A survey of middle school teachers' perceptions and practices of discipline and the relationships to student discipline referrals

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

THORNTON, HOMER E. B.A. MORRIS BROWN COLLEGE, 1957
M.A. ATLANTA UNIVERSITY, 1986

A SURVEY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS
AND PRACTICES OF DISCIPLINE AND THE RELATIONSHIPS
TO STUDENT DISCIPLINE REFERRALS

Advisor: Dr. Stanley Mims


The purpose of this study was to investigate the degree to which student discipline referrals were related to teachers' perceptions of discipline procedures in addition to other variables such as student grade level, administrative teacher rating, teacher sex, teacher experience, and ITBS scores.

The study was conducted through the use of a validated 28 item questionnaire designed and field tested through several Performance Assessment Laboratories. Fifty-seven (57) teachers assigned to Bear Creek Middle School for the 1990-91 school year were selected to participate in the study. The 50 students who participated had been referred for discipline violations. They were matched with the referring teacher to compare perceptions and practices.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation showed student ITBS scores as the only variable that had a significant relationship to student discipline referrals.
A SURVEY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF DISCIPLINE AND THE RELATIONSHIPS TO STUDENT DISCIPLINE REFERRALS

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

BY
HOMER E. THORNTON

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
ATLANTA, GEORGIA
JULY, 1991
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The investigator wishes to express his sincerest appreciation to the members of the thesis committee, particularly Dr. Stanley Mims, Chairman, for their guidance in the course of this study. Special appreciation is expressed to my wife, Anne, and my children, Deborah, Kimberly, Heather and Edra for their support through the completion of this project.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Americans have in recent years viewed discipline as the most important problem in the public schools. The issue of discipline has become a nationwide concern. The violence and potential for violence cause great concern for school officials, parents, teachers, and students. Calls are being made for more Joe Clarks, special schools, and stricter codes of discipline. However, in most instances, the call is for punishment rather than attacking the underlying causes of the behavioral problems. Suspensions and other forms of discipline techniques solve the immediate problem, but the underlying conditions still remain.

A more realistic view of discipline is needed and desired. The old methods are not meeting the needs. It suffices to say that all students have the right to learn and all teachers have the right to teach. To do so, each teacher, must be in a school climate that is satisfying and productive without disruptive behavior by any students infringing upon the rights of others. To create the climate, the administration of discipline should be consistent and fair. Disciplinary action should be implemented to show the student how he/she has ownership of the problem, to help the student formulate ways to prevent the problem's recurring, to seek alternate behavior, and to inform his/her parents of the misconduct.
According to Tanner (1978), if the primary goal of classroom management techniques is to enable students to become responsible for controlling their own behavior and to move them toward higher levels of moral development, the imposition of external control may be temporarily effective. If problems are to be effectively confronted without sacrificing the long range goals of classroom discipline, it is imperative that field-tested techniques be developed which will enable teachers to control chronic behavior problems without removing the responsibility for controlling their own behavior from students.

Bell and Stefanich (1985) stated in their Cascade Model for Classroom Discipline (a series of strategy levels: preventive, supportive, corrective, and adaptive) that in order to prepare youngsters for the self-responsibility and freedom found in adult social structure, school systems must orient their programs in that direction. The Cascade Model for Classroom Discipline is a series of strategy levels of discipline ranging from preventive to adaptive. Preventive and supportive are more desirable than corrective and adaptive. The model is designed to help teachers identify various discipline techniques for developing a positive learning climate in the classroom.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which student discipline referrals are related to teacher perception of discipline procedures in addition to other variables such as student
grade, administrative teacher rating, teacher sex, teacher experience, and ITBS scores. The position presented was that these variables will impact on the student discipline referrals. It was also proposed that teachers who advocate preventive and supportive discipline procedures will have fewer referrals and teachers who advocate corrective and adaptive procedures will have a greater number of referrals.

Classroom discipline continues to be viewed as a perennial school problem by educators and the public at large. In spite of the societal conditions or any other purported causes which may increase discipline problems, the teacher is still the primary force in establishing an effective teaching-learning climate within the school.

Specifically, this study attempted to determine if there was a significant relationship between student discipline referrals and (1) discipline measures according to student grade, (2) discipline measures according to administrative rating, (3) discipline measures according to teacher sex, (4) discipline measures according to teacher experience, (5) discipline measures according to teacher perceptions of discipline and procedures, and (6) discipline according to ITBS scores.

The study of discipline became a source of concern for this writer after observing, staffing, supervising, hearing grievances, and holding conferences with parents, teachers, and students on the subject of discipline at the middle school level. The writer concluded after varied observations, consultations, and evaluations the perception that, apparently, teachers are not using the proper discipline measures
to create the kind of teacher-learning climate necessary for the attainment of student self discipline and student achievement.

Waterman and Peters (1982) illustrated that successful ventures of businesses have leaders who shape values and reinforce them through coaching and preaching in the field with the worker and in support of the product. They further emphasized that culture and shared values are essential in unifying the social dimensions of an organization. Schools, then, are also organizations, and they are made up of human beings. There must be common values and expectations in a school; otherwise, it is generally agreed that any specific practice, training, or special program will have limited or short lived success.

This study was designed to provide information that would enable teachers to define and redefine their roles as effective teachers in their classrooms. Secondly, it is hoped that the study would provide specific information about teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward discipline measures. Thirdly, it is hoped that this study would give the administration information about teachers who are in need of varied inservice training activities to enable them to develop effective teacher learning climates in their classrooms.

Research Questions

The following questions were developed to guide the research.

1. What is the relationship between student discipline referrals and student grade level?
2. What is the relationship between student discipline referrals and administrative rating of teachers?
3. What is the relationship between student discipline referrals and teacher sex?
4. What is the relationship between student discipline referrals and teacher experience?
5. What is the relationship between student discipline referrals and teacher supportive discipline procedures?
6. What is the relationship between student discipline referrals and teacher preventive discipline procedures?
7. What is the relationship between student discipline referrals and teacher corrective discipline procedures?
8. What is the relationship between student discipline referrals and teacher adaptive discipline procedures?
9. What is the relationship between student discipline referrals and ITBS scores of students?
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

The acceptability of various management procedures depends on ideological learning with respect to the relative emphasis to be accorded the task, the group, and the individual student. Burns (1985) stated that many effective discipline approaches and practices have been used during the last fifteen (15) years: reality therapy, peer influence programs, codes of conduct, assertive discipline, contracts, isolation alternatives, intervention teams, not to mention detention, suspension, and expulsions. It is generally conceded that each practice can be effective in the continuum of programs to remedy or prevent misbehavior.

It is hoped that this research can aid in developing appropriate discipline practices and procedures based on students' needs to combat the discipline problem of our schools. Bell and Stefanich's (1985) Cascade Model for Classroom discipline is a means of identifying techniques available to the classroom teacher. Preventive, supportive, corrective, and adaptive techniques are used to build effective discipline.

Organization of Related Literature

The following review of the literature consists of references that are related to the four (4) measures ranging from preventive to adaptive.
Emmer, Evertson, and Anderson (1980) maintained that teachers should model appropriate behavior from the first day of school. The reason is that opportunities to teach through modeling will be greater at this time and rules and procedures can be amended. In recent research it is suggested that teachers who have well-managed classrooms during the year are those who take the time to explain and model their classroom expectations. It is assumed that when the teacher and class have settled into predictable routines, it will be more difficult to bring about change.

Henson and Higgins (1978) suggested that "personalized" teaching is the most effective way to stimulate intrinsic motivation and enhance group enthusiasm for learning. In the view of Henson and Higgins, the teacher should show interest in each member of the group, know names, show patience regarding academic limitations, and show fairness in the use of time and attention to students. The most effective way to deal with classroom management problems is to prevent them in the first place. Teachers can accomplish this through advance planning and preparing the classroom as a suitable place for learning.

Weinstein and Middlestadt (1979) stated that some students fail to complete seat work and homework assignments. Methods for handling this situation should depend on why assignments are not completed. Some students do not turn in work, because they have not been able to figure out how to do it. When this happens, it is not a motivational problem; it is a teaching problem. The teacher then needs to provide
remedial work to help students learn what they do not understand and move to a point where they can work alone. Most slow students maintain that teachers do not provide the assistance but simply continue calling for work they have not completed. Many times teachers fail to consider their need to plan for slow learners. As a result, frustration sets in, and behavior problems materialize.

Good and Brophy (1984) declared that praising students is an effective method for reinforcement. Effective teachers would realize when and how to praise. This praise would call attention to students who are developing learning progress or skills mastery. The idea is to call attention to the students' efforts or accomplishments and not their role of pleasing the teacher.

Pistine (1983) studied the teachers' attitudes of six Middle School faculty in New York in relation to control, discipline, and suspension. It was concluded that teachers in schools with fewer repeated suspensions were more custodial than those schools with greater frequency of suspension. A very weak association was shown between teachers' attitudes and student control. The more experienced teachers preferred coercive methods of control, and the less experienced preferred non-coercive methods of control.

Douglas' (1979) study of an assessment of the effect of a schoolwide positive approach to discipline and classroom management in a suburban junior high school used experimental and controlled teachers and students in two junior high schools. The study showed that all schools should look at developing a specific school-wide approach to
schools should look at developing a specific school-wide approach to discipline that can be developed by the building staff as a means of reducing the number one problem identified in the public schools.

Johnson and Riley (1980) stated, in their teacher workshop regarding the problem of discipline and importance of students' becoming more responsible, a strong interdependence between the process of teacher assessment and the development of the students' self concept. The importance of students' becoming more responsible was stressed.

Presbie and Brown (1985) stated that, when students engage in behavior which seriously interferes with their own learning and that of others, the teacher must act to decrease these behaviors. The general behavioral approach would stress complimenting the good behaviors of students and ignoring inappropriate behaviors. However, there are instances when inappropriate behavior cannot and should not be ignored. There should be no questions about using punishment procedures when behavior is dangerous to the student and others or when the behavior violates the rights of students to learn and teachers to teach.

Williamson (1984) stated that the classroom management and discipline is a major concern of administrators, teachers, and parents at all levels of education. The major thesis of the study was that values and goals act as legislative agents in the determination of the organization or structure of discipline systems and programs.

Hyman and Wise (1979) stated that physical punishment still exists in some schools. It was revealed that it is used ineffectively and
lack alternatives. It is often used against youngsters from lower classes and minority groups. The study concluded that it was used by the ineffective against the weak and vulnerable.

Chernow and Chernow (1981) indicated that traditional punishment included restricting students, referring students to the principal, and contacting parents. Successful classroom managers used positive incentives and encouraged students to follow desired behavior and develop self discipline. This is accomplished through class involvement and individual problem solving. The successful teacher gives students input in making rules and deciding sanctions to be applied to offenders. The class can help solve the problem of one student. The students are given the opportunity to develop positive answers and develop empathy and problem-solving skills.

Laslett and Smith (1984) stated that criticism should be done in private, if at all. When the student is criticized in public, it creates resentment and hostilities and sours the relationship between teacher and student. The student should not be placed in the position of losing face with his peers. When this happens, the student usually reacts confrontationally.

Stainback and Stainback (1974) asserted that children should be made aware of what is expected of them with regard to desirable classroom behavior. They should not have to guess as to what is correct in any given circumstance. Rules that convey appropriate behavior should be formulated by the teacher with his or her students having a opportunity to make suggestions. When students are given the
opportunity to participate in formulating class rules, they tend to accept them more readily.

O'Leary and O'Leary (1977) suggested that trying to control behavior problems through emphasis on punishment is ineffective and usually counterproductive. Generally, it is much more effective to focus on desirable behavior, using management techniques that prevent problems from emerging than it is to try to deal with problems after they emerge. The key to success lies in the things the teacher does to create a good learning environment and a low potential for trouble.

Lufler (1984, pp. 87-92) stated that there is a practical way that common values in regard to discipline can be developed in schools beset with other pressures and priorities, union contracts, turned-off teachers, and beaten-down principals. The following common values have grown out of action-and field-based periods with remarkable success:

COMMITMENT ONE:

The principal and teacher shall agree upon standards of conduct and the respective roles of all key personnel. Any success is dependent upon the degree to which this is achieved.

COMMITMENT TWO:

The principal designee is not the disciplinarian of the school. Teachers are responsible for disciplining students. The principal becomes involved after the teacher has taken steps to resolve the problem and the teacher says, "I'm unable to resolve my problem and I need your assistance."

COMMITMENT THREE:

Emphasis is placed upon letting students know expectations of behavior, and ensuring through supervision that students will be caught and dealt with. Punishment alone cannot resolve behavior
problems; students must be taught to behave and must be supervised to ensure conformity.

COMMITMENT FOUR:

Teaching values to students must become an accepted goal of the school system and be integrated into the culture of the school. Because of cultural diversity, religious activism, and issues, schools have retreated from their appropriate role in passing on the roles of a civilized society which are the foundation of our social fabric.

COMMITMENT FIVE:

The board and the superintendent must establish a philosophy that makes the first four commitments possible. We cannot expect principals or teachers to take a stand on discipline if the powers-that-be of an organization do not have a set of common values.

Laslett and Smith (1984) stated that although some criticism of students cannot be avoided, the teacher should not loudly and publicly denigrate a student. To do so stirs up resentment and hostility, and even if the student does not express this openly, it tends to sour his/her relationship with the teacher. If the student is addressed in unmeasured tones, he/she loses face with his/her peers and has the problem of putting this right. If the student redresses by some verbal attack on the teacher, then this may be the starting point of a confrontation.

Rohrkemper and Brophy's (1981) study of teachers' strategies for coping with the students who present chronic personality or behavior problems proposed two general factors associated with the principal's and observer's rating of teacher effectiveness in dealing with such students. First, teachers rated as effective tried to deal with such problems personally, whereas teachers rated ineffective often
disclaimed responsibility or competence to deal with the problem and tried to refer it to the principal or counselor. Secondly, the effective teachers used long term solutions-oriented approaches to problem solving, whereas the ineffective teacher concentrated on controlling misbehavior in the immediate situation, often relying on threats and punishment. Effective teachers tended to help students understand and cope with the conflicts or problems that caused their symptomatic behavior. Teachers who rely heavily on punishment can achieve, at best, only temporary success. Such teachers are usually in constant conflict with their students who may obey them out of fear when they are present but who will go out of control when the teachers are not in the room. Punishment is sometimes necessary, however, and teachers should use it when circumstances call for it.

Summary of the Review of the Literature

It seems generally agreed that the first step in developing the proper learning climate in the classroom is for teachers to model good behavior and a caring attitude for their students. The personal qualities of the teacher will also affect classroom management.

The foundation of good classroom management is prevention. Teachers do not have to cope with misbehavior that does not occur. It is necessary that students know the rules and what is expected. There should be no need to guess about expectations and consequences of rules violations. Students should also know that the proper learning environment will be maintained.
Daily the teacher should strive to specify desired behavior in positive terms, to provide instructions and opportunities to practice routines, to monitor students for compliance with expectations, and to praise students for meeting expectations.

Whenever it becomes necessary for teacher intervention, it should be brief, direct, and focused on the desired behavior. The flaunting of authority, threats, and nagging should be avoided, because punishment is only a stop-gap control measure and it involves many negative side effects. It should be used only as a last resort. Whenever it is used, it should relate to the offense, be a brief and mild as possible, and be flexible enough to allow students to redeem themselves and maintain their dignity.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical Focus

It is proposed that student discipline referrals to the principal's office can be explained by the student grade level, administrative rating of the teacher, teacher sex, teacher experience, teacher support discipline procedures, teacher preventive discipline procedures, teacher corrective discipline procedures, adaptive discipline procedures, and ITBS scores of referred students.

The possible relationships and linkages are shown in the chart:

Grade level of student >
Administrative rating of teachers >
Teacher sex >
Teacher experience > Student
Teacher support discipline procedures > Discipline
Teacher preventive discipline procedures > Referrals
Teacher corrective discipline procedures >
Teacher adaptive discipline procedures >
ITBS scores of students >

Definition of Variables

The definitions which follow explain the terms used in this study:

Student Grade - the student's present placement level (6, 7, 8).
Administrative Rating of Teacher - the principal's perception of each teacher on the following scale:
(1) **Unacceptable** - teacher who never or rarely meets minimum requirements, significant and immediate improvement needed.

(2) **Marginal** - teacher who often meets minimum requirements, some improvement required.

(3) **Satisfactory** - teacher who consistently meets minimum requirements, improvement desirable, but not required.

(4) **Superior** - teacher who frequently exceeds minimum requirements.

(5) **Distinguished** - teacher who sets the standard for excellence, teacher can be recommended as a model.

**Teacher Experience** - number of years the teacher has served in a teaching capacity. the scale was (1) one to three years; (2) four to six years; (3) seven to ten years; (4) eleven to twelve years; and (5) thirteen years plus.

**Teacher Supportive Discipline Procedures** - desirable behavior reinforcement through praise and privileges used to encourage appropriate behavior, sensitivity shown for student's feelings.

**Teacher Preventive Discipline Procedures** - creating a positive learning environment, teacher display of enthusiasm and a positive caring attitude, learning encouraged by offering high rate of success to each student.

**Corrective Discipline Procedures** - helping students make good, students' knowing what is expected of them and aware of the consequences of unacceptable behavior, development and enforcement of rules and consequences.
Adaptive Discipline Procedures - measures used when all else fails, procedures generally used for students who engage in deviant behavior and need some form of adjustment in the classroom setting, students' participation in programs that nurture growth and a high probability of success.

ITBS Scores - the reading score percentiles as indicated by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

Student Discipline Referrals - the cases of students who are sent to the principals' office for violation of rules; the further categorization of such students into first time and chronic cases.

Discipline Procedures - measures used by classroom teachers to control student behavior varying from supportive, preventive, and corrective to adaptive.

Null Hypotheses

As a result of the research findings regarding the study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

(1) There is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and student grade level.

(2) There is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and administrative rating of teachers.

(3) There is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and teacher sex.

(4) There is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and teacher experience.
(5) There is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and supportive discipline procedures.
(6) There is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and preventive discipline procedures.
(7) There is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and corrective discipline procedures.
(8) There is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and adaptive discipline procedures.
(9) There is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and ITBS scores.

Limitation of the Study
The subjective rating of the principal was a limitation.
The study required that the researcher must rely on the honesty of the respondents in answering questions on the questionnaire.

Summary
It is hoped that the theoretical framework will provide the impetus to formulate and provide specific information about student referrals and the impact of the variables. Also, it is hoped that the study would give the principal information about teachers who would benefit from inservice training activities to help them develop effective classroom discipline procedures.
CHAPTER IV

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Research Design

The design was a survey of teacher characteristics as they related to student discipline referrals to the principals office. Therefore, all students who were sent to the office the first, second, and third times were traced back to their grade level and respective teacher's characteristics. An attempt was then made to determine the degree to which each teacher's characteristics explain the student discipline referral.

Description of Setting

The setting was a middle school in Fulton county, Georgia. Fifty-seven (57) teachers participated by responding to a set of seven (7) statements containing four (4) responses. The total number of responses was twenty-eight (28). The anonymity of the respondents was maintained. A letter granting permission was acquired from the principal to conduct the study at the middle school. The student discipline referral records were acquired from the discipline file for each student with grade level and anonymity protected.

Sampling Procedures

Fifty (50) students were selected who had been referred to the principal's office. These students were categorized as to the number of referrals, grade level, and ITBS scores. The students were then traced to the referring teacher in an attempt to determine the degree
to which the teacher characteristics explained the student discipline referrals.

SAMPLE

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<td>50</td>
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Instrument

A two-part questionnaire, consisting of a general information section and a twenty-eight (28) item scale, was designed to measure the perceptions and practices of middle, elementary, and high school teachers toward discipline procedures. The general information section was designed to secure information regarding teacher sex and teaching experience. The teacher sex legend was 1=female and 2=male. For teacher experience the key was (1) = one to three years of experience, (2) = four to six years of experience, (3) = seven to ten years of experience, (4) = eleven to twelve years of experience; and (5) = thirteen plus years of experience.

The second section of the instrument which consisted of a twenty-eight (28) item scale ranging from 1 (highest) to 4 (lowest) was designed to measure the perceptions and practices of the teachers. The response choices on the forced-choice scale indicated that an item was perceived to be a high or low degree of importance to the respondents.

The twenty-eight (28) items were developed from a list of suggestions describing essential factors of discipline measures:
preventive, supportive, corrective, and adaptive. The Cascade Model for Classroom Discipline was designed by Gregory P. Stefanich and Louise C. Bell and involves a series of classroom suggestions that flow from independence and self responsibility toward a more highly restrictive environment. The rationale is one of moving toward preventive and adaptive discipline procedures and away from corrective and adaptive discipline procedures. The model was published in the National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin in 1985. The questionnaire was field tested and scrutinized for assessment of appropriateness and clarity.

Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaire was given to fifty-seven (57) teachers at a middle school in Fulton County, Georgia. The teachers were requested to respond to the items ranking them from 1 (highest) to 4 (lowest). The questionnaires were returned to the Assistant Principal's mailbox. Anonymity of the teachers was protected at all times. Teachers were given two (2) days to complete the questionnaire.

Statistical Applications

A correlational analysis between student discipline referrals and each independent variable was made. The correlation matrix was used to test the hypotheses. Next a regression analysis was conducted to determine which independent variable (A) explained the student referrals and the dependent variable.
Summary

This study is highly dependent on the honesty of the respondents and the willingness to participate. The fact that anonymity was maintained should have aided in getting honest responses. The questionnaire will hopefully provide information that would aid in future studies.
CHAPTER V
DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The data are reported in the order of the hypotheses. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Table which shows the relationship between student discipline referrals and all the independent variables was used to test each hypothesis. As shown in Table 1, only ITBS scores significantly related to student discipline referrals. Next, the regression analysis is used to show the contributions of each independent variable to student discipline referral or dependent. Overall, the results of the regression analysis show that only student ITBS scores significantly influenced student discipline referrals. The higher the ITBS score, the less the student is referred to the office.

Detailed Analysis

Hypothesis I states that there is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and student grade level.

The data with respect to this hypothesis are shown in the correlation matrix. In the correlation matrix the item, student discipline referrals, has a Pearson Product Moment Correlation of .0607 with student grade level. This value is lower than the critical value r .273 for the .05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted as there is no significant relationship.

Hypothesis II states that there is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and administrative rating of the teacher.
PEARMON PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATION MATRIX TABLE
Student Discipline Referrals with all the Independent Variables (N=50)

CORRELATION MATRIX:

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<th>T Exp</th>
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<th>T Prevent</th>
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<td>.14953</td>
<td>.03212</td>
<td>- .09351</td>
<td>.08020</td>
<td>- .05820</td>
<td>- .03737</td>
<td>1.00000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant .05 Level = r .273

This Table shows the relationship between student discipline referrals and all the independent variables used to test the hypotheses. The data showed that only ITBS scores were significantly related to student discipline referrals.
The data with respect to this hypothesis are shown in the correlation matrix. In the correlation matrix the item, student discipline referrals, has a Pearson Product Moment Correlation of .0642 with administrative rating which is not significant at the .05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted as there is no significant relationship.

Hypothesis III states that there is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and teacher sex.

The data with respect to this hypothesis are shown in the correlation matrix. In the correlation matrix the item, student discipline referrals, has a Pearson Product Moment Correlation of .0734 with teacher sex which is not significant at the .05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted as there is no significant relationship.

Hypothesis IV states that there is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and teacher experience.

The data with respect to this hypothesis are shown in the correlation matrix. In the correlation matrix the item, student discipline referrals, has a Pearson Product Moment Correlation of .0195 with teacher experience which is not significant at the .05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted as there is no significant relationship.

Hypothesis V states that there is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and supportive discipline procedures.
The data with respect to this hypothesis are shown in the correlation matrix. In the correlation matrix the item, student discipline referrals, has a Pearson Product Moment Correlation of .1765 with supportive discipline procedures which is not significant at the .05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted as there is no significant relationship.

Hypothesis VI states that there is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and preventive discipline procedures.

The data with respect to this hypothesis are shown in the correlation matrix. In the correlation matrix the item, student discipline referrals, has a Pearson Product Moment Correlation of .0727 with preventive discipline procedures which is not significant at the .05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted as there is no significant relationship.

Hypothesis VII states that there is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and corrective discipline procedures.

The data with respect to this hypothesis are shown in the correlation matrix. In the correlation matrix the item, student discipline referrals, has a Pearson Product Moment Correlation of .1315 with corrective discipline procedures which is not significant at the .05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted as there is no significant relationship.
Hypothesis VIII states that there is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and adaptive discipline procedures.

The data with respect to this hypothesis are shown in the correlation matrix. In the correlation matrix the item, student discipline referrals, has a Pearson Product Moment Correlation of .1972 with adaptive discipline procedures which is not significant at the .05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted as there is no significant relationship.

Hypothesis IX states that there is no significant relationship between student discipline referrals and ITBS scores.

The data with respect to this hypothesis are shown in the correlation matrix. In the correlation matrix the item, student discipline referrals, has a Pearson Product Moment Correlation of -.5227 with ITBS scores. This value is greater than .273 and, hence, significant at the .05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected as there is a significant relationship.

Regression Analysis of Data

In this analysis it was intended to show the contributions of each independent variable to the dependent variable (student discipline referrals) when they are all interacting simultaneously. The regression analysis is often used to show the independent contributions of each independent variable to the dependent variable when all the
other independent variables are held constant. The results of the regression analysis are shown in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF STUDENT DISCIPLINE REFERRALS WITH ALL THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ITBS</td>
<td>-.018176</td>
<td>.004278</td>
<td>-.522739</td>
<td>4.248</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CONSTANT)</td>
<td>-2.854243</td>
<td>1.230088</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.405</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VARIABLES NOT IN THE EQUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Beta In</th>
<th>Partial</th>
<th>Min Tol</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>Sig T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S Grade</td>
<td>7.048E-04</td>
<td>.000821</td>
<td>.986220</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.9955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD Rate</td>
<td>-.059307</td>
<td>-.069566</td>
<td>.999914</td>
<td>-.478</td>
<td>.6348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Sex</td>
<td>.155077</td>
<td>.179865</td>
<td>.977639</td>
<td>1.254</td>
<td>.2162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Exp</td>
<td>-.002705</td>
<td>-.003172</td>
<td>.998968</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td>.9827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Support</td>
<td>.128754</td>
<td>.150370</td>
<td>.991257</td>
<td>1.043</td>
<td>.3024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Prevent</td>
<td>.115377</td>
<td>.134905</td>
<td>.993567</td>
<td>.933</td>
<td>.3554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Correct</td>
<td>.162485</td>
<td>-.190277</td>
<td>.996613</td>
<td>-1.329</td>
<td>.1903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Adapt</td>
<td>-.211061</td>
<td>-.247409</td>
<td>.998603</td>
<td>-1.751</td>
<td>.0865</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student ITBS Scores are in the equation and have a Beta coefficient of -.522739 with student discipline referrals as the dependent variable. This relationship is significant at the .0001 level of significance. The overall contribution of all variables is the adjusted R Square of 25% and significant at the .0001 level.
In the table student ITBS scores are in the equation and have a Beta coefficient of -.522739 with student discipline referrals as the dependent variable. This relationship is significant at the .0001 level of significance. The correlation is negative meaning that the higher the ITBS scores, the less the referrals and vice versa. All other variables make insignificant contributions and are placed outside the equation. The overall adjusted R square is 25% with an F ratio of 18.104807 and is significant at the .0001 level. This shows that the amount of variance produced by all the variables on student discipline referrals is only 25%, and, hence, some key variables that explain student discipline referrals are not included in this study.

In examining the data gathered in this study, several interpretations can be drawn. Students with high ITBS scores are referred less frequently to the principal for discipline action. Those students who possess a high degree of self esteem and are experiencing a degree of success in the classroom have less referrals to the principal for discipline referrals (Johnson and Riley, 1980). Those students referred to the principal's office were coded 1, 2, and 3 according to their rating of low to high referrals. The corresponding ITBS scores were also attached to their profile. The administrator gave the same kind of counseling to each group. The results indicated that students whose ITBS scores were high were referred one time and did not report back the second and third time while those with low ITBS scores came back repeatedly. It would appear that students are responsive to disciplinary action and encouragement when experiencing
success in school but are not responsive when they are not experiencing success in school. For high achieving students, when preventive discipline procedures and supportive discipline procedures are used, the students are given some input in the establishment of classroom rules, and the students tend to move toward self correction and ownership of their discipline problems, according to Chernow and Chernow (1981). Hence, teaching methods should be designed to match the different learning styles of the students so as to insure success for all students. The teacher should never be too hard pressed as not to remediate whenever and wherever necessary. Many times teachers fail to consider the need to plan for slow learners. As a result, frustration sets in, and behavior problems materialize. The teacher ought to establish a favorable climate in the classroom with known expectations and a caring attitude for the welfare of all students.

The data showed that the other variables: Student grade level, Administrative rating, Teacher sex, Teacher experience, Teacher supportive discipline procedures, Teacher preventive discipline procedures, Teacher corrective discipline procedures, and Teacher adaptive discipline procedures did not have a significant relationship to student discipline referrals, and they were placed outside the equation.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

One of the major goals of the classroom teacher should be productive classroom behavior. Inherent in this goal must be the teacher's concern for establishing a classroom climate that is conducive for learning. To facilitate this goal, the teacher must plan and provide instruction that would insure that all learning styles are satisfied. The teacher must strike a balance by providing an atmosphere conducive to academic achievement and, at the same time, develop a plan to provide for the student's social and personal maturity.

The position of this study was to examine the degree to which student discipline referrals were related to the teacher perception of discipline procedures in addition to the other variables such as ITBS scores, student grade level, administrative rating, teacher sex, and teacher experience. The position presented was that these variables would impact on student discipline referrals. It was also proposed that teachers who advocate preventive and supportive discipline procedures would have fewer referrals than those who advocate corrective and adaptive discipline procedures.

Nine null hypotheses were developed for this study, and a summary of the findings is presented for each hypothesis.

Hypothesis I - There is no significant relationship between student discipline referral and student grade. The Pearson Product Moment correlation of .0607 showed no significant level, and the hypothesis was accepted.
Hypothesis II - There is no significant relationship between student discipline referral and administrative rating. The Pearson Product Moment correlation of .0642 showed no significant level, and the hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis III - There is no significant relationship between student discipline referral and teacher sex. The Pearson Product Moment correlation of .0734 showed no significant level, and the hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis IV - There is no significant relationship between student discipline referral and teacher experience. The Pearson Product Moment correlation of .0195 showed no significant level, and the hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis V - There is no significant relationship between student discipline referral and supportive discipline procedures. The Pearson Product Moment correlation of .1765 showed no significant level, and the hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis VI - There is no significant relationship between student discipline referral and preventive discipline procedures. The Pearson Product Moment correlation of .0727 showed no significant level, and the hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis VII - There is no significant relationship between student discipline referral and corrective discipline procedures. The Pearson Product Moment correlation of .1315 showed no significant level, and the hypothesis was accepted.
Hypothesis VIII - There is no significant relationship between student discipline referral and adaptive discipline procedure. The Pearson Product Moment correlation of .1972 showed no significant level, and the hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis IX - There is no significant relationship between student discipline referral and ITBS scores. The Pearson Product Moment correlation of -.5227 showed a significant level, and the hypothesis was rejected.

Implications

Teachers, researchers, evaluators, administrators, and those involved in developing discipline programs may draw specific implications from this study.

When students are given the opportunity to provide input in the discipline policies, they tend to move toward self correction. Discipline programs that cause the student to take ownership of his problem, give him/her alternatives, and allow him/her to maintain his dignity, have a greater chance for success. The discipline program ought to involve the use of counseling. After all, it is essential to remember that punishment should not be the goals of the discipline program; rather the goal should be self correction.

Since there appears to be a relationship between the success of the student and student discipline referrals, teachers should plan avenues for success. Teachers must realize and understand that students have different learning styles. Some students are slower than
others. Hence, the teacher must plan and implement strategies to accommodate all learning styles to ensure student success. Students should feel good about themselves and believe that the teacher is caring and supportive. Teachers must never be too busy to offer that assistance necessary to enable the student to excel.

Conclusion

There was a 25% variance explained by all variables, and only ITBS showed a significant contribution. Therefore, stronger explanatory variables were excluded and need to be included in a further study. Since ITBS scores are a significant explanatory of discipline student referrals, greater emphasis should be placed on methods to provide students with greater opportunity for success in the classroom. As noted, the greater the success level, the better the student felt about himself/herself, and he/she tended to protect that image. Hence, the increase of self esteem tended to aid in lowering student discipline referrals.

Recommendations

The findings and conclusions of this study warrant the following recommendations:

(1) A similar study should be conducted to include other variables such as socio-economic levels of students and teaching methods.
(2) A similar study should be conducted to include students who were not sent to the office and who possess similar ITBS scores of students referred to the principal 1, 2, and 3 times from the same class and teacher.

(3) A study should be made to include teachers' procedures to provide avenues for student success.

(4) The study relied upon subjective ratings of teachers by their principal. It is recommended that a study be done with objective ratings of teachers as they relate to teacher evaluation.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX
Dear Teachers:

Please take a few minutes to share your perceptions and practices about how you manage behavior in your class(es). This questionnaire is anonymous.

Please give the following information by circling the appropriate response:

1. How long have you been a teacher?
   A. 1-3 years   B. 4-6 years
   C. 7-10 years   D. 11-12 years
   E. 13 plus

2. Circle one: A. Male   B. Female

Directions: This a survey of your preferences regarding your perceptions and practices toward disciplining students. In each of the seven (7) sets of twenty-eight (28) items, there are four (4) statements of measures to discipline students. For each of the four (4) items in each set, you are requested to rank your choices from 1-most preferred to 4-least preferred with 1 being the highest, 2-second, 3-third, and 4-lowest. Read all four (4) items in each set before stating your preferences. Place your rank order on the line provided at the right hand margin.

Please return the completed survey Friday, April 26, 1991, to Ms. Ferrell's box.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

Sincerely,

Mr. Homer Thornton
A SURVEY OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF DISCIPLINE

1. I communicate frankly and honestly with each student regarding the quality of his or her academic or undesirable behavioral performance.

   I make allowances for differences in learning rates and styles by planning activities which are designed for flexibility and are easily adaptable to varied performance levels.

   When behavioral adjustment contracts are made by me and my students, I use a reward system for those who successfully attain their committment.

   I use a consistent and reliable system of rewards to help keep undesirable behavior from recurring and improve the frequency of desired behavior.

2. When corrective behavioral action is necessary, I feel I must be consistent and fair.

   I feel I must demonstrate what I expect from my students and then see that it is done to the best of their abilities.

   When continued disruptive behavior calls for behavior adjustment, I feel the approach must be in a caring manner.

   In order to establish credibility with my student, I must practice what I preach.

3. I maintain a focus on remediating behavior by dealing with behavior and not with personal qualities of the student.

   I discipline myself in manner, voice, disposition, honesty, punctuality, consistency, fairness and love for students, so that my example inspires behavior at its best.

   I use "peer modeling" techniques by giving attention to students who are performing as expected.

   I avoid forcing confessions from students when undesirable behavior is suspected.

4. Whenever possible, I handle a confrontation by postponing it until a later time when it may be handled in private.

   I use "signal interference" such as a raised eyebrow, frown, or shake of my head to let the student know he or she is doing something unacceptable.

   I solicit input from my students for the development of class rules so that they can relate their undesirable behavior to rules
they helped development of class rules so that they can relate their undesirable behavior to rules they helped develop.

Through discussion with my students, I force a value judgment of the behavior exhibited and a plan for improvement.

5. Students are denied privileges or excluded from my class only after I have exhausted all other disciplinary options.

I use an evaluation system with my students that reinforces desirable behavior, and make it clear that punishment will be used only as a last resort.

I listen to excuses for undesirable behavior but stand firm in requiring students to accept responsibility and focus upon appropriate future behavior.

Established punishment for classroom rule violations are enforced without exception.

6. I create an atmosphere in which students demonstrate respect for the worth and dignity of individuals and feel free to communicate ideas and feelings without fear or hesitation.

I develop for students who consistently engage in undesirable behavior a plan incorporating incremental steps to enhance acceptable behavior.

I try behavior shaping by reinforcing behavior that is close to desired, and then by raising the criterion for reinforcement.

When student behavior occurs which warrants threats of corrective action, I state consequences which can and will be implemented.

7. I use an evaluation system to keep students abreast of the rules and regulations that reinforce behavior I wish them to exhibit.

I support temporary removal or isolation of a disruptive student either within or outside the classroom environment.

I enforce rules and administer punishments consistently with each student who is insubordinate or disorderly, or whose conduct otherwise endangers the safety and welfare of others.

I work closely with parents to help them develop and maintain a supportive attitude toward school and encourage their children to adhere to rules and regulations of the school.

Computer Code

(Glover 85)