The effect of locus of control on suspended and non-suspended Black male high school students

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The purpose of the study was to statistically determine whether black males who have been suspended from school differed in their locus of control orientation from black males who have not been suspended from school.

A total of 80 students participated in this study. The students were selected at random and asked to respond to the 40 items of the Children's Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Instrument.

The statistical test used to analyze the data was the t-test. The .05 level of significance was adopted for the study. Data analysis indicated that there was no significant difference between suspended and non-suspended black males either in terms of locus of control orientation or in terms of grade point average.

It is recommended that further research be conducted to determine if there are locus of control differences without at-risk populations.
THE EFFECT OF LOCUS OF CONTROL ON SUSPENDED
AND NON-SUSPENDED BLACK MALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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

BY
TEDDY SMITH

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
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Rationale

Student discipline, or the lack thereof, is currently an issue that could affect the very future of American education. Over the last decade, ten of eleven Gallup polls of public attitudes toward schools reported that Americans view discipline as the most important problem in the schools (Jones 1981). In addition, school superintendents listed discipline as their top concern and said they had to spend increasingly more time resolving discipline problems.

To focus on such a pressing issue as discipline is all the more desirable when one considers the enormous amount of pressure currently being applied by citizens, parents, students, and educators who are concerned about the violence, disruption, and vandalism within the schools.

Jones (1981) further stated that school officials were in a state of perplexity concerning poor discipline in the schools. Their level of anxiety was heightened by allegations that discipline is meted out unfairly, and separate standards are maintained for black students.

According to Carter (1981), the lack of discipline within the school has encouraged a great deal of "finger pointing" between the school and home. Educators accuse parents of failing to support school authorities when their children need discipline, and they suggest that parents are too permissive and lenient. Carter also states that school personnel assume the responsibility for supervising the students via Loco
Parentis, i.e. in the absence of the parent, school officials can act in the best interest of the child to maintain discipline and an orderly learning environment. As a result, school authorities have developed a variety of strategies to maintain discipline within the schools. Some of the more common methods for disciplining students include: detention, corporal punishment, suspension, alternative instruction, and expulsion.

Carter (1981) found that in every region of the nation, the proportion of black students suspended or expelled is two to three times greater than the proportion of white students suspended or expelled. The issue of whether double standards for discipline exist in our schools has given rise to two significant studies, Farley and Sewell (1975) and Bennett and Harris (1982). Both of these studies concern cultural, socio-economic and psychological influences that cause black students in general, and black males specifically, to be disciplined in greater numbers than their white counterparts.

Kunjufu (1985), a contemporary educator and author, views the school-age black male as an endangered species. He describes the exclusion of the black male in our educational system as a conspiracy:

Among the animal and bird kingdom there are certain species classified as "endangered" by the Department of the Interior. This label has been assigned to these species because they are becoming scarce due to adverse environmental conditions and the insatiable greed of man to hunt and destroy them for so-called sporting pleasures. "Endangered species" are not limited to the animal kingdom. In America, and other nations, many humans fall under this category. (p. vii)

Kunjufu (1985) cited the public school as being the most flagrant institution which contributes to the destruction of black boys. His investigation found that black boys, during the fourth grade, show vivid
signs of intellectual retrogression. He further stated that, in the primary grades, blacks progress and thrive at the same rate as their white counterparts until the third grade. After this time, black males begin a downward plunge which tends to continue the rest of their academic career resulting in what he calls the third grade syndrome.

Other journalists viewed the problem of the endangered black male as having cultural and socio-economic overtones. Gergen (1988), a reporter for U.S. News and World Report, stated that crime and drugs increasingly plague the ghettos across the country; ghettos that are filled with black males who are called "super losers." In his analysis of a study conducted at the University of Chicago, it was found that homicide is the leading cause of death of black men and women between the ages of 17 and 35. Among black men of college age, more are in prison than in school. Today 43% of black children grow up in poverty, many of whom find solace in the streets rather than in the classroom.

Kunjufu (1985) stated that the fastest and greatest influence on most male youths is the streets. He found a direct correlation between age and street time. The transition from the primary grades to the intermediate and upper grade levels parallel increased street time. Black males' time on the street increase with age, because parents spend less time with and give increased freedom to their children.

Moore (1988) reported that the leading causes of suspension and failure for black males are poverty, unemployment and discrimination. He presented the following statistics in 1987:

Black males account for 35.5% of arrests for serious crimes, but make up only 12% of the population. One half of the United States prisoners are black, a proportion that has doubled since 1920. Black males are eight times more likely than whites to
be imprisoned. One in four black males now in their twenties will spend time behind bars. Forty-five percent of all Americans murdered are black, and 94% died at the hands of another black. These statistics do not end at the school doors. (p. 50)

Kunjufu (1985) found that black males constitute 15% of the total public school enrollment, yet they were 21% of the dropouts, the highest of any group. In an investigative report concerning suspension and corporal punishment of students in the Cleveland Public School System, Stevens (1982) found that black students were suspended at a higher frequency than white students. For all grade levels combined, suspensions were issued to black students at a rate of 35% compared with a rate of 22% for white students. He further stated that suspension frequency among black males were 61% higher than that of white males.

Bennett and Harris (1982) conducted a study of the causes of disproportionality of suspensions among males and black students. In this study a "Fatalism Index" was used extensively to measure Locus of Control or the degree to which an individual believes she or he has control over her or his destiny. The researchers found some difficulty in establishing the causes of the disproportionality of suspension among black students. Their broader findings show that these causes are related to an overall orientation of white predominance which includes institutional and individual racism. Black students and parents perceive that some teachers and administrators feel that black students are intellectually and socially inferior.

What is important about this research is that all of it points toward the black male as being an expendable resource in our educational system. It is from such concerns that the primary objective of this
study was established. That is, whether the locus of control orientations of black males affect the rate at which they are suspended from school.

Research Questions

This study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. Will the locus of control orientation for black males who have been suspended from school differ from black males who have not been suspended from school?

2. Will the grade point average of black males who have been suspended from school differ from black males who have not been suspended from school?

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to statistically determine if the locus of control orientation for black males who have been suspended from school differs from that of black males who have not been suspended from school. This study was done at a suburban high school during the spring quarter of the 1990 school year. The results of this study have the potential to be useful in helping educators to modify the behavior patterns of at-risk students in order to help them contribute to our educational community rather than being eliminated from that community.

Basic Assumptions

The following assumptions were made at the beginning of this study:

1. There will be a difference in the locus of control orientation
between black males who have been suspended versus black males who have not been suspended.

2. There will be a difference in the grade point averages of black males who have been suspended versus black males who have not been suspended.

3. The instrument employed by the investigator has been used repeatedly for determining locus of control orientation; therefore, it is valid and reliable.

Limitations

Not all variables were able to be controlled for this study, thereby limiting its effectiveness. The most important of these limitations were as follows:

1. The study was limited to one high school in metropolitan Atlanta.

2. Students were asked to listen and respond to a 40 item instrument. The students' perception of what is asked of them is an inherent limitation.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clarity, the researcher found it necessary to define the following terms:

1. Locus of control in this study is operationally defined as a score on the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale. This score is a relative measure of internal and external orientation. The higher scores indicate external orientation.
2. Internal control for this study is operationally defined as a relatively low score on the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale in which subjects perceive that outcomes are a consequence of or are controlled by their own behavior.

3. External control for this study is operationally defined as a relatively high score on the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale in which subjects perceive that outcomes are not a consequence of or are not controlled by their own behavior.

4. Suspended student for this study is operationally defined as a student who has committed a violation of the school discipline code and is dismissed from school for a period of one to ten days.

Summary

This chapter focused on the problem of how the disproportionate suspension rate of black male high school students may be affected by their perception of personal control over situational events within their environment. Further investigation was done to determine whether differences existed between black males who have been suspended from school versus those who have not been suspended from school.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature reviewed in this research covered the concept of locus of control and how it was affected by variables such as performance, achievement, self-esteem and self-control. Other factors such as behavior changes and environmental influences were also treated.

The Concept of Locus of Control

The concept of Internal-External Locus of Control was first emphasized in Rotter's (1966) Social Learning Theory.

According to the Social Learning Theory, the potential for any given behavior to occur is a function of the individual's expectancy that the behavior will be effective in securing a desired end or reinforcement. In a classroom for example, the probability that a person will make an effort to achieve is directly related to the degree to which the person believes or assumes there is a contingency between effort on one's own part and such rewards as the teacher's approval and good grades. (p. 55)

Rotter (1975) concluded that internal versus external dimensions of behavior are elements of the Attribution Theory. The Attribution Theory is associated with the perception of causality, which means the judgment of why a particular incident occurred. The degree to which one perceives his own behavior as the controlling factor in receiving rewards or reinforcements is the measure of his internal locus of control. Internals believe that the reinforcement they receive is a result of their own behavior, ability, effort, or characteristics. Individuals that show signs of external locus of control attribute the control to forces outside of themselves, such as luck, chance, fate, or
powerful others.

Weiner (1972) developed an attributional model of achievement motivation that focused on the causal explanation people give for their successes or failures and how those explanations affect subsequent expectations and behavior. He stated: "The explanations given for outcomes rely on a combination of four causal elements: ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck. Ability and effort are seen as internal qualities, while task difficulty and luck are seen as external qualities" (p. 122).

Rotter (1975) believed that internal control refers to the perception of events, whether positive or negative, as being a consequence of one's own actions, thus under personal control. External control, on the other hand, refers to the perception of positive or negative events as being unrelated to one's own behavior and, thereby beyond personal control.

Markley, Kramer, Parry, and Ryabik (1982) viewed the concept of locus of control as the degree to which an individual feels reinforcements are contingent upon his own behavior (internal control) as opposed to being the result of fate, luck, or chance (external control).

Many of the early studies involving locus of control were dedicated to contrasting the variables of internal and external orientation. In summarizing these findings in locus of control research, a number of authors such as Victor (1971), Fish and Karabenick (1971), Bryant (1972), Warhime and Woodson (1982), Broedling (1974), and Ellis and Franklin (1983), viewed internals as being characterized as having more
dominance, tolerance, sociability, intellectuality, insight, achievement in conformance, and initiative. They perceived internals as being less impulsive, having more environmental control, with more willingness to seek information and remedy self-problems than externals. Regarding internals, the researchers in the various works listed above concluded that internals are better workers, more resistant to manipulation, and make better impressions on others than externals. Externals have debilitating anxiety, deathfear, hostility, less trust, cheat more, are more dogmatic, more suspicious, more irresponsible, more conforming and generally less well adjusted than internals.

Performance, Achievement and Locus of Control

The following studies analyze how performance and academic achievement in school-aged children are affected by their locus of control orientation.

Wichman and Oyasato (1983) studied internal and external oriented high school students; whereby, students were required to perform a simple or complex intervening task during which they were asked to remember to perform a planned action at regular or irregular intervals. Externals were found to perform much worse than internals on the difficult intervening tasks but better in simple repetitive situations. Results revealed that externals perform considerably better on a prospective remembering task than internals when the task is simple and repetitious. As the task situation becomes more mentally demanding, performance drops continuously for externals. In the middle ranges of difficulty, performance of externals is similar to that of internals.
Internals perform less well on simple repetitive tasks and as complexity and difficulty increase there is a moderate improvement in their performance. The results suggest that locus of control might be an important personnel selection variable when dealing with intensive tasks that are at the extremes of simplicity and complexity.

Cole and Sapp (1988) studied stress, locus of control, and achievement of high school seniors. The study determined whether the three variables differed by sex. The study involved 60 seniors, 30 from the highest cartel of the class and 30 from the lowest cartel of the class. The GPA of each subject was computed and the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale (1973) was administered. The findings of the study revealed that locus of control most strongly related to tension-stress. Students with an internal locus of control did tend to exhibit lower tension-stress. The hypothesis that there would be a significant correlation between locus of control and achievement was not supported by the findings. In fact, the researcher found that locus of control was a poor predictor of achievement in this study. In examining sex differences for locus of control, the findings suggest that girls experience more role conflicts than boys while boys perceive major life events as more stressful.

Wichman and Lizotte (1983) studied the effects of mental practice and locus of control on the performance of a physical skill. The purpose of their study was to determine whether mental practice would improve the performance of a skill, in this case the throwing of darts. Results of the study showed that mental practice did improve performance on a dart throwing task and mental practice had a stronger effect on
internal subjects than externals. The researchers felt that mental practice had no utility for external subjects. The researchers also found that when internal subjects were given instructions on skill performance, they were more likely to ask questions regarding the task and the skill. Internal subjects seem to become more mentally engaged and motivated by the activity.

Coady, Fellers, and Kneavel (1981) studied the locus of control construct in relation to grade level on a digit-cancelling task when incentive instructions were employed. Boys in grades 4, 7, and 10, classified as internals or externals, were given skill or chance verbal incentives and their performance was studied over time. No main effect differences were found as a result of incentives or on the locus of control dimension. However, older subjects cancelled significantly more digits than younger children and a significant locus of control (X) time interaction was found indicating that internals performed significantly better than externals over time.

Borg (1985) studied locus of control and grade point average among middle and high school boys and girls. This study revealed that locus of control as a personality construct is linked with learning and achievement. The purpose of the research was twofold; that is, to determine if there was a relationship among hemisphericity, locus of control, and achievement (as determined by grade point average) and whether there are differences in hemisphericity, locus of control, and achievement by sex and grade of students. The results showed there to be no significant relationship of hemisphericity with locus of control and grade point average; and the relationship between locus of control
and grade point average was of low practical value. The research also revealed there to be no significant relationship between locus of control and sex of students and grade of the student.

A number of researchers such as Brown, Fulkerson, Furr, Ware, and Voight (1984) examined sex differences in relation to children's locus of control and achievement motivation. Fendrich-Salowey, Buchanan, and Drew (1982) found no significant differences between males and females in terms of overall locus of control orientation. Brown, et al. (1984) also concluded that sex differences were not significant when considering the children's willingness to take responsibility for successes versus failures.

Brown (1980) conducted a study of 25 females and 33 males from a suburban high school. All subjects were white, from middle class intact families, and were described as having a continued history of satisfactory academic achievement. The results indicated that intelligence was significantly and moderately related to locus of control for boys and girls. Achievement was not significantly related to locus of control measures for either sex. Such results indicate that intelligence was related to locus of control for these adolescents.

McLeod (1985) found that people who are internally controlled tend to feel more in control of their own fate and environment compared to individuals who are externally controlled. Children who attend to and persist at their work are likely to learn more and perform better in school than children who do not.

McLeod performed a study in which he used teachers' ratings of persistence for 16 children from a relatively structured classroom and
for 18 children from a relatively unstructured classroom. Teachers rated external children as more persistent than internal children in the structured classroom environment. On the other hand, teachers tended to rate internal children as more persistent than external children in the unstructured classroom. Results of this research indicate that personality variables and environmental structure may play a significant role in the development of achievement behaviors. Children who differ in locus of control orientation may perform best academically in unstructured environments where they are allowed to monitor and reinforce their own progress. External children may perform best academically in structured environments where progress and contingencies are monitored and controlled by the teacher.

The research revealed that locus of control orientation does have an effect on student performance and achievement. Externals tend to perform worse than internals on difficult tasks but perform better on simple repetitive tasks. Internal subjects tend to become more mentally engaged and motivated by tasks that require mental practice than external subjects. Collier and Jacobson (1987) stated that gifted students are more internal in their attributes of success and failure than normally achieving students, and that internally oriented people tend to feel more in control of their own fate and environment compared to externally oriented individuals. Nowicki and Strickland (1973) further stated that persons with the generalized expectancy that they can control reinforcements are internally oriented, and have shown higher academic achievement than those who perceive reinforcers as dependent on chance, fate, or powerful others.
Behavior Change and Locus of Control

Rotter (1975), a pioneer in the field of locus of control, examined the potential for behavior change. He stated that for any behavior to occur in a given situation is a function of the person's expectancy that the given behavior will secure the available reinforcement. In a particular situation an individual may have a maximal desire for a goal but may believe that there is no behavior in his repertoire that allows him to be effective. He does not anticipate any contingency between effect on his part and the end results in the situation.

Siegel and Griffin (1984) studied the depressive symptoms and locus of control in adolescents. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship among stressful life events, attributional style, interpersonal problem solving ability, and depressive symptoms in middle and high school adolescents. The results of this study indicated that the level of self-reported depression symptoms in adolescents is significantly related to the external locus of control attributional style and socio-economic status. Of all the variables under consideration in this study, external locus of control emerged as the most significant variable, accounting for the most variance in the adolescent depression score.

Feindler, Marriott, and Iwata (1984) conducted a study on anger control training for junior high school students. This study involved thirty-six adolescents from a sample of one hundred students in a behavior modification program for multi-suspended delinquents, based on high rates of classroom and community disruptions. Students were taught both general self control strategies and strategies specific to
aggressive-disruptive incidents. The results of this study reveal that the students' locus of control orientation were not significant to any of the behavior changes of the subjects.

Macpherson and Holmes (1982) conducted a study on cigarette smoking and locus of control which suggests that seventh graders with external locus of control perception represent the group at greatest risk to start smoking early, to smoke at high frequency, and to plan continuation of smoking behavior. However, the relation between locus of control and smoking appears to be nonlinear. Research shows that early adolescents who never smoked exhibit a decidedly more internal orientation than do persons having any smoking experience, regardless of frequency. These findings suggest the deterrence programs should aim directly at individuals with personality characteristics and attributes associated with externality, so as to reduce the contribution of fatalism or learned helplessness to early smoking onset.

In summarizing the literature relative to behavior change, Kennelly and Mount (1985) hold a similar opinion to that of Rotter in that they believe changes in behavior are based on an individual's perceived contingency of reinforcement. Kennelly and Mount go on to state that there is a feeling of helplessness among individuals who perceive little or no change in the probability of reinforcement as a function of their behavior. These individuals tend to be more externally oriented. They further state that externals attribute these reinforcements to luck, fate, or other agencies external to themselves, while internals are said to perceive relationships between their behavior and reinforcements as not very important and casual in nature.
Self-Esteem, Self-Control and Locus of Control

Studies concerning self-esteem and self-control have added much to locus of control research. The following studies show how individuals perceive themselves, how they are perceived by others, their level of self-control, and how locus of control orientation affects these variables.

Denkowski and Omizo (1983), in a study of behavior modification among hyperactive children, sought to determine if EMG-assisted relaxation training could induce improved academic performance in hyperactive school-age children and how that treatment affected measures of self-control and self-esteem via the Nowicki and Strickland Locus of Control Instrument. The results modestly affirmed that self-control is enhanced by EMG-assisted relaxation training, but there appeared to be a shift toward internal control and improved self-esteem.

Tiggemann and Winefield (1984) studied the effects of locus of control, self-esteem, and depressive affect among high school dropouts who were employed and unemployed. The study predicted that unemployed high school dropouts would be more externally oriented, have lower self-esteem, and score higher on the depressive affect scale than subjects who were employed. The researcher observed a difference in the level of self-esteem between employed and unemployed subjects. The predicted locus of control difference for employed and unemployed subjects was not obtained. The results also revealed that employed subjects were less depressed than unemployed subjects.

Several researchers have published studies involving popularity, self-control, and physical attractiveness. Some of the conclusions

Dahlquist and Ottinger (1983), stated that there is some evidence that adolescents who take responsibility for the effects of their behavior on others, i.e., internal locus of control, achieve greater popularity among peers. Similarly, adolescents who can control impulsivity, delay gratification, and sustain attention might be expected to gain greater social acceptance and avoid rejection from peers.

In an assessment of self-control, Kendall and Wilcox (1982) reasoned that the child who achieves self-control would be likely to develop attributions consistent with an internal locus of control.

A study by Ferrer and Krantz (1987), involving 50 third grade and 54 fifth grade children, revealed that a lack of self-control was sufficient for rejection by peers, but social acceptance required both "internality" and control of the self.

Physical attractiveness is often associated with social acceptance and popularity among peers. Anderson (1978) found that college students of average physical attractiveness scored more internally on a locus of control scale than did males and females either high or low in attractiveness. No difference existed between males and females. Markley, Kramer, Parry, and Ryabib (1982) investigated the relationship between physical attractiveness and locus of control in 126 elementary children, grades 3 through 6. They found no significant relationship between physical attractiveness and locus of control, but did suggest
that the relationship is different for children than it is for adults. This may be due to the fact that children may not have integrated their own physical appearances into those aspects of self tapped by the locus of control measures.

In a study concerning self-concept, Frieberg (1982) concluded that a poor self-image accompanied by a perception that one's behavior is an ineffectual means of obtaining rewards or achieving goals may contribute powerfully to anti-social behaviors. Frieberg investigated the relationship between locus of control and self-concept for status offenders. The research found that high scores on the locus of control scale which reflect externality were significantly negatively correlated with high self-concept scores. Status offenders who perceived their rewards as being controlled by fate, chance, luck, or powerful others reported low self-concepts.

In summarizing the literature relative to self-esteem, self-control, and locus of control, there appeared to be a relationship between internal locus of control and improved self-esteem; while externality was associated with low levels of self-concept. The research also revealed that internally controlled individuals enjoyed greater popularity within their peer group. Contrary to what the researcher hypothesized, there was not a significant relationship between physical attractiveness and locus of control.
Environmental Influences and Locus of Control

The following studies reveal how adolescent locus of control is influenced by social and cultural variables.

Olton (1985) studied the interactive effect of locus of control and perception of school environment with regard to drug prevention program outcome. It was assumed that internal students with positive perception of school environment are more likely to benefit from drug abuse prevention programs than external students. Results of the study revealed that students with more external orientation to locus of control would do less well in the drug abuse prevention program than more internally oriented students.

Weihe (1985) studied the effect of foster care on children in reference to locus of control orientation. The 56 foster children and a comparable group of 56 non-foster children who completed the Nowicki Strickland Internal-External Locus of Control Scale, showed a statistically significant difference in external control orientation for female foster children but not for males as compared to their non-foster counterparts. This significant difference in external locus of control may be due to the identification of the female children with their mothers, whom they may perceive as being primarily responsible for the nurturing and functioning of the family and whose inability to do so precipitated their placement into foster care.

Similar studies have been conducted that dealt with father absence. Parish and Nunn (1983) found that youths who had experienced father loss through divorce at an earlier developmental period, 0 to 13 years of age, as compared to 14 to 21 years, were significantly more externally
oriented than were youths from intact families. Parish and Copeland (1980) found that sons adopted a more external locus of control following the death of the father. This result most likely occurred as a result of identification of the sons with the parent of the same sex.

According to Rotter's (1966) conceptualization of locus of control, father-absent children are said to experience massive doses of "fate" and "uncontrollable complex forces," and thus might be expected to be more external.

Lancaster and Richmond (1983) conducted a study of locus of control in children of father-absent homes. Their results indicated that father-absent children were more external than those from father-present homes, and older children were more external than younger ones. Father-absent children appear to have experienced more environmental and social factors that contribute to external locus of control.

Galejs, Jegland, and King (1983) conducted a study of 65 preschoolers and found that children's perceptions of control over all social agents except themselves were highly correlated. Children perceived the most control over social interactions involving teachers, mothers, and fathers; and significantly less control over peers and themselves. No correlations were found between children's and parent's locus of control nor between children's locus of control and teacher's ratings of achievement. These results suggest the locus of control may not be acquired through modeling but rather through contingent reinforcement. Steitz (1982) suggested that locus of control should be considered a life-long developmental process; that it is a developmental trait, subject to change with age and life circumstances.

In summarizing environmental influences and locus of control orientation, the research points to one variable that is instrumental in the cultural changes of today's society. The study by Parrish and Nunn (1983), which dealt with youths and the absence of the father through divorce, and the study of Parrish and Copeland (1980), which dealt with the absence of the father via death, showed evidence that the children involved were profoundly more externally oriented than children with fathers in the home. These studies further revealed that the children became more external with age.

**Black Adolescents and Locus of Control**

There have been a limited number of studies comparing the elements of locus of control and behavior differences among blacks and whites. The following studies expound upon those findings.
Murry and Mednick (1975) studied success, failure, sex, race and level of motivation in reference to locus of control. The research reveals that black males, regardless of their level of achievement motivation, attributed achievement outcome to luck. Staub (1971) suggested that whites are more responsive to competition. By contrast blacks are more responsive to cooperation in terms of achievement performance. Coe (1980) studied the internal and external differences among blacks and whites under conditions of competition and cooperation. The results of this study showed that locus of control and achievement relationships for blacks are not completely straightforward as exists for white internals and externals. While internal blacks are more achieving than external blacks, internal blacks are not consistent in their achievement and show different levels of performance depending on whether they are cooperating with other blacks, competing against whites, or cooperating with blacks against other interactors. In another study that involves black and white competition and locus of control, Daniel (1976) concluded that there is little data on the consistency of a relationship between locus of control and achievement for blacks. However, there is reason to believe that achievement performance of some blacks may suffer when they compete with whites due to low levels of confidence and self-esteem.

The following studies suggest that blacks are more external and tend to attribute their lack of success to luck. Forward (1970) viewed the concept of internal-external locus of control as being most central in understanding the psychological bases for the reaction of young Negroes toward racist attitudes and practices of dominant whites. Gurin (1969)
studied the internal-external control in motivational dynamics of black youth. The findings of this study showed that black students endorsed the internal control ideology equally as strongly as white students and were effectively moving away from an external orientation or an individual blame system to an orientation of personal efficacy. In a similar study by Lao (1970) that involved the political activities of black college students, it was determined that differences existed in locus of control at the personal and ideological levels. Externals who blamed society for their problems participated more in political activities. They preferred social activities over individual activities. Internals were found to be more involved on a personal level with academic performance, had a higher level of self confidence in predicting grades, and possessed positive attitudes toward finishing college.

Reilly and Lewis (1983) studied the effects of the learning environment and locus of control. This study suggested that the most important point may be the differences in attitudes and values of blacks and whites. The research also showed a correlation between positive attitude toward good grades and classroom learning behaviors. This study further implied that blacks rate external factors of task difficulty and luck as the most important determinants of success and failure.

Coleman (1966) studied the relationship between school achievement and variables of family background. Of all the variables that were studied, the strongest relationship among black children was between school performance and locus of control. This relationship was not
important among white children for advantaged groups assume that the environment will respond, if they are able to affect it. Children from disadvantaged groups do not make this same assumption. In many cases disadvantaged children assume that nothing they will do can affect the environment - it will give benefits or withhold them but not as a consequence of their own action.

There have been a very limited number of studies that isolate black male behavior patterns and locus of control. Steele and Yetman (1971) authored a book entitled *The Dynamics of Racial and Ethnic Relations* wherein they analyzed the works of a famed Negro Psychiatrist in reference to the Negro psyche. The authors expressed that the patterns of behavior set for the young Negro, especially the males, is directly opposed to that upheld as masculine for the rest of American youth. Conversely, black women are positively reinforced for assertiveness and achievement. They tend, more than black men or white women, to develop a positive view of the efficacy of ability and effort. The findings suggest that black men may employ external attributions about achievement outcomes to a greater degree than black women.

Lefcourt (1982), in a study of beliefs in personal control, found that blacks and other minorities score in a more external direction than whites. It is a popular conception that black men are more victimized by discrimination than black women. This stems from the view that black males present a greater threat to white males than black women, thus black males are discouraged from behaving in a self-assertive and responsible manner and are denied the opportunity to develop a sense of control over their own fate.
Bennett (1982) researched the causes of disproportionality of suspended and expelled black male students. In this study the researcher used a fatalism index which was used to measure locus of control or the degree to which an individual believes he or she has control over his or her destiny. During this study the researcher unveiled some untraditional discoveries. The research revealed that students who had been suspended from school one or two times exhibited lower levels of fatalism than students who had never been suspended. This result was interpreted to suggest that the school's serious disruptors have a lower sense of fatalism, thus having a higher sense of personal efficacy than non-disrupters. This study also revealed that the school's troublemakers or suspended students were more positive about school than their never-suspended classmates. It appeared from the research that the school's worst troublemakers have stronger feelings of personal efficacy than do their high achieving, scholastically successful classmates.

Farley and Sewell (1975) conducted a significant study which dealt with attribution and achievement motivation differences between delinquent and non-delinquent black adolescents. This research of causality or internal versus external locus of control suggested that delinquents are significantly more external in orientation than non-delinquents.

The research on black adolescents reveals that little attention has been paid to the locus of control orientation of this population in our society. The literature that does address the locus of control of black adolescents reveals that blacks rate the external factors of task
difficulty and luck as the most important determinants of success and failure. The research further shows that black and other disadvantaged adolescents assume that they have little or no control over their environment and there is nothing within their power to affect that environment.

**Suspension of Black Student**

Despite the compulsory attendance laws, Wright and Moles (1985) found that schools may punish misbehavior by depriving students of access to education. While parents argue that suspension does little to change student behavior, school officials find it a useful tool to provide an immediate response to rule breaking.

Suspension may label students as troublemakers, which can lead to more failure and suspensions. The Children's Defense Fund (1975) investigated national data on suspended students and concluded that suspended students frequently have learning disabilities or inadequate academic skills, and suspensions may impede their progress. The data also indicated that suspensions are not uniformly applied to all groups. They found that non-white and male students are suspended disproportionately to females and whites.

While there is very little information on the reasons for most suspensions, the Children's Defense Fund shows that students are suspended most often for tardiness, unexcused absences, and fighting. The Children's Defense Fund found that acts of violence, the destruction of school property, assaults on teachers, and alcohol and drug related incidents account for a small percentage of suspensions.
One of the most significant findings of the Children's Defense Fund was that minority students were suspended much more than their counterparts. For example, over 50 percent of the students suspended in New York, Houston, Cleveland, Memphis and Dallas were minorities though less than 40 percent of those school districts' total enrollment consisted of minority students. During this period there were approximately one million suspensions. Chicago, New York City, Philadelphia, Jacksonville, and Cleveland were the top five student suspension areas, and in all these districts, a disproportionate number of black students were suspended.

This finding may be interpreted as gross misbehavior among black students, but the researchers for the Children's Defense Fund found that black students were treated differently. "A double standard was used in reference to student suspension resulting in black students being suspended three times more often than white students, 12.8 percent compared with 4.1 percent" (p. 45). School officials attribute this disproportionality to the behavior of minority students rather than to factors inherent in the schools.

To further document the contention that black students are suspended disproportionately to whites, the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission (1980) compiled a report that analyzed the suspension and enrollment patterns within the Portland Public Schools. The commission found that although black students made up only 13.5 percent of the total enrollment, they accounted for 29.3 percent of all the suspensions. When compared to white students, blacks were being suspended at a 2.55 to 1 ratio. The student had been suspended for the
following reasons: (1) poor attendance; (2) behavior problems encountered with other students; (3) unacceptable personal behavior; (4) disrespect, harassment and/or insubordination directed toward teachers or school officials. The Metropolitan Human Relations Commission came to the following conclusions:

(1) Black student suspensions are in disproportion to black student enrollment, while the reverse is true for white students and other minorities; and (2) the ratio of a black student's probability of suspension when compared to white students is 2.55 to 1; and for other minorities, the ratio is 48 to 1; (3) the suspension probability ratio of black students to white students in K-8 schools is the highest for all school types and grade levels at 3.25 to 1. The high school ratio is the second highest at 2.75 to 1. (pp.60-61)

In a similar study conducted by the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission (1975), researchers found that black student suspension out proportioned their enrollment numbers. This commission noted that students who are repeatedly suspended make the problem of discipline appear more severe than it really is. The explanation for this is that the repeated suspension of the same black students increases the total number of student suspensions. Carter (1981) reported the fear of suspension diminishes if a student has been suspended previously as a result of his disruptive behavior. Carter also concluded that school administrators suspend students in order to force parents to get involved in their child's schooling. Contrary to this belief, the Children's Defense Fund survey found that 33 percent of the suspended students re-entered without the parent having come for a re-entry conference.

In a study of the effects of desegregation and students suspension rates, Bickel and Qualls (1981) studied the court ordered plan in
Jefferson County, Kentucky to determine whether blacks were being suspended at higher rates than whites. Bickel reported that suspension rates for 1980 for grades nine through twelve were 3,682 blacks and 3,824 whites. Blacks accounted for 49 percent of the total suspensions and whites accounted for 51 percent. Enrollments reflect 8,126 black students and 26,521 white students. Suspension rates were calculated on the basis of the percentage of enrollment, which showed that black student suspensions were 45.3 percent and white student suspensions were 14.4.

Bickel (1981) investigated the underlying causes for increased discipline problems among black students during the initial period of school desegregation. His findings reflect the following: shifting enrollment patterns results in more racially diverse student populations posing problems for school staff that has become accustomed to almost all-white enrollment.

Many white teachers experience considerable difficulty in adjusting to changes in student populations that require interacting with greater number of black students. Misunderstanding, inappropriate responses, and negative attitudes of teachers and students toward desegregation may aggravate the problem of student discipline and student suspension.

In a study of ethnic, racial, and gender equity in school suspension, Streitmatter (1986) focused her study on one Ohio school district to determine the frequency of white and minority suspensions, as well as the general use of suspension as a disciplinary measure.

While the primary analysis of results was focused on the personal attitudes of student involved in disciplinary actions, speculation about
the effects of institutional racism and biased attitudes of adults in the system were made.

In the schools that were studied, white suspensions were under-represented, and minorities were over-represented. Statistics show that Hispanics, by as much as 7 percent and blacks by 7.5 percent; twice their general representation in the school enrollment. While each school had approximately equal numbers of male and female students, each of the three schools showed a highly disproportionate number of males having been suspended. The researcher found that those offenses resulting in suspension were: defiance of authority, physical abuse, assault or threat, illegal use or possession of drugs, and repeated interference with the learning process.

Streitmatter stated that there is no evidence that minority children are inherently more poorly behaved than white. She further stated that public schools may be establishing behavioral norms and policies that tend to be violated more often by certain groups. These youngsters are expected more often to be rule breakers. The author strongly suggests that, until children are no longer categorized according to their racial, ethnic, and gender identities, equity in schools may be unobtainable.

Campbell, Achilles, Faires and Martin (1982) prepared a study for the Mid-South Education Research Association's annual conference. Their report made reference to discipline problems reflecting the climate and effectiveness of the school as a whole. They reported that in 1980-81 school year, even though enrollment trends consistently declined, suspensions trends increased. Enrollments were approximately 26 percent
black, 72 percent white and 2 percent other minorities. Suspensions were approximately 46 percent black, 51 percent white, and 3 percent other minorities. This data revealed an over-representation of minority suspensions.

The researchers sought to find the reason for the over-representation. The reason for suspensions were divided into three categories: (1) teacher judgement, (2) rule violation, such as cutting class, and (3) illegal offenses, such as assault or rape.

Suspensions in these categories were then analyzed by race. The results showed there was an over-representation of black students similar to the ratio found in total enrollment to total suspension. A similar disproportionate suspension rate of black students was found in the teacher judgement category.

The research team also looked at demographic variables and their relationship to suspension. Those variables were: (1) race, (2) sex, (3) SES, and (4) achievement. The findings were:

Race: For all high schools that were studied, the suspension rate was 30 percent of student enrollment. Enrollment totals were 4,000 blacks, 11,077 whites, 308 other minorities; suspensions were 2015 blacks, 2451 whites, and 59 other minorities. The racial ratios were .50 black, .22 white, and .19 respectively. Black students were suspended more than twice as often as white students.

Sex: The results indicate a significant over-representation of males being suspended. In three high schools there were 337 male and 160 female suspensions. The ratio of suspension to total enrollment was .18 for males and .10 for females. Males were suspended twice as often as females.

SES: For this study, records of children from families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) were used to identify students of lower economic levels. Students receiving aid that were suspended totaled 97 from a group 217, compared to 3450 from families which did not receive aid, 400 were suspended. Students identified as being low SES were more
than three times more likely to be suspended than were other students.

Achievement: The results indicate that when class rankings were divided into academic quartiles and were cross-referenced to students receiving out-of-school suspensions, no top quartile student in any of the three schools was suspended more than once. On all grade levels students in the lower quartile were 24 times more likely to be suspended. (pp. 44-45)

The researchers found it safe to conclude that although black students were strongly over-represented in total suspension, there are other important variables affecting suspension rates, such as sex, SES, and class rank.

In summarizing the data concerning suspensions as a disciplinary tool, it is clear that minorities are suspended more often and disproportionately to whites. Carter (1981) attributed the results to the following: (1) differing interpretations of what constitutes acceptable behaviors and the differing expectations of school officials as to how these standards will be met by students from different race, sex, and age groups; (2) the inconsistent application of school discipline codes to different races, sexes, and age groups, and (3) the need to analyze the nature and effect of the disciplinary action and to appraise its suitability for the nature of the infraction.

Summary of Literature

A review of the literature regarding internal-external locus of control and how these two orientations affect school-age children's performance, achievement, and behavior has the potential to be useful in understanding why certain groups of our society exhibit unacceptable behavior patterns. The study of internal-external locus of control also
affords us a greater opportunity to help modify the behavior of at-risk students in order to help them contribute to our educational process rather than being eliminated from that process.

Significance of the Problem

There have been hundreds of studies done on locus of control which focused on white male adolescents of low or middle socio-economic status, or which have compared subjects from the same socio-economic level but differing in race, or compared groups mixed with respect to race and socio-economics. In a limited review of the literature, the researcher found that no significant attention has been paid to the difference in locus of control orientations between black males who have caused trouble in school versus black males who have not caused trouble.
In an effort to determine the black male's perception of personal control over situational events, this study dealt with the locus of control differences between suspended and non-suspended black male high school students. This study also considered academic achievement to determine whether a difference existed between the grade point averages of suspended and non-suspended black males.

To accomplish the goals of this study two groups of black male high school students ranging from grades eight to twelve and ages thirteen to eighteen were selected from a total population of 180 black males. Of the two groups, the experimental group consisted of 40 black males who had been suspended from school at least once. The control group consisted of 40 black males who had not been suspended from school. These students were selected at random in order that every grade and age level might be represented. Each group was given the same instrument in order to compare their locus of control orientation differences.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the stages of this experiment. Specifically a detailed discussion of the following elements of the study will be provided: (1) statement of the hypotheses, (2) instrumentation, (3) sampling technique, (4) research design, and (5) statistical analysis.
Statement of Hypotheses

The hypotheses which this study was designed to test are:

\( H_0_1 \) There is no significant difference between
the locus of control orientation of
suspended and non-suspended black male
high school students.

\( H_0_2 \) There is no significant difference between
the grade point average of suspended and
non-suspended black male high school
student.

Instrumentation

The subjects were administered the children's version of the
Nowicki-Strickland Internal-External Locus of Control Instrument (1973). The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale is a paper-and-pencil measure consisting of 40 questions that are read orally to the subjects. After each question is read by the administrator, subjects are asked to respond by circling yes or no for each item on the test. Test administrators are asked to pronounce the words clearly and slowly when reading the scale items to the subjects. The Nowicki-Strickland usually takes about fifteen minutes to administer. The scoring of the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale is the total number of external responses a subject chooses. To the left of each item on the instrument, there is either a "Y" or "N." This denotes the external response for that item. Each time the subject responds in agreement with the keyed "Y" or "N" next to the item, it is considered to be one
external response. The score is the total number of agreements with the keyed "Y" or "N." The higher the score, the more external the score. In order to use the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for data analysis, the data were placed in the following form by the test administrator: for each external response the number "2" was assigned, and for each internal response the number "1" was assigned. These numbers denote scores for the comparison of the means of the two groups. Nowicki-Strickland (1973) reported estimates of internal consistency via the split-half method, corrected by Spearman-Brown $r=.63$ (grades 3,4,5); $r=.68$ (grades 6,7,8); $r=.74$ (grades 9,10,11); and $r=.71$ (grade 12). These reliabilities are satisfactory in light of the fact that these items are not arranged according to difficulty. The following section describes the method used to select the students who participated in the study.

Grade point averages were retrieved from the student history files within the institution. In order to use the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for data analysis, the grade point averages were placed on a scale and assigned the following numerical system: (4.0 to 3.5 = 5), (3.4 to 3.0 = 4), (2.9 to 2.5 = 3), (2.4 to 2.0 - 2), and (1.9 and below - 1).

**Sampling Technique**

The students taking part in this project attended a public high school in a suburban county of metropolitan Atlanta. The sample consisted of two groups of black male students. The experiment consisted of 40 black males who had been suspended from school at least
once. The control group consisted of 40 black males who had not been suspended from school. The subjects ranged in grade level from eighth through twelfth and ranged in ages from thirteen to eighteen. The subjects were selected from a total population of 180 black males. In order that every individual would have an equal opportunity of being chosen for the study, the total population of 180 names were placed on small pieces of paper with an "S" or "NS" beside each name. The "S" or "NS" denotes whether or not the student had been suspended from school. All of the names were placed in a container, in which both groups of 40 subjects were randomly drawn by the researcher.

Research Design

The research design depicts how the variables of this study were examined based upon the sample responses to the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale. The paradigm for this design is shown on Table 1.

Table 1
Locus of Control Orientation
(A Paradigm)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>External</th>
<th>Internal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suspended Black Males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Suspended Black Males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nowicki-Strickland Scale</th>
<th>Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Statistical Analysis**

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to process the data. The (SPSS) is a comprehensive tool for managing, analyzing, and displaying information. It brings together data management, report writing, and statistical analysis in a comprehensive system.

To test the hypotheses formulated for this experimental study, data were collected and a t-test for independent mean samples was employed. The two-tailed t-test was used to test the hypotheses at the (.05) level of significance. If $t > .05$ the null hypothesis is accepted and there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups. If $t < .05$ the null hypothesis is rejected and there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups.

**Summary of Methodology**

This chapter defined the variables of the study, stated the hypotheses under investigation, provided a description of the population and research design, and explained how the statistical outcomes would be measured.
CHAPTER IV
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

The intent of this statistical investigation was to determine whether the locus of control orientation differs between suspended and non-suspended black males in a suburban high school setting; and whether there was a significant difference in the grade point averages between these two groups of students. There were a total of eighty (80) black high school males in this investigation with an equal division of forty (40) in the suspended and forty (40) in the non-suspended groups. The data on locus of control were gathered and measured in reference to the forty (40) items on the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale. This scale determined the orientation for the suspended and non-suspended groups in terms of internal and external control. The grade point average data were collected from the individual student histories.

The scores from the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale as well as the grade point averages of the subjects were calculated by the researcher. The mean scores were found for both groups in reference to locus of control and grade point average. The mean score of the suspended group was compared to the mean score of non-suspended group in reference to locus of control and grade point average. These scores were compared to determine the probability that the corresponding population means were different. This researcher was interested in determining whether there was a significant difference in locus of control orientation of suspended black males as compared to non-
suspended black males. The researcher was also interested in determining whether there was a significant difference in the grade point averages of suspended black males as compared to non-suspended black males.

**Testing of Hypotheses**

The t-test was used to test the two null hypotheses in this statistical investigation. This test is a measure of difference between two means.

A null hypotheses (Ho) is a state of no difference. The predetermined level of significance was set at .05. If the probability is greater than .05 the null hypothesis is accepted and there is no significant difference between two means. Conversely, if the probability is less than .05, the null hypothesis is rejected and there is a significant difference between two means.

**Ho$_1$** - There is no significant difference between the locus of control orientation of suspended and non-suspended black male high school students. The data with respect to this hypothesis are stated in Table Two. In the table, the mean for suspended black males is 1.61 and for non-suspended black males is 1.65. In scoring the Nowicki-Strickland each internal response was assigned a value of "1", and external responses were assigned a value of "2." The mean scores for suspended and non-suspended black males indicated both groups tended to be more external than internal. The mean score of 1.65 for the non-suspended versus 1.61 for the suspended group indicates that the non-suspended subjects tend to be more external than the subjects who had
been suspended from school. This finding is contradictory to the research. The calculated t-value is .682 with a probability value of .812. Since the p-value of .812 is above the significance level of .05, the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between suspended and non-suspended black males in reference to their locus of control orientation.

Table 2
Locus of Control Orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>(N)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>p-Value Two-Tailed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suspended</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.682</td>
<td>.812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blk. Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Susp.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blk. Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( H_0_2 \) - There is no significant difference between grade point averages of suspended and non-suspended black male high school students. The data with respect to this hypothesis is stated in Table Three. The scale used for grade point average analysis was as follows: (4.0 to 3.5 = 5), (3.4 to 3.0 = 4), (2.9 to 2.5 = 3), (2.4 to 2.0 = 2), and (1.9 and below = 1). In the table, the mean for suspended black males is 1.70 and for non-suspended black males is 1.78. This indicates that the non-suspended black male has a higher grade point average than the suspended black male. This is consistent with the researched literature. These statistics further reveal that the average black male in this population has a grade point average of less than 2.0 which is failing on a 4.0 scale. The calculated t-value is 0.85 with a probability value of 0.39. Since the p-value of 0.39 is above the significance level of .05, the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, there is no significant
difference in the grade point averages of suspended and non-suspended black male high school students.

Table 3
Grade Point Average

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>(N)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>p-Value (Two-Tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suspended Blk. Male</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Susp. Blk. Male</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>.423</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

The focus of this chapter was to present the statistical analysis of the data with respect to each null hypothesis and its respective findings. Hypothesis one states there will be no significant difference in the locus of control orientation of suspended and non-suspended black male high school students. In testing hypothesis one, there was a difference between the mean scores, but not a significant difference. Thus the null hypothesis was accepted. Hypothesis two states there will be no significant difference in the grade point averages of suspended and non-suspended black male students. In testing this hypothesis, there was a difference between the mean scores, but not a significant difference; therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of the study was to determine if the locus of control orientation differs in suspended and non-suspended black male students in a suburban high school setting. Thus, the researcher sought to determine the level of difference between these two groups of students in terms of locus of control orientation.

The first null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between the locus of control orientation of suspended and non-suspended black male high school students. The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of control Instrument was administered to both groups to determine whether the subjects were internally oriented or externally oriented. Data were collected and analyzed by a t-test to determine the differences between the means of the groups. Statistical results of this study showed that, although the non-suspended group was more externally oriented than the suspended group, there was no significant difference in the locus of control orientation of suspended and non-suspended black males in this setting.
The second null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between the grade point average of suspended and non-suspended black male high school students. The grade point averages were retrieved from the student history documents of both groups to determine the level of difference. Data were analyzed by a t-test for the differences between the means of the groups. Statistical results of this study showed that there was no significant difference in grade point average of suspended and non-suspended black males in this setting. The statistics also reveal that, although there was not a significant difference in mean scores for the two groups, the grade point averages for both groups were below 2.0 which is failing on a 4.0 grade point scale.

Conclusions

The following questions constituted the problem of the study: Will the locus of control orientation for black males who have been suspended from school differ from black males who have not been suspended from school? Secondly, will the grade point average of black males who have been suspended from school differ from black males who have not been suspended from school? The following discusses the above questions in light of the statistical results and previous findings.

The study was an attempt to clarify questions surrounding the effect that locus of control orientation has on the suspended and non-suspended black male high school students. The locus of control scores of suspended black males compared to non-suspended black males showed no significant difference. The mean scores reveal that the suspended group
of 1.61 was more internally oriented than the non-suspended group of 1.65. These results are not consistent with the research literature.

The study also sought to clarify questions surrounding the differences in grade point averages of suspended and non-suspended black males. The grade point average comparison showed no significant difference. In fact, the means were almost identical (suspended 1.70; non-suspended 1.78). The findings resulting from the analysis of data indicated that there was no significant difference in locus of control orientation and grade point average between suspended black males and non-suspended black males. These findings further indicate that neither group of black males were achieving academically.

Discussion

The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the locus of control orientation of suspended and non-suspended black males was in direct contrast to the researched literature. The following factors may have contributed to the difference between the findings of this study and the researched literature.

1. The small number of students in the sample could have prevented an accurate indication of difference.

2. The instrument relied on the subjects' interpretation of what was being asked.

Recommendations

As a result of this study, it is recommended that further research
be conducted to determine if there are differences in locus of control orientation among black males. It is also recommended that the researcher should use a larger sample or other at-risk populations. A possible comparison of the locus of control differences of black males of different socio-economic levels should be considered.

It is recommended that school administrators investigate ways in which the academic achievement of black males can be improved. The researcher is also recommending that closer attention be paid to the impact that suspension has on academic achievement.


TABLE 1
Nowicki-Strickland Scale
and Item-Total Correlations with that Item missing for Subjects in the
Third, Seventh and Eleventh Grades of the Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>**(Y) 1. Do you believe that most problems will solve themselves if you just don't fool with them?</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(N) 2. Do you believe that you can stop yourself from catching a cold?</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>.279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**(Y) 3. Are some kids just born lucky?</td>
<td>.281</td>
<td>.497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(N) 4. Most of the time do you feel that getting good grades means a great deal to you?</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(Y) 5. Are you often blamed for things that just aren't your fault?</td>
<td>.204</td>
<td>.167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(N) 6. Do you believe that if somebody studies hard enough he or she can pass any subject?</td>
<td>.385</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**(Y) 7. Do you feel that most of the time it doesn't pay to try hard because things never turn out right anyway?</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>.390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(Y) 8. Do you feel that if things start out well in the morning that it's going to be a good day no matter what you do?</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**(N) 9. Do you feel that most of the time parents listen to what their children have to say?</td>
<td>.222</td>
<td>.330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(Y) 10. Do you believe that wishing can make good things happen?</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>.059</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Male 3</th>
<th>Male 7</th>
<th>Male 11</th>
<th>Female 3</th>
<th>Female 7</th>
<th>Female 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+Y11. When you get punished does it usually seem its for no good reason at all?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Y12. Most of the time do you find it hard to change a friend's opinion (mind)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)13. Do you think that cheering more than luck helps a team to win?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Y14. Do you feel that it's nearly impossible to change your parent's mind about anything?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)15. Do you believe that your parents should allow you to make most of your own decisions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>++Y16. Do you feel that when you do something wrong there's very little you can do to make it right?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>++Y17. Do you believe that most kids are just born good at sports?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* (Y)18. Are most of the other kids your age stronger than you are?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>++Y19. Do you feel that one of the best ways to handle most problems is just not to think about them?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)20. Do you feel that you have a lot of choice in deciding who your friends are?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Y)21. If you find a four leaf clover do you believe that it might bring you good luck?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 (con't)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(N)22. Do you often feel that whether you do your homework has much</td>
<td>0.149</td>
<td>0.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to do with what kind of grades you get</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Y)23. Do you feel that when a kid your age decides to hit you</td>
<td>0.273</td>
<td>0.177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there's little you can do to stop him or her?</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Y)24. Have you ever had a good luck charm?</td>
<td>0.086</td>
<td>0.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)25. Do you believe that whether or not people like you depends</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on how you act?</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)26. Will your parents usually help if you ask them to?</td>
<td>0.230</td>
<td>0.218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Y)27. Have you felt that when people were mean to you it was</td>
<td>0.314</td>
<td>0.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usually for no reason at all?</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>0.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)28. Most of the time, do you feel that you can change what</td>
<td>0.166</td>
<td>0.283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>might happen tomorrow by what you do today?</td>
<td>0.152</td>
<td>0.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Y)29. Do you believe that when bad things are going to happen they</td>
<td>0.367</td>
<td>0.443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>just are going to happen no matter what you try to do to stop them?</td>
<td>0.322</td>
<td>0.608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)30. Do you think that kids can get their own way if they just</td>
<td>0.154</td>
<td>0.203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keep trying?</td>
<td>0.208</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Y)31. Most of the time do you find it useless to try to get your</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>0.211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>own way at home?</td>
<td>0.446</td>
<td>0.342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(N)*32. Do you feel that when good things happen they happen because of hard work?</td>
<td>.423</td>
<td>.290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(Y)*33. Do you feel that when somebody your age wants to be your enemy there's little you can do to change matters?</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(N)*34. Do you feel that it's easy to get friends to do what you want them to?</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>.276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(Y)*35. Do you usually feel that you have little to say about what you get to eat at home?</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(Y)*36. Do you feel that when someone doesn't like you there's little you can do about it?</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>.132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(Y)*37. Do you usually feel that it's almost useless to try in school because most other children are just plain smarter than you are?</td>
<td>.456</td>
<td>.341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(N)*38. Are you the kind of person who believes that planning ahead makes things turn out better?</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td>.531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(Y)*39. Most of the time, do you feel that you have little to say about what your family decides to do?</td>
<td>.203</td>
<td>.343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*(N)*40. Do you think it's better to be smart than to be lucky?</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.435</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Items selected for abbreviated scale for grades 1-6.
+ Items selected for abbreviated scale for grades 7-12.