher observed that some teachers displayed negative attitudes toward students; and there was a poor student-teacher relationship, which seemed to affect the behavior of the students.

Statement of the Problem

Historically, disruptive behavior in schools has been a problem for school officials. The school office is generally considered the place where misbehavior is handled. To some, it represents an ominous and mysterious place where students are sent for a cure. However, most students and teachers never actually experience a “session in the office” (Grossnickle and Sesko 1985). The discipline office is a place where penalties are doled out. The school administrator sometimes functions as a catalyst who is supposed to get things done, thereby freeing the classroom and school from disruption, crime, and violence. The administrator is expected to solve the problem so that teachers can teach without disruption and students can concentrate on learning.

The most difficult and challenging task of the administrator has been that of satisfying those being served. Misbehavior in the school and classroom is often only a symptom of a larger problem troubling the student and, many times, a lack of effective
management on the part of the teacher (Grossnickle and Sesko 1985).

Students who are punished are often unhappy with the disciplinary action taken by the administrator; and parents, while stating that there should be more discipline control in the schools, often disagree with the punishment imposed on their misbehaving children. Teachers often express dissatisfaction or disagreement with the final disciplinary action taken.

Significance of the Study

Since early colonial days, essays on teacher training and numerous collections of educational archives on pedagogy have reflected many important issues, but none more controversial or widely debated than classroom discipline and its implications for instruction and learning. Traditional views of discipline applied to the classroom emphasize that teacher control of pupil behavior is essential for learning (Kohut and Range 1987).

Although teachers face the task of educating many students whose home and community environments are disruptive, research demonstrates that teachers' skills in managing classrooms are a major factor influencing students' motivation, achievement, and behavior. The concept of discipline, with its emphasis on dealing with inevitable behavior among students, has been replaced by a more comprehensive body of knowledge on how to increase student achievement by preventing management problems (Jones
and Jones 1986). The significance of this study is supported by current research on teacher effectiveness which shows that classroom management skills are of primary importance in determining teaching success and student learning.

This study was not expected to serve as a panacea for effective classroom management strategies and student achievement, but as a catalyst for teachers and administrators to become familiar with the ever-broader range of research and related skills in effective classroom management and incorporate these into a new type of classroom leadership. Studies such as A Nation At Risk, The Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, and John Goodlad's A Study of Schooling (1983) have aroused public worry over the quality of education in the United States. Consequently, classroom management is increasingly seen as vital because of its relationship to student learning (Jones and Jones 1986).

Despite extensive worry about student achievement and misbehavior, very few teachers understand why problems exist or the relationship between the problem and their own professional behavior. An analysis of data from the 1984 Gallup Poll of Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Public Schools shows that:

Teachers blame disciplinary problems on outside influences — specifically, the courts, lack of respect for authority, and especially lack of discipline in the home which is mentioned by virtually all teachers (94%). Only about one third of the teachers feel that teachers themselves are at fault.
Teachers' attitudes or behavior can "tell" students what a teacher expects from them. It has been noted that teacher behavior or attitude such as smiling, head nodding, and general interaction between student and teacher communicate to students what the teacher expects from them in terms of both academic outcomes and behavior. Consequently, levels of aspiration, motivation, and self-concept may all be affected (Swick 1987).

Effective teachers, those who elicit the best learning outcomes from students, are those who hold high expectations. This practice can also be considered a management technique since it has the capacity to reduce discipline problems (Swick 1987).

Summary

School achievement and school behavior are closely related whether it is at the individual, classroom, or school level. Recent studies have demonstrated that students learn best and behave more appropriately in classroom settings that meet their learning needs. Students' misbehavior and failure can often be traced to failure to create an educational environment conducive to learning.

The information from the related literature will benefit and assist teachers and administrators to understand the many issues in effective classroom management and the relationship between the variables. Only the teacher, then, can develop his/her
instructional strategies for the classroom and thereby enhance student achievement and prevent student failure.

Research Questions

Questions that prompted the research investigation were as follows:

1) Does the attitude of teachers affect student discipline?

2) Is the number of discipline referrals affected by teachers' attitudes?

3) Is there a significant relationship between teachers' discipline referrals and teachers' failure rate?

4) What are the implications of effective classroom management and student achievement for the school administrator and the classroom teacher?
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teacher attitude and student failure rate, teacher attitude and teacher discipline referrals, and teacher discipline referrals and student failure rate.

The review of the literature included a study of discipline, its causes and effects, the school culture, teacher attitude, school order and achievement, the role of the principal, and the summary.

Definition and Problem

*World Book Encyclopedia Dictionary* (1987) defines discipline as:

Training, training of the mind of character, order kept among school pupils, or members of any group, a particular system of rules for conduct, punishment, chastisement.

According to Estes (1979), the problem of discipline is the worst crisis facing the American educational system. Discipline is not a new problem for the schools, but the extent of the problem has caused record numbers of experts to try to tackle the dilemma and propose solutions.
McDaniel (1986) studies indicated that certain teaching techniques lead to better learning and better behavior. Teachers must master these techniques if they hope to have well-managed and effective classrooms.

Gaddy (1987) separated discipline into two distinct parts: an external manifestation and an internal condition.

External discipline is manifest as order in the school building. Its presence is characterized by well-behaved classes, clean halls and quiet libraries that provide the appropriate environment for learning. Its absence is characterized by riotous students, halls littered with trash and defaced with graffiti, and restrooms filled with marijuana smoke and threats of extortion, all of which create an environment that not only discourages learning but positively breeds vices.

Internal discipline is manifested in an only indirectly observable order in the students’ minds. It is the organization, set of values, and condition of character that allow an individual to voluntarily behave in a manner appropriate to the situation. Its presence is characterized by the clarity of thought and organization of knowledge, the self-motivation and personal responsibility that describe the highest ideals of education.

Causes and Effects of Discipline Problems

Debryn (1987) investigated the action the teacher must take. They were:

1. Children with problems at school usually have more severe problems at home. These students must not be abandoned because they get no help from parents or because they are neglected, ignored, or not disciplined
at home. When there is a problem, teachers must still call their parents no matter what the situation is at home. If parents are uninterested, intensify efforts or the problem will get bigger.

2. Students with discipline problems often dislike themselves and are usually disliked by other students. Children who don’t behave appropriately do not lead happy lives. If they are to change their behavior and enjoy school, they need someone... they need the teacher. Without the teacher, more inappropriate behavior is a probability. These students are looking for happiness. Yet, nobody is around to show them that happiness comes from being useful. These students have a large void in their personal lives—other people. Herein lies the key to changing their inappropriate behavior because humans are social beings not loners.

3. These students feel they are not liked by adults. Human relationships tend to reflect, “If you like me, I like you” and vice versa. When these children believe they are liked by a teacher, they often act differently but maybe only toward that one teacher. If teachers look down on problems, teachers automatically look down on the people who have or cause them. Research reveals when these students feel teachers or others look down on them, then real problems begin.
4. These students lack self-discipline. They equate self-discipline with being independent or doing their own thing. Teachers must teach them to find success via self-discipline. Teachers must spend as much time with persuasive and informative teaching as teachers do laying down the law and enforcing it. These students will respond in positive ways.

5. These students have few, if any, meaningful relationships with adults. Teachers must change this situation to change the behavior. If the teacher assumes the role of enemy, the gap widens. Children who are regarded as discipline problems are rejected by the adult world. Until they can be accepted, they cannot be helped. In order to change their behavior in the classroom, a relationship must be developed, this is a prerequisite.

6. What is a discipline problem for one teacher may or may not be for another. It is rare for a child to be a discipline problem in every class or with every teacher. There is usually one place, with one teacher, where appropriate are at least acceptable behavior is the norm. Everyone needs to use this other teacher as a resource to change the behavior of this student.
Maintaining order and discipline is not exclusively a classroom responsibility. Research shows that the “school culture” — the atmosphere and tone for everything that happens in the school — has a significant influence on student behavior. Students learn best in an orderly environment where they are required to have high standards and they are treated with respect.

In order to achieve a more positive atmosphere, researchers agree that principals and teachers must present a “united front” on both discipline and achievement matters. They can improve discipline by accurately targeting problem areas and agreeing on how to treat them. They can then develop, with students contributions, a school disciplinary code that is enforced firmly, fairly, and consistently. The code should be published and distributed so that every student knows the consequences for breaking it, and should clearly spell out the punishment for misbehavior. Good conduct should also be rewarded. By taking such steps, principals, and teachers can join in building a school culture toward achievement, not chaos (Daly and Fowler 1988).

According to Grossnickle and Sesko (1985), discipline in schools is everyone’s business. Everyone is affected by disruptive, violent, and misbehaving students. When a student is unable or unwilling to behave in an acceptable manner, the school also, in a sense, fails. Student misbehavior is an opportunity for counselors, students, parents, teachers, and administrators to work together for the good of each student and the entire organization.
Merwin (1991, p. 11) studied the problem of discipline. Discipline must be made a positive force. The administrator or teacher should make discipline a positive influence on students and their behavior. Anyone who disciplines a student should be able to find something good to say about every student in the school.

The discipline process should be initiated in the classroom by the teacher for minor offenses. The teacher should call the student's home and make the parent aware that a problem exists. There is one formula for winning with discipline and that involves everyone.

Teacher Attitude

Teachers have little or no choice in the composition of their classes. Therefore, a teacher has a unique responsibility to be able to understand and deal with the differences in their students.

Arthur Combs (cited in Estes 1979) identified several characteristics that distinguish effective teachers from poor ones. They are:

- Good teachers feel identified with rather than apart from others.
- Good teachers feel basically adequate rather than inadequate.
- Good teachers feel trustworthy rather than untrustworthy.
• Good teachers see themselves as wanted rather than unwanted.
• Good teachers see themselves as worthy rather than unworthy.
• Good teachers perceive their purpose in teaching as one of freeing, rather than controlling students.
• Good teachers tend to be more concerned with larger rather than smaller issues.
• Good teachers are more likely to be self-revealing rather than self-concealing.
• Good teachers tend to be personally involved rather than alienated.
• Good teachers are concerned with furthering processes rather than achieving goals (Estes 1979).

School Order and Achievement

Gaddy (1987) studied school behavior and achievement. Both are related whether examined at the individual, classroom, or school level. Students who misbehave in school are likely to do poorly in their school work and vice versa. He further stated that there are three separate (but not exclusive) possibilities for such a correlation: (1) an individual’s behavior influences that individual’s achievement, (2) an individual’s achievement influences that
individual's behavior, or (3) other factors influence both the individual's behavior and achievement.

Environmental influences on behaviors and achievement may be divided into two categories — interscholastic and extrascholastic. The most important extrascholastic influence on achievement and behavior is the family. From the first Coleman study on equality of educational opportunity (cited in Jones and Jones 1986), the importance of the family's influence on academic achievement has been widely acknowledged.

One high school in Miami, Florida, explains the factors that contributed to its academic success was the atmosphere at the school.

Praisio (1991, p 112) stated that:

The strong sense of community that the school had developed has enabled the school to overcome obstacles and to achieve in many areas. Students were motivated, the staff was dedicated, and parents and community were involved. Students expected success. They were rewarded for achievement, and they were provided with a myriad of opportunities.

While there are numerous studies of student behavior and multitudes on student achievement, only a few studies deal directly with the relationship of order and achievement in secondary schools.

One major study, Fifteen Thousand Hours by Michael Rutter and his colleagues (cited in Gaddy 1987), looked at 12 high schools in inner-city London. They found evidence that differences
between schools do make a difference on students. The study showed that schools that give more emphasis to academics have better behavioral outcomes.

Teacher emphasis on academics was consistently related to student behavior. The more time teachers spend “on topics” and the less time “on equipment,” the fewer lessons that ended early, the more time students spend working in silence and the more teachers interacted with the class as a whole, the better behaved students were overall. This study expands the consistent findings that teacher management style is related to student behavior within the same classroom.

Schools with teachers who spent less time on disciplinary interventions had greater misbehavior; schools which had teachers with a “disciplinary” rather than a “welfare” approach to behavior problems had less. The official use of corporal punishment was related to marginally worse behavior and lower achievement; the unofficial use of physical punishments such as slaps or cuffing was clearly and significantly related to greater misbehavior. On the other hand, the use of academic sanctions for misbehavior was significantly related to lower delinquency outside of school.

While punitive sanctions were found to be variably related to behavior, rewards and praise both at the school and classroom levels were found to be strongly related to good behavior.

Schools where teachers reported being willing to see students at any time about a problem and actually did see more
students had fewer behavior problems. Schools that were cleaner and had more decorations such as plants, pictures, and posters had fewer behavior problems. Students have fewer behavior problems when they see overt indications that others care about their behavior as it relates to school.

Students who participated more in class and school activities and are given more responsibilities have lower rates of misbehavior.

In summary, *Fifteen Thousand Hours* indicated that achievement is related to behavior. The correlation between behavior and achievement suggests that schools effective in discipline are more effective in producing achievement and vice versa (Gaddy 1987).

Campbell (1991) concluded a study of discipline problems by stating that the disciplinary climate is affected positively by:

a. strong administrative leadership,
b. a climate of high expectations,
c. an atmosphere that is orderly without being rigid,
d. an emphasis on students' acquiring basic skills,
e. frequent monitoring of the progress of students.

Extensive evidence shows that some of the primary causes of discipline problems are deeply rooted in the nature of the school itself. Thus, when educators consider ways to reduce the causes of discipline problems, they must seek practical ways to modify the institution.
Almost all surveys of teacher effectiveness report that classroom management skills are of primary importance in determining teaching success, whether it is measured by student learning or by ratings. Thus, management skills are crucial and fundamental. A teacher who is grossly inadequate in classroom management skills is probably not going to accomplish much (Brophy and Evertson 1976).

Teacher effectiveness research has focused attention on three sets of teacher behaviors that influence student’s behavior and learning: (1) teachers’ skill in organizing and managing classroom activities, (2) teachers’ skills in presenting instructional materials, and (3) teacher-student relationship.

Research findings of Kounin, Brophy and Evertson (1980) (cited by Emmer, Everston and Anderson 1980) which showed that the smooth functioning found in effective teachers classrooms throughout the school year mostly resulted from effective planning and organization during the first few weeks of school. Effective classroom managers provided students with clear instruction in desirable classroom behavior and carefully monitored students’ performance – reteaching behaviors that students had not mastered. Effective teachers also made consequences for misbehavior clear and applied these consistently.

Work carried out by Dunn and Dunn (1983), Joseph Renzuli (1983), and Anthony Gregory (1982) shows that when teachers allow students to study in environments conducive to learning and use approaches to learning that are most productive for each
student, the students learn more effectively and behave appropriately.

Goodlad (1984) analyzed the resulting data on school effectiveness research which show that teachers and administrators do make a difference. Factors such as teacher expectation, the quality of teacher-student relationship, instruction emphasizing careful monitoring of students' progress, opportunities for teacher and student involvement in decision making, administrative leadership, and variety in teaching methods influence students' academic performance and behavior.

School administrators all desire to motivate students toward self-discipline. The challenge is "how?" While punishment, admonition and chastisement can control or curb behavior, discipline need not be punitive to work. Institutional responses must be fashioned within a system of fairness that allows students to take responsibility for the effects of their actions on others and on themselves. Every teacher, administrator, and parent wants school to be a "safe place" to learn as well as an environment which is orderly without being constrained, neat without being compulsive, and structured without being rigid (Turnbaugh 1986).

Swick (1987) stated that the most promising approach for dealing with disruptive behavior in school has emphasized educational and support activities that strengthen parent and teacher skills in dealing proactively with student behavior. Education programs for parents and professional development opportunities for teachers that focus on increasing their power to
influence students’ lives in a positive direction are ultimately the most effective method for responding to behavior problems and preventing student failure. Classroom deportment and achievement are important, however, they are not the ultimate goals of schooling. A student’s school behavior is not as important as the values and attitudes the student carries away from school. A student’s grades are not as important as the ability to think clearly and freely (Gaddy 1987).

The Principal’s Role

While all the strategies contribute to the less disruptive, more highly motivated student, schools could not have achieved their goals without strong leadership from their principals. This is a crucial ingredient in improving discipline. Students respond best to a principal they can respect. These men and women are firm, fair, consistent, and highly visible. Though they differ in style and technique, they all value order and discipline, stay in touch with the local police when necessary, and encourage a common agreement on school goals and how to attain them.

Strong principals clearly and consistently articulate high academic standards and other expectations of students and staff. They demand prompt, accurate information about incidents of misbehavior and absenteeism and punish offenders consistently. An outstanding principal monitors classroom activity and student performance, systematically evaluates teachers, and formulates
goals that are linked to the mastery of basic skills. Effective principals also avoid unnecessary classroom interruptions, distractions, and burdens. They motivate staff and students to work together toward common goals. They recruit, retain, and train talented staff members. By working together, principals and teachers can improve instruction – one of the most effective ways to improve discipline (Daly and Fowler 1988).

"Every principal should supervise school decorum and order" as stated by Morris, Crowson, Porter-Gehrio and Hurwitz, Jr. (1984). The principal must extend the maintenance of control to enhance the school's learning experiences. The authors recommended three maintenance strategies necessary to provide decorum and order. They are: (1) anticipation of likely problems, (2) the quick control of event and crisis that may occur and (3) the development and enforcement of school rules as guides to proper institutional behavior. As the principal attempts to control the behavior of students, the principal must be sure that rule enforcement is responsible and consistent. Otherwise, chaos results.

Summary

All studies on discipline agree that the principal sets the tone for the school. Discipline is the major problem facing the American education system. Even though many causes of discipline problems are given, it is the classroom teacher who
must handle the problem. However, research shows that the school culture, teacher attitude, and classroom management are significant influences on student behavior and achievement. Research studies indicate that student behavior is related to student achievement.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teacher attitude and student failure rate, teacher attitude and teacher discipline referrals, and teacher discipline referrals and student failure rate based on classroom management.

The Role of Theory

Classroom management is the dependent variable. Teacher attitude, teacher discipline referrals, and teacher failure rate are the independent variables.

Presentation and Definition of the Variables

Definitions

Unlike practitioners in other professions, educators usually find it difficult to agree upon specific definitions of common terms and practices.

*Webster’s New World Dictionary* (cited in Kohut and Range 1986) defines *discipline* as:

Training that develops self-control, character, orderliness and efficiency, “accepting of or submission to authority and control, “and a system of rules or methods, as for the conduct of members of a monastic
order.” Webster defines to discipline “to develop by instruction and exercise.” Discipline is teaching and learning; it is not punishment. Discipline is two-dimensional for it involves both imposed and self-disciplined (Kohut and Range 1986).

There are educators who believe that discipline is synonymous with classroom management. They say that a well-planned lesson is the best deterrent to a noisy and disruptive classroom. Unfortunately, many teachers are judged on their ability to keep a class quiet; this is the sole criterion for their evaluation. However, supervisors usually endorse a “lively” classroom atmosphere but often resort to measuring a teacher’s ability in terms of the noise level in a classroom (Jones and Jones 1986).

**Classroom Management** is an all encompassing term which refers to virtually every facet of interaction and activity – planned and spontaneous – which may occur in an academic classroom, science laboratory, or gymnasium. The meaning of discipline is narrow; it infers self-respect and respect for other persons.

The concept of classroom management is broader than the notion of student discipline. It includes all the things teachers must do to foster student involvement and cooperation in classroom activities and to establish a productive working environment (Sanford, Emmer and Clements 1983). Another definition of Classroom Management as defined by Lemlech (1988) is the orchestration of classroom life: planning curriculum, organizing procedures and resources, arranging the environment
to maximize efficiency and monitoring student progress anticipating potential problems.

There are teachers who are reluctant to take any redirecive action, even when warranted, against a disobedient pupil because such action might seem to be an admission of failure or might subject the teacher to ridicule from unkind colleagues. On the contrary, it is often more of an injustice to the pupil not to initiate any action (Sanford, Emmer, and Clements 1983).

**Teacher Attitude** was used interchangeably with teacher behavior or teacher communication. *World Book Dictionary* (1987) defines attitude as (1) a way of thinking, acting, or feeling, manner or behavior of a person toward a situation or cause; (2) a position of the body suggesting an action, purpose, emotion, or mental state.

**Discipline Referrals** are forms completed by the teacher describing the discipline problem of the student. They are submitted to the discipline office for disciplinary action by an administrator.

**Student Failure** according to the state and local boards of education is a numerical grade of 69 or below or a letter grade of “F” received by a student at the end of a grading period.

The classroom is the command center where teachers win or lose the battle for academic achievement and order. If disruptive behavior prevails and discipline is weak or lacking, then the chances for victory are slim (Daly and Fowler 1988).
Null Hypotheses

Three null hypotheses were structured to establish the relationship between the three independent variables.

H₁: There is no significant relationship between teacher attitudes and student failure rates.

H₂: There is no significant relationship between teacher attitude and discipline referrals.

H₃: There is no significant relationship between teacher discipline referrals and student failure rates.

Limitations of the Study

The research study is limited by the following:

1. Only twenty teachers from the same school were used in the study.

2. No demographic data were obtained for the twenty teachers.

3. Teachers selected to participate in the study teach students on each grade level and various student ability level.

4. Data were collected for only one semester.
5. Data were collected from only one high school.

6. Response to the attitude questionnaire might have been tainted by teachers not giving their true feelings, instead giving what they thought was the most appropriate answer.

Summary of the Theoretical Framework

In the theoretical framework of the study, independent variables of teacher attitude, student failure rate, and discipline referrals were discussed in relationship to the dependent variable of classroom management.

The words “discipline” and “classroom management” were defined extensively in order to show the distinctive features of each and to discourage the widely held assumption that the terms may be used interchangeably.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design selected for the study was correlational. The relationship between the three variables of teacher attitude, student failure rate, and teacher discipline referrals was examined. Correlation was used to decide whether there was a statistically significant relationship between two variables.

Description of the Setting

The study was conducted at one of the sixteen Atlanta Public High Schools. It has a student enrollment of approximately 1,157. The students are in grades nine through twelve. The teaching staff consists of seventy-five classroom teachers. There are five school administrators, namely, one principal, two assistant principals, an instructional magnet coordinator, and one vocational supervisor. Students are attracted to the school because of the magnet program which specializes in information processing. Other students live in the surrounding area of the school.
Sampling Procedures

Twenty teachers were asked to voluntarily participate in the study. Consideration was given to discipline referrals, high and low student failure rates, and exemplary classroom management styles.

No specific criterion was used in choosing the participants, no demographic information was asked. The range of teaching experience was from three years up to thirty or more years. The range of teaching classifications was from exceptional children to teachers of gifted children with varied ability levels — remedial to advanced placement.

Working with Human Subjects

Each teacher chosen to participate in the study was given a letter describing the study. They were asked if they would participate in the study strictly voluntarily. They were told that anonymity and confidentiality would be used. No information would be used to evaluate them or used for any other purpose but research.

After each teacher returned the signed letter agreeing to participate in the study, each teacher was given a packet containing the Teacher Attitude Questionnaire and an answer sheet outlining the instructions. Each teacher returned the questionnaire within a week as requested.
Description of the Instrument

The study was designed to determine the relationship between teacher attitude and discipline referrals, teacher attitude and student failure rate, and teacher discipline referrals and student failure rate.

Teacher Attitude

In order to collect data to determine teacher attitude, it was necessary to locate an instrument which measured teacher attitude. After carefully searching the Eric files, an instrument was chosen designed by Edward J. Furst, University of Arkansas, 1976. The instrument was in the form of a questionnaire designed to measure human relations and attitude for teachers entitled Measuring Human Relations Attitudes and Values with Situational Inventories.

Furst (1976) stated in the abstract that little had been made of the process of problematic situations as an evaluative measure in studying human relations. His study reported on works carried out by the author himself to further research and development of this measure related to human relations. He used an analysis based on three elements which are necessary for determining interest dimensions: (1) the sample of problematic situations, (2) a sampling of alternative courses of action, and (3) the task given the respondent to study. In each of the inventories, the situations consist of short paragraphs depicting a problem in human
relations. The problem situations were those that might occur at elementary and high school levels. These were situations in which the teacher may interact with the students. A rating scale was developed and administered to three samples: Freshmen at the Ohio State University (N = 127), Prospective teachers at the Ohio State University (N = 115), and Prospective teachers at the University of Arkansas (N = 79). Methodology used included varimax rotation, oblique factors and correlations among oblique factors.

After two preliminary factor analyses and reduction of number of variables, the investigator did a final series of analyses on 57 items plus 3 instrument variables. The investigator concluded that the utility of logical and psychological analysis had been demonstrated and that the kind of technique as modified in the study appeared to have promise and for use in research and instruction. Please see [Appendix A] for instrument and the mean, standard deviation, coefficients, alpha and intercorrelations of scales.

The questionnaire is an abridged version of the forms used by the author to gather data. It includes only the alternatives from the original that became part of the final analyses of data.

It should only be used for research on attitudes and values.
Discipline Referrals

The researchers compiled all discipline referrals submitted to the administration for each teacher for one semester. The number of referrals for each teacher was placed on the scale beside the teacher's alphabet letter for anonymity.

Student Failure Rate

The researcher used the data sent to the school from the research and evaluation department of the Atlanta Public School System. Research and Evaluation calculates each teacher's failure rate at the end of each semester based on end of semester grades given by each subject teacher. These grades are used by Research and Evaluation for many purposes such as course evaluation, report cards, and student's transcript. Any student who receives a numerical grade of 69 or below has failed the class.

Data Collection Procedures

The procedures used in collection of data were administering a questionnaire to each teacher to determine teacher attitude, counting the number of discipline referrals sent to the office for each teacher for one semester, and the percentage rate of student failure for each teacher.

Each teacher selected to participate in the study was given a packet containing the teacher attitude questionnaire and a national
computer system answer sheet with 100 item count. Instructions for doing the questionnaire were written on the cover sheet. Each teacher had to carefully study the ten problematic situations. Then they were to rate each alternative course of action on a 5-point scale according to its appropriateness. A rating of 5 was the high end, standing for a very appropriate or good action, and 1 was the low end, standing for a very inappropriate or poor action.

To guarantee anonymity, each teacher was assigned an alphabet letter to be used for identification of data. Teachers returned the completed packets to the researcher within one week. The researcher made a chart with three columns and assigned each teacher an alphabet letter beginning with teacher A through teacher T.

The questionnaire was scored only to get a mean score. There was no right or wrong answer. The following scale was used for calculating the responses. There were 57 alternative courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After all points were added for each respondent, that number was recorded beside the teacher’s alphabet letter in the column labeled attitude. See Table 2.

The discipline referral counts and the failure percentage rate had already been placed on the chart in the proper column and beside the teacher’s alphabet letter.

**Statistical Application**

The statistical tools used to analyze the collected data was the Pearson r Product Moment Correlation which is the most commonly used measure of linear correlation between two variables.

Phillips (1982) states that coefficients of correlation are indices of relationship. Any correlation coefficient is an index of the extent to which measurements of the same individuals are to be found on corresponding segments (e.g., low middle, and high) of two different scales. When such a relationship holds precisely and with no exceptions, the correlation is said to be perfect, the coefficient is 1.00. Less than perfect relationships produce coefficients smaller than 1.00. A negative correlation is just as strong as a positive correlation if its coefficient is equally large. The coefficient indexes magnitude and direction separately in a single number that varies from .00 to 1.00 and that does not carry a minus sign. The presence of a significant linear correlation does
not necessarily mean that there is a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the two variables.

Summary of Methods and Procedures

A quantitative study was used for collecting data. Correlation was the research design used in order to analyze paired data to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the three variables.

Data used for the three variables were supplied from twenty teachers in one Atlanta high school. They were asked to participate in this study based on discipline referrals, high and low student failure rates, and exemplary classroom management styles.

Data were calculated and placed on a chart beside each teacher’s alphabet letter which was used instead of a name. The Pearson Product r Product Moment Correlation was the statistical tool used to analyze the data and accept or reject the null hypotheses.
CHAPTER V
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teacher attitude and student failure rate, teacher attitude and teacher discipline referrals, and teacher discipline referrals and student failure rate.

Twenty teachers from one Atlanta public high school agreed to participate in the study. The data were collected from the participants agreeing to respond to an attitude questionnaire. Teachers were asked to study carefully the ten problematic classroom situations and respond to the fifty-seven action on a scale of one to five, with five being the highest and the most appropriate, and one being the lowest and the least appropriate.

The discipline referrals were compiled from the referrals submitted to the office over one semester for disciplinary action. The student failure rate was obtained from the research and evaluation department of the Atlanta Public School System.

The analysis of data is presented in three parts: an overview, explanations of the findings in tabular format, and data tables which restated each hypothesis and its acceptance or rejection.

Presenting data as shown for each teacher according to attitude, discipline referrals, and student failure rate. The mean
score of each variable will be presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4. See Table 1.

Mean Score of Respondents on Teacher Attitude Questionnaire

Teachers were asked to respond to ten problematic situations of a kind sometimes faced in the classroom. They were to study each situation carefully. Then rate each alternative course of action on a 5-point scale according to its appropriateness. The following code to record the ratings were:

HIGH END – “Good”

5 – Very Appropriate

4 – Fairly Appropriate

3 – So-So, Possibly Acceptable

2 – Fairly Inappropriate

1 – Very Inappropriate

LOW END – “Poor”

There were fifty-seven items. Scores were tabulated for each teacher; and for each response, units the same numerical value as given in the response. The scorcs ranged from a low of 137 to a high of 198.
### TABLE 1

**TEACHER ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teacher D</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Teacher E</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Teacher F</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Teacher G</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Teacher H</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Teacher I</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Teacher J</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Teacher K</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Teacher L</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Teacher M</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Teacher N</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Teacher O</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Teacher P</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Teacher Q</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Teacher R</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Teacher S</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Teacher T</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** 172.6
To get a mean score, each total score was added and divided by the number of respondents which was 20. The mean score was 172.6. One insignificant observation was the teacher who had the lowest attitude score also has the highest number of discipline referrals and also the highest percentage rate of student failure.

Mean Score for Teacher Discipline Referrals

The researcher gathered all discipline referrals sent to the administrators for disciplinary actions for one semester. They were counted for each participant in the study. No effort was made to categorize the referrals into specific discipline areas such as fighting, disruptive behavior, etc. The researcher felt that if the teacher took time to write up the referrals and submit them to the administration for disciplinary action, then it must have been serious. The referrals ranged from one to forty-five discipline referrals per teacher within one semester. The mean score for the referrals was 14.9. Another insignificant observation made was the same teacher who had a low attitude score had the highest number of referrals and the highest student failure rate. The teacher with the highest attitude score had the lowest discipline referrals and also the lowest student failure rate. See Table 2.
TABLE 2

TEACHER DISCIPLINE REFERRALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Referrals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teacher D</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Teacher E</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Teacher F</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Teacher G</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Teacher H</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Teacher I</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Teacher J</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Teacher K</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Teacher L</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Teacher M</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Teacher N</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Teacher O</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Teacher P</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Teacher Q</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Teacher R</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Teacher S</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Teacher T</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** 14.9
Mean Score for Student Failure

At the end of each semester, teachers submit their grades on a scan computer sheet to be sent to the computer center for printing of report cards and transcripts. Research and Evaluation also uses the same data to generate various reports. One important report sent to all principals is the student failure report for each teacher. From this report, the researcher assigned each teachers' percentage rate of student failure. The failure rate ranged from a low of 2.6 to a high of 78.8 percent of students failing in class for one semester. The mean percentage score for failure was 29.7. See Table 3.

Testing the Null Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between teacher attitude and student failure rate.
TABLE 3
STUDENT FAILURE RATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>78.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teacher D</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Teacher E</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Teacher F</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Teacher G</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Teacher H</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Teacher I</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Teacher J</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Teacher K</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Teacher L</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Teacher M</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Teacher N</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Teacher O</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Teacher P</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Teacher Q</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Teacher R</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Teacher S</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Teacher T</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 29.7
TABLE 4
PEARSON PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATION OF
TEACHER ATTITUDE AND FAILURE RATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
<th>D.F.</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>172.6</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure Rates</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p = .678

Using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation of teacher attitude and failure rate, the data collected from the twenty participants yielded the following: p = .678 and r = -0.1. Therefore, there is no significant correlation between teacher attitude and failure rate. Hypothesis one is accepted.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between teacher attitude and discipline referrals.
Using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation of teacher attitude and discipline referrals, the data revealed the following: p = .651 and r = -0.1. Therefore, there is no significant correlation between teacher attitude and discipline referrals. Hypothesis Two is accepted.

**Hypothesis Three**

There is no significant relationship between teacher discipline referrals and student failure rates.
The analysis of data using Pearson Product Moment Correlation of failure rates and discipline referrals indicate the findings: \( p < .01 \) and \( r = +0.651 \). This finding indicates that there is a positive correlation between failure rates and discipline referrals. Therefore, the correlation is significant and Hypothesis Three is rejected.

Summary of Analysis of Data

This chapter analyzed the data collected for this study. There were twenty teachers selected to participate in the study to determine the relationship between teacher attitude and discipline referrals, teacher attitude and student failure rate, and teacher discipline referrals and student failure rate.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistical Procedure was used to accept or reject the three null hypotheses.

Null Hypothesis One and null Hypothesis Two were accepted, thus indicating no significant correlation between the two independent variables. Null Hypothesis Three was rejected indicating that there is a significant relationship between teacher discipline referrals and student failure rate.
CHAPTER VI
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUMMARY

Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings, conclusions, implications, recommendations, and summary of the research project. Through a questionnaire of teacher attitude, collected data from discipline referrals, and student failure reports, from twenty teachers in one Atlanta public high school, the findings were as follows:

1. There was no significant correlation between teacher attitude and discipline referrals.

2. There was no significant correlation between teacher attitude and student failure rate.

3. There was a significant correlation between teacher discipline referrals and student failure rate.

From informal observation of the data, two findings were observed. They were as follows:
1. Teachers who had the lowest score on the attitude questionnaire had the highest number of discipline referrals as well as the highest percentage of student failures.

2. Teachers who had the highest score on the attitude questionnaire had very low discipline referrals and student failure rate.

Conclusions

Based on the findings and related literature on classroom management, discipline, student achievement, and teacher attitude, the researcher concluded that educators must discern the difference in meaning between the term “classroom management” and “discipline.” Too many times, the two words are used synonymously which is in error. Discipline is only one facet of classroom management. Classroom management is an all encompassing term which refers to all activities in the class.

This study is indicative of the effective school research which stresses that the principal is the instructional leader of the school. However, discipline is a shared responsibility. The parents, community leaders, students, teachers and staff must all be held accountable for discipline in the school, in the classroom, in the community, and in the home.

In order to minimize discipline problems and maximize positive student behavior and increase student achievement, the leadership team of principals, counselors, and teachers must work
together and must show a great interest in the welfare of the students they teach.

The study has indicated that there is a significant correlation between student achievement and discipline referrals. Therefore, classroom management must be an important link toward discipline and student achievement. The effectiveness of classroom management depends not on finding quick fixes or magic formulas. Rather, the teachers must grow in their competence by developing their skills of instruction, management, and humanistic problem solving.

Classroom control of student behavior deals primarily with the symptoms of misbehavior. Ultimately, a teacher's discipline will depend on long-term relationships with children, effective instructional practices, an ability to convince students that school is important. School is important when teachers reach students with meaningful lessons and a professional commitment that says, "I care about you, I know you can behave, I want to help you be a better you" (McDaniel 1987).

Implications

The implications that are pertinent to this study were the following:

1. According to effective school research, the administrator is the instructional leader of the school. The administrator must have a vision and be willing to “dare.” The
administrator must be visible in the classrooms and in the school. Therefore, the administrator cannot spend the entire day in the office solving discipline problems.

2. Effective planning and appropriate classroom management skills are the key ingredients in minimizing student discipline and maximizing student achievement.

3. The “universal” problem of discipline is not just the responsibility of the classroom teachers. It must be a team effort involving administrators, teachers, counselors, staff, students, and parents.

4. All teachers, beginning and veteran, must be trained through staff development, inservice workshops and through summer classes to develop a mature and comprehensive approach to classroom management well grounded in research and theory.

5. Teachers and staff who work daily with students must aim to develop a positive teacher-student relation which would ensure student achievement and appropriate discipline.

6. Principals, being the instructional leader, must involve teachers in site-based management which would allow everyone to study the entire school climate and to make recommendations. If inappropriate discipline is the result of the curriculum, then administrators must be willing to take the risk to change curriculum which would be more relevant for the students at that school.
Recommendations

Based upon the findings and implications, these recommendations are warranted:

1. A collaborative effort of all staff personnel must be initiated to study ways and means, theories and practices, to create the appropriate climate for preventive discipline.

2. On-going staff development or workshops must be provided for all teachers, supervisors, and administrators.

3. The principal must actively assume the role as instructional leader; the principal no longer can be a disciplinary officer.

4. Teachers who have high student failure rate and numerous discipline problems should be provided small group classroom management workshops. They should be encouraged to visit outstanding teachers at other schools.

5. The principal, administrators, or department chairperson should implement the “coaching” model for all teachers, but especially teachers experiencing problems in classroom management.

6. “High Expectations” is one of the most important correlates of the effective school. It is the catalyst that sets everything in motion. Teachers and administrators must develop an attitude of high expectations of all students and work hard to convey it to students at all times.
7. The questionnaire on attitude did not yield a relationship between teacher attitude and discipline referrals and between teacher attitude and student failure. Therefore, the researcher recommends that further study of the above questions should be made using a different instrument to measure teacher attitude.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teacher attitude and failure rate, between teacher attitude and discipline referrals, and between discipline referrals and failure rate.

The findings from the study indicated that the most significant relationship between the variables was that of discipline referrals and student failures.

Therefore, administrators and teachers must take a more in-depth look at the problem of discipline and student failure. Each school must design a tailor-made plan to address the needs of their students. The administrator must establish the role as an instructional leadership role and begin to provide an on-going staff development which would focus on recent studies in classroom management, discipline and student achievement.

Finally, the staff and administrators must work collaboratively to design a preventive discipline plan, tailored-made to that individual school which would provide a school climate for optimum learning.
The research encourages teachers and administrator to investigate the multitude of principles and practices concerning classroom management and student achievement and incorporate them into their disciplinary practices and classroom management style.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Questionnaire on Teacher Practices (Abridged)
Edward J. Furst

Directions

This booklet contains ten problematic situations of a kind sometimes faced in the classroom. These situations are lettered from A through J. Following each situation there is a list of 12 to 18 possible courses of action that a teacher might take. To conform to the numbering on the answer sheet the alternative courses of action are numbered consecutively from 1 to 150.

Study each situation. Then rate each alternative course of action on 5-point scale according to its appropriate. Try to consider each alternative on its own merits, independently of the others in the list. Use the following code to record your ratings on the answer sheet:

(HIGH END "GOOD")

5 - Very Appropriate
4 - Fairly Appropriate
3 - So-So, Possibly Acceptable
2 - Fairly Inappropriate
1 - Very Inappropriate

(LOW END: "POOR")

Thus, if you feel that a certain action is very appropriate, blacken answer space 5 opposite the corresponding item number on the answer sheet. If you feel that the action is fairly appropriate, then blacken answer space 4, and so on for the other possible ratings.

The spaces for answers run from left to right (1-2-3-4-5). Be careful to use the scale properly: remember that 5 is the high end, standing for a very appropriate or good action, and 1 is the low end, standing for a very inappropriate or poor action.

Use a no. 2 pencil, either your own or one provided by the person in charge. Do not use pen or a electrographic pencil such as the IBM kind.

Please do not make any marks on this booklet.
Situation A

Tim was a popular tenth-grade student who often set the tone and style for other students to follow. Mathematics was one subject he especially disliked (it was a required subject in the main course of study). Near the end of one class period in mathematics, he throws this question at you, the teacher: “Why do we have to study that stuff?”

Other students take up the query. Soon in their private conversation the whole class is using that question as their their theme song before and after class session. Affairs reach a critical point when another student, the daughter of a prominent businessman, says quite loudly and pointedly: “My father doesn’t see any sense in algebra either.”

5 - Very appropriate
4 - Fairly appropriate
3 - So-so, possibly acceptable
2 - Fairly inappropriate
1 - Very inappropriate

1. Ignore the incident, go on with the lesson. (3)

2. Caution the two students that they will get more out of the course and benefit their future by making an effort to like algebra. (5)

3. Appoint a special student committee to investigate the uses of algebra in science and other areas and have the committee report its findings to the class. (6)

4. Go through some everyday problems to show the value of algebra. (8)

5. Discuss with the class why they don’t feel algebra is necessary and what they think about the course. (9)

6. Arrange for the two outspoken students to see the school counselor. (13)

7. Give the student an extra assignment or some other form of punishment for disrupting the class. (15)

8. Remind the class that mathematics is a required subject and that there is little point in making an issue of it. (16)
Situation B

A junior high school student had refused to prepare a written contribution requested by you, his English teacher, for that day’s assignment. Consequently, you tell him to have the paper the next day or not come to class. The next day when he is asked to read his contribution, he has one, which he then reads to the class. The topic of his paper is a disagreement between a student and a teacher in which conversation the student referred to the teacher as “an old heifer.” It is quite obvious that the student is referring to you, the teacher of this English class. Upon reading the contribution, he starts to leave the class.

5 – Very appropriate
4 – Fairly appropriate
3 – So-so, possibly acceptable
2 – Fairly inappropriate
1 – Very inappropriate

9. Call the student in for a private conference, then advise him on the importance of meeting assignments and showing proper respect. (17)

10. Have student return to seat, give credit for the assignment, don’t do anything further about the incident. (19)

11. Let the student leave, then have the class discuss and evaluate his paper. (25)

12. Send him to the principal’s office for disciplinary action of some sort. (26)

13. Ask him to come in and talk things over, then give him a chance to tell how he feels about the assignment and your class. (29)

14. Refer the boy to the school counselor or psychologist. (33)

[3]
Situation C

You are teaching social studies to a group of tenth-grade students. The class is in the midst of a certain unit which has been carefully planned and for which definite reading assignments have been made.

In this community, the City Council was deciding whether to adopt daylight savings time and the issue was being debated in the community. The radio, whenever it was turned on, blared forth spot announcements and 15-minute speeches on either side of the question. A group of tenth-grade students was also debating the question between periods as they gathered in their classrooms. In your class, before the bell rang, several students turn to you and ask, "How can the City Council tell what the people really want? They don’t know who hires the different speakers or which ones represent most of the people. How could they tell? One of the students then suggests that the council needs a survey of community opinion and asks, "Couldn’t we make a survey like that?"

5 - Very appropriate
4 - Fairly appropriate
3 - So-so, possibly acceptable
2 - Fairly inappropriate
1 - Very inappropriate

15. Give your immediate approval, allow the class to plan and make the survey. (37)

16. Open the matter of a survey to class discussion, getting the class to consider what would be involved in making one. (38)

17. Take a few minutes at the start of the period to give the pro's and con's on the issue, then go on with the regular class work. (39)

18. Take responsibility for inviting speakers to class who represent both sides of the controversy. (43)

19. Keep the class out of the controversy, go on with the present unit as planned. (46)
Situation D

You have been out of school one day and on your return asked a few questions about the work covered the day before so that you would know where to pick up. Volunteers tell you what had been done in reading, arithmetic, and so on, and you proceed to begin the day.

Suddenly someone addresses you and says, "... We had a little trouble yesterday." At the snickers start, grins appear, and all of a sudden several begin to tell you of the "fun" they had had. It is quite evident that the poor substitute had put in a trying day.

5 - Very appropriate
4 - Fairly appropriate
3 - So-so, possibly acceptable
2 - Fairly inappropriate
1 - Very inappropriate

20. Ask the few who seemed to be ringleaders to see you after school, then give them a "talking to." (49)

21. Let the pupils discuss their behavior and how they should act in the future. (58)

22. Listen to the comments but turn the problem over to the principal. (59)

23. Make it clear to the class that you expect better behavior of them on future occasions. (60)
Situation E

Students in one homeroom were busy getting signatures on a petition to dismiss a gym instructor. They hadn't even asked you, their homeroom teacher, for advice. They had decided among themselves that the gym instructor was overly strict. They had even worked actively for signatures between classes and were planning to get more. Feeling was running strong.

5 - Very appropriate
4 - Fairly appropriate
3 - So-so, possibly acceptable
2 - Fairly inappropriate
1 - Very inappropriate

24. Ask the students to submit in writing their reasons and to cite specific incidents. (63)

25. Have the students appoint a committee to talk with the gym instructor about their grievances. (65)

26. Discuss with the class the possible consequences of their getting up a petition. (67)

27. Pay no attention to the signature-getting, ignore it. (68)

28. Suggest that a committee of the students see the principal to present their views. (70).
Situation F

Elmer, whose scholastic aptitude score places him in the top 1 percent of his high school class, enrolls in as many “snap” courses as possible. He earns B’s and C’s with little effort. He tells his schoolmates, “Get wise. Don’t knock yourself out with homework. The school will have to graduate you anyway when you are of age.”

5 - Very appropriate
4 - Fairly appropriate
3 - So-so, possibly acceptable
2 - Fairly inappropriate
1 - Very inappropriate

29. Ask the guidance counselor to assume responsibility for this problem. (76)

30. Inform him that the school does not have to graduate a student and that a student may quit when of age. (77)

31. Explain to him that his attitude is really not very wise, that is a rationalization for lack of effort. (85)

32. Find some special interest that Elmer has; then encourage him to cultivate it through outside reading, etc. (88)

33. Invite him to tell you about his way of looking at school and his feelings about it. (89)

34. Plan a more appropriate program for him and urge him to adopt it. (90)
Situation G

In fourth-grade spelling class, Linda volunteers to spell “Arkansas” but is mistaken. You correct her, and she becomes sullen. Later you call on her to spell “acrobat.” Again she is mistaken, and you correct her. She then gives the impression of feeling “picked on” and of wanting to be left alone.

5 - Very appropriate
4 - Fairly appropriate
3 - So-so, possibly acceptable
2 - Fairly inappropriate
1 - Very inappropriate

35. Explain to her that these two words are easy to misspell; then show some easy way — like a jingle — to remember the spelling. (92)

36. Caution Linda that you will request a conference with her parents if she does not improve her behavior. (93)

37. Refer the problem to a school psychologist. (95)

38. Make a special effort to praise her whenever this seems appropriate. (98)

39. Call Linda in for a talk and then explain that you weren’t picking on her but only trying to help by correcting errors. (103)

40. Contact Linda’s and leave the problem up to them. (105)
Situation H

When Kevin, an eleventh grade student, is not chatting with his neighbors in class, he is passing notes. He often interrupts the lecture or discussion to offer his point of view. Or he has to get a book, sharpen a pencil, etc. His work is unsatisfactory.

5 – Very appropriate
4 – Fairly appropriate
3 – So-so, possibly acceptable
2 – Fairly inappropriate
1 – Very inappropriate

41. Give him some form of responsibility such as taking attendance, leading an occasional discussion, and the like. (109)

42. Ask him to leave the class and not return until he is ready to do his work and conduct himself in the proper manner. (111)

43. Arrange for the guidance counselor to have a talk with Kevin. (112)

44. Have a talk with Kevin in which you explain what his behavior is doing to the class, to himself, and to his future life. (113)

45. Talk over with him how he sees his own behavior in school and what satisfactions he derives from it. (115)

46. Keep him after school when he misbehaves. (118)
Situation I

Jeff, age 6, is in the first grade. He is an alert, bright boy. One morning he entered class with his hat, coat, boots, and gloves on and joined the group for the opening activity. (The children have lockers in the hall where they remove garments before entering the classroom.) He was then asked to go to his locker and hang up his outer garments. This he did. Nevertheless, for the next few days he came to class fully clothed and had to be asked each time go to his locker.

5 - Very appropriate  
4 - Fairly appropriate  
3 - So-so, possibly acceptable  
2 - Fairly inappropriate  
1 - Very inappropriate

47. In the period devoted to Health, raise the question of why we take our wraps off indoors; draw out various members of the class and summarize the points. (121)

48. Refer the problem to the school psychologist for further action. (127)

49. Don’t say anything further, let him sit with his outer garments on. (129)

50. Give him a gentle scolding. (130)

51. Report this to Jeff’s parents and let them take it from there. (134)
Situation J

Eugene is ten years old but his physical growth is that of a well-developed thirteen year old. He does not wait his turn in games and appoints himself as captain. At lunch time, he will demand or take cake or cookies from others. If anyone objects to his behavior or tells the teacher, he fights with him on the way home.

5 - Very appropriate
4 - Fairly appropriate
3 - So-so, possibly acceptable
2 - Fairly inappropriate
1 - Very inappropriate

52. Point out to him that just because he is bigger he has no right to pick on other children. (136)

53. At lunch time, forbid him to take food from other children; but at games and away from school, let the situation take care of itself. (139)

54. Hold a class discussion, encourage the pupils to formulate rules for taking part in games, behaving during lunch time, etc. (140)

55. Give Eugene some little extra duties like messenger to the office. (142)

56. Refer the problem to the school psychologist. (143)

57. Advise Eugene that no one will play with him or like him if he continues to act that way. (148)
Table 7
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR THE ITEMS AND INSTRUMENT-VARIABLES

| Item | Sample 1 | | | Sample 2 | | | Sample 3 | | |
|------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|      | Scale    | Mean     | S.D.     | Scale    | Mean     | S.D.     | Scale    | Mean     | S.D.     |
| 1    | 1        | 1.8      | 1.1      | 1        | 1.7      | 1.0      | 1        | 2.0      | 1.1      |
| 2    | 3        | 3.5      | 1.0      | 2        | 2.7      | 1.0      | -        | 2.6      | 0.9      |
| 3    | 1-       | 4.1      | 1.0      | 1-       | 4.5      | 0.8      | 5        | 4.0      | 1.1      |
| 4    | 1-       | 4.2      | 1.0      | 1-       | 4.4      | 0.8      | 5        | 3.9      | 1.0      |
| 5    | 1-       | 3.8      | 1.2      | -        | 4.0      | 1.1      | 5        | 3.5      | 1.1      |
| 6    | 2        | 2.0      | 1.1      | 1        | 1.8      | 1.0      | 1        | 1.9      | 1.1      |
| 7    | 1        | 1.6      | 1.2      | 1        | 1.2      | 0.6      | 1        | 1.4      | 1.1      |
| 8    | 1        | 2.0      | 1.2      | 1        | 1.6      | 0.9      | 1        | 1.5      | 1.0      |
| 9    | 1-       | 3.8      | 1.1      | 2        | 3.1      | 1.2      | 2        | 3.3      | 1.1      |
| 10   | 1        | 2.4      | 1.3      | 5        | 2.8      | 1.2      | -        | 2.9      | 1.1      |
| 11   | 1        | 1.7      | 1.0      | 1        | 1.6      | 0.9      | 1        | 1.8      | 1.2      |
| 12   | 1        | 2.0      | 1.2      | 1        | 1.5      | 0.9      | 1        | 1.7      | 1.0      |
| 13   | 1-       | 3.9      | 1.1      | -        | 4.2      | 1.0      | 2        | 3.6      | 1.1      |
| 14   | 5        | 2.2      | 1.2      | 3        | 2.3      | 1.2      | 1        | 2.0      | 1.0      |
| 15   | -        | 2.6      | 1.3      | 5        | 2.8      | 1.2      | 5        | 2.5      | 1.2      |
| 16   | 1-       | 4.3      | 1.2      | 1-       | 4.5      | 0.8      | 1-       | 4.2      | 0.9      |
| 17   | 3        | 3.2      | 1.1      | 2        | 2.8      | 1.0      | 2        | 3.0      | 1.0      |
| 18   | 2        | 3.3      | 1.3      | -        | 3.5      | 1.2      | 5        | 3.4      | 1.2      |
| 19   | 1        | 1.8      | 1.1      | 1        | 1.4      | 0.9      | 1        | 1.7      | 1.0      |
| 20   | 1        | 2.5      | 1.2      | 1        | 2.1      | 1.0      | 1        | 2.1      | 1.0      |
| 21   | -        | 3.8      | 1.1      | 1-       | 4.4      | 0.9      | 5        | 3.6      | 1.2      |
| 22   | 1        | 1.9      | 1.0      | 1        | 1.7      | 0.9      | 1        | 1.7      | 0.9      |
| 23   | 1-       | 4.4      | 1.1      | 2        | 4.0      | 1.0      | 2        | 4.2      | 1.0      |
| 24   | 2        | 3.7      | 1.2      | -        | 3.4      | 1.3      | 5        | 3.1      | 1.3      |
| 25   | 2        | 3.8      | 1.1      | 1-       | 3.9      | 1.2      | 5        | 3.2      | 1.3      |
| 26   | 4        | 3.8      | 1.0      | 1-       | 4.0      | 0.9      | 5        | 3.6      | 1.0      |
| 27   | 1        | 1.5      | 1.0      | 5        | 1.5      | 0.9      | 1        | 1.6      | 1.0      |
| 28   | 2        | 3.8      | 1.2      | 1-       | 3.9      | 1.2      | 2        | 3.7      | 1.2      |
| 29   | -        | 3.2      | 1.1      | 3        | 3.3      | 1.1      | 3        | 2.9      | 1.1      |
| 30   | 3        | 3.0      | 1.3      | 2        | 2.7      | 1.3      | 4        | 2.8      | 1.2      |
| 31   | 3        | 3.7      | 1.0      | 2        | 3.1      | 1.0      | 4        | 3.1      | 1.2      |
| 32   | 6        | 3.8      | 1.2      | 4        | 4.5      | 0.8      | 2        | 4.3      | 0.9      |
| 33   | 4        | 3.9      | 1.1      | 4        | 4.4      | 0.8      | 2        | 3.9      | 0.9      |
| 34   | -        | 3.6      | 1.2      | 2        | 3.5      | 1.1      | 2        | 3.6      | 1.0      |
| 35   | 2        | 4.2      | 1.0      | 2        | 3.8      | 1.0      | 2        | 4.0      | 1.0      |
| 36   | 1        | 1.6      | 1.1      | 1        | 1.4      | 0.9      | 1        | 1.4      | 0.7      |

[12]
### Table 7 Continued

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**Note:** Scale numbers correspond to the serial numbers of the first-order factors; thus the assignment of an item varies somewhat from one sample to another. An item appears on only one scale generally that corresponding to the factor on which it had its highest loading. There were a few exceptions in each sample – for instance, to avoid making a small scale bipolar. The symbol “1-” refers to the negative pole of Factor 1.
Table 8
Means, Standard Deviations, Coefficients Alpha and Intercorrelations of Scales

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a All scales here were factor-based: simple, unweighted scores based upon the assignment of items given in the footnote to Table 6. Scale C was a composite consisting of those scales followed by an asterisk above. Scoring of scale 1 was reversed for the composite.

b Coefficient alpha, an index of internal consistency of scale (after L.J. Cronbach, 1951).

c Decimal points omitted.
Appendix B
Letter to Colleagues

My Fellow Colleagues:

Discipline problems continue to be one of the primary concern of teachers, parents, and administrators. If we are to be effective in changing students' behavior, we need the professional attitude and skills to discover reasons for the misbehavior, not the punishment to impose on the misbehavior.

As one of the assistant principals of Southside, I am quite disturbed when I find myself spending numerous hours sequestered in the office trying to help students correct inappropriate behavior in classrooms rather than issuing a punishment which serves little value in correcting behavior.

Presently I am collecting data for my thesis at Clark Atlanta University to determine the significance between student discipline problems, student achievement and teacher attitude toward discipline in the classroom.

I am asking you, only on a voluntary basis, to assist me in collecting this data if you will respond to the 57 questions on Teachers' Practices.

DIRECTIONS

Please use the answer sheet provided. Use a number 2 pencil. The answer sheet is labeled ABCDE. Please substitute the alphabet for number.

Let  A = 1
     B = 2
     C = 3
     D = 4
     E = 5

Ignore the number at the end of the alternative course of action.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Do not write your name on the answer sheet.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


