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# Student Exclusionary Consequences and Teacher Inexperience at Texas Moderate-Size High Schools

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## ABSTRACT

*In this statewide, multiyear investigation, the relationship between teacher inexperience levels and student discipline assignments into in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and DAEP at Texas moderate-size high school campuses with an enrollment of 1,000-1,999 students was addressed. An analysis of each discipline placement was conducted for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years. Statistical analyses revealed a mixed presence of relationships between teacher inexperience and student disciplinary consequence assignments. The number of students assigned exclusionary discipline consequences was higher when higher percentages of inexperienced teachers were present than experienced teachers. Implications and recommendations for future research were made.*

**Keywords:** Classroom Management, Discipline, Enrollment Size, Teacher Experience

## INTRODUCTION

Classroom management is an area in which new teachers report they feel is a lesser developed teaching skill as they begin their professional careers (Headden, 2014; Langdon & Vesper, 2000). New teachers feel most vulnerable when it comes to preventing and dealing with challenging behaviors from students in the classroom. One could argue to prevent an increase in the number of students being removed from classrooms, a need exists to better prepare newer teachers for their experiences in the classroom. Feeling less developed in the realm of classroom management while going through a teacher preparation program could have a direct relationship to a teacher's level of self-efficacy when dealing with discipline issues. As a result of having a lower level of self-efficacy in their disciplinary capabilities, a teacher is more likely to exhibit signs of psychological distress, including emotional exhaustion (Jeon et al., 2018a). A teacher is less effective and responsive in the classroom when experiencing higher levels of psychological distress, which is connected to a larger number of student behaviors classified as disruptive (Flook et al., 2013). Some resulting factors of teachers experiencing psychological distress include the likelihood of more punitive measures in student discipline, less time dedicated to lesson plans, an increased perception of lower functioning student abilities, and less excitement for teaching in the classroom (Jeon et al., 2018b; Lens & Neves de Jesus, 1999; Shernoff et al., 2011; Yoon, 2002). Evidence exists demonstrating instructors in urban schools devote more time to disciplinary procedures than their counterparts in suburban, rural, and town schools (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In a quantitative analysis of rural schools in Tennessee and Indiana, Shoulders and Krei (2015) discussed the self-efficacy of rural teachers regarding classroom management. In their report, they stated that teachers who obtained a degree higher than a master's demonstrated greater self-efficacy in classroom management than teachers with only a bachelor's degree. Furthermore, Shoulders and Krei (2015) reinforced the idea that less experienced teachers are less comfortable handling student discipline issues in the classroom than their more experienced colleagues. Therefore, to improve classroom management, and thus reduce disciplinary actions resulting from mismanaged classrooms of novice teachers, a program established to coach new teachers around classroom management can be beneficial (Kwok & Svajda-Hardy, 2021; Kraft & Blazar, 2018). A school district wide designed program to develop classroom management can decrease the number of students receiving an ISS placement, especially in urban schools and among those classrooms with the greatest number of

documented misbehaviors of students (Back et al., 2016; Flynn et al., 2016; Tolan et al., 2019).

Lee et al. (2023) stated an increasing disconnecting trend exists between teachers and students from a cultural means leading to greater struggles in classroom management. The teacher workforce is comprised mostly of White females who speak English (Raue & Gray, 2015). This specific demographic of current teachers is more likely to struggle to work in a classroom that is more diverse from a linguistic, economic, ethnic, and cultural standpoint (Greenberg et al., 2014). In addition, the context in which a new teacher in their first job most likely is in a classroom that is more diverse from their own cultural identity (Wiggan et al., 2020).

Educators need to try to comprehend their students' lives beyond the confines of the classroom by applying social and cultural lenses (Milner & Tenore, 2010). How a teacher approaches classroom management and student behavior can be inferred from their experience in the classroom and their background. In a study on this topic, Deckman (2017) conducted interviews with seven educators who had taught in an urban public school system for Grades 7-12. Teachers who identified as belonging to an underrepresented ethnic group utilized classroom management as a chance to educate their students and work through challenging situations, rather than employing quick, harsh student punishment. Administrators on campus and individuals who lead professional development programs should make it known to new instructors their ability to teach is not called into question when they take the time to involve students in a social reflection (Deckman, 2017).

The lack of cultural responsiveness in current education policies and practices exacerbates the problems schools in larger and more urban contexts face due to societal biases. These problems include low expectations related to perceptions of race and class, intellectual challenges, and other manifestations of deficit thinking (Benson & Fiarman, 2020; Khalifa, 2018; Kieran & Anderson, 2019). According to many researchers (i.e., Bartanen & Grissom, 2021; Gershenson et al., 2016; Gottfried et al., 2021), students from historically underrepresented groups are less likely to encounter educational inequalities when their leaders and teachers share the same racial or ethnic background.

During the 2015-2016 school year, students in Grades K-12 lost 11,360,004 days of learning in the United States due to an out-of-school suspension (OSS) disciplinary action (Losen & Whitaker, 2018). A well-known fact added to this learning loss is that over the past few decades, Black students received a disciplinary consequence resulting in their withdrawal from the normal educational setting at a rate out of proportion compared to students of other racial/ethnic groups, specifically White and Hispanic students (Berger, 2003; Children’s Defense Fund, 1975; Fenning & Rose, 2007; Skiba, 2004, 2013; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Racial disparities in school discipline consequences, specifically

with Black students, could align these students on a direct path to the criminal justice system, either as adults or juveniles (Rios, 2011).

Noltemeyer and Mcloughlin (2010) analyzed patterns of exclusionary discipline in the state of Ohio during the 2007-2008 school year by school typology and ethnicity. School typology included rural, suburban, and urban schools. Their investigation was on out-of-school suspensions in 326 school districts and included about 1.3 million students. In their data analysis, they revealed schools in a rural setting with smaller enrollment numbers and lower poverty levels had a lower rate of discipline actions. Interestingly as well, the researchers (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010) discovered more expulsions per 100 White students as compared to Black students within rural settings. They reported school districts located in a geographical rural area had a larger number of White students who received an expulsion as a percentage of their population as compared to Black students in the same district.

Disproportionate discipline between White and Black students may also be caused by implicit bias. According to some researchers (Bargh, 1999; Devine, 1989; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986), implicit bias exists and influences the behavior of people even when they are not aware of it. As a result, people without prejudiced beliefs or methods may exhibit implicit bias. Girvan et al. (2017) used a particular model to predict more subjective student behaviors would result in a larger discipline gap than behaviors that were more precisely defined. Student disobedience, teacher disrespect, and disturbances of the classroom are examples of subjective behaviors. The possession of a weapon, the use of illegal drugs by a student, and aggressive behavior, such as fighting or assault, are examples of more specific behaviors. According to Girvan et al. (2017), implicit bias influences a teacher's ability to make decisions when responding to subjective student behaviors, which in turn the decisions affect the disproportionality of discipline along racial lines. According to their nationwide investigation, middle school students had the biggest racial disparities in discipline (Girvan et al., 2017).

Several studies have been conducted to determine if the use of positive behavior interventions and supports influenced the number of OSS placements students received in rural schools (Gage et al., 2022; Grasley-Boy et al., 2022). In the recent studies conducted by Gage et al. (2022) in rural schools in Florida and Grasley-Boy et al. (2022) in rural schools in California, a pattern was evident of greater usage of OSS, even when positive behavior intervention and supports were implemented with fidelity. In the California study, OSS was used more frequently, specifically with students who had a disability (Grasley-Boy et al., 2022).

The atmosphere in schools may also be a sign of the discipline methods employed in secondary schools. Heilbrun et al. (2018) examined the effect of support and discipline systems on the suspension rates of students in Grades 7 and 8 through the lens of an authoritative school climate theory. According to teachers and students in these grade levels, schools with lower suspension rates generally

had strict yet fair school rules. They developed their analysis using 39,364 public school students and roughly 10,000 teachers in Virginia during the spring semester of 2013. Suspension rates were lower on campuses where students felt that the teachers were supportive. Heilbrun et al. (2018) concluded racial disparities in discipline were less common in schools with more organized discipline systems than in schools with less organized systems.

**Student Discipline on Academic Achievement and Graduation**

Academic performance and high school graduation are negatively influenced when students are extracted from their regular learning environment due to behavioral concerns. There is evidence that ties a high school diploma to the financial success of the student. Evidence suggests people without a high school diploma are more likely to be without a job as opposed to those who have attained a high school diploma. The unemployment rate for those without a diploma was just over 2% higher compared to those with a diploma per the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2021. In addition, those without a high school diploma make about $800 less per month compared to those with a high school diploma (U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2021).

Peguero et al. (2021) sought to determine if there is a relationship between strict or lenient discipline practices of schools and the rate at which students are retained or required to repeat a grade. They analyzed over 900,000 Grade 7 students in the state of Texas, starting during the 1999-2000, 2000-2001, and 2001-2002 school years until their anticipated graduation year of 2006-2007. Their analysis concluded schools seen as both too strict and too lenient in the disciplinary practices implemented had a larger number of students who had repeated a grade. Further, the researchers pointed out students of color were much more likely to be retained even when taking into consideration the availability of school resources and geographic location. Peguero et al. (2021) also stated the higher retention rates discovered in urban schools were more closely caused by the student-teacher ratio in the classroom, school size, and teacher-student racial ratios, not because of students' actions in the classroom or their financial background.

Evidence exists on how students who are placed into a DAEP influences their chances of not graduating from high school. In a study of over 1,600,000 first-time public school Texas students in Grade 9 between 2011 and 2014, Lenderman and Hawkins (2021) conducted research to examine the effects of exclusionary discipline on students and the relationship to high school graduation rates. Revealed within their analysis was a graduation rate of less than 50% after four years for Grade 9 students who enrolled in DAEP during their first year in high school. Even more concerning, when a student was placed into DAEP more than once during their first year of high school, the graduation rate for the same cohort went to 25%. Conversely, the graduation rate of Grade 9 students who were not placed into DAEP during their first year of high school was 84%. Campus and

district administrators should be aware of the long-term consequences to the Texas economy of implementing exclusionary discipline policies (Lenderman & Hawkins, 2021).

The need to be cognizant of student suspensions along racial lines is critical from the academic standpoint of students' achievement in the classroom. Morris and Perry (2016) examined racial differences in academic achievement among students receiving a suspension. The Measures of Academic Progress assessments for Mathematics and Reading from the Northwest Evaluation Association were used to examine over 16,000 Kentucky student academic and discipline records in Grades 6–10 from the fall of 2008 through the spring of 2011. These records came from 17 schools. They concluded a student's academic performance in both reading and mathematics when compared to other students in the same school was well indicated by a suspension. According to Morris and Perry (2016), racial achievement gaps exist, and Black students' academic achievement rates are lower because they are more likely to be suspended as a disciplinary measure than White students.

Ingersoll et al. (2018) cited less than half of all American teachers had no more than 10 years of professional experience in their field. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) and McDonald (2018), half of all newly hired teachers will quit their jobs and leave the profession within the first five years of their careers. A decline in academic progress, including graduation rates and state assessment scores, could result from an increase in the number of students removed from the classroom for disciplinary actions due to a lack of classroom management skills (Cholewa et al., 2018; Lenderman & Hawkins, 2021; Smith et al., 2021). To make the case for better training, advancement, and retention of new instructors, it is imperative to examine the connection between teacher experience and campus discipline placements. Little research exists examining the connection between the total number of students expelled for exclusionary discipline and the teacher experience levels across a campus. To further the body of knowledge already available on this subject, this study is required.

Minimal research on the relationship between the teacher experience levels and the number of students removed for exclusionary discipline was located. Given the critical need to retain experienced teachers in the classroom, it is necessary to establish the importance of retaining teachers to keep students in the classroom for student achievement. Removal of students from the classroom for disciplinary reasons because of less experienced teachers can lead to an increase in achievement gaps, especially for minority students. Therefore, this study will add to the literature on the importance of retaining teachers and reducing student removal from the classroom for exclusionary discipline.

## Statement of the Problem

Removing students from the normal classroom environment for discipline purposes and assigning ISS, OSS, or DAEP placements can have negative consequences on student academic achievement, leading to a lower probability of high school graduation or lower achievement exam scores on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness exam (Lenderman & Hawkins, 2021; Smith et al. 2021). Additionally, Black students in Texas classrooms receive a disproportionate number of ISS, OSS, and DAEP placements compared to their White and Hispanic counterparts (U.S. Department of Education 2018). The less experienced teachers are in the classroom, the more likely they will have difficulty carrying out effective classroom management and student discipline (Headden, 2014; Langdon & Vesper, 2000). The disproportionate practice of school discipline consequences with students of color could place them on a direct path to the criminal justice system (Rios, 2011).

The problem, however, is that most of the existing research on student discipline focuses on the disproportionality of students removed from the classroom by race. Existing literature is lacking to establish the relationship between student discipline and the professional experience levels of teachers. Greater emphasis should be placed on preparing teachers for classroom management and establishing relationships with students, which could lead to a decrease in the removal of students from the classroom. This study is proposed to demonstrate the need to retain teachers in the classroom, especially as they become more experienced, and place an emphasis on the training needed to grow teachers who are less experienced. Within the first five years of professional service, about 40% to 50% of new teachers leave the workforce and venture into a different profession. To be clear, these new teachers who leave the workforce within the first five years does not include the teacher who moves from one position within a school district, to a different position within a different school district. (Ingersoll 2003; McDonald 2018). Retaining more teachers beyond five years of professional experience could lead to an inverse relationship between classroom removal and academic achievement, greater gains in academic test scores coupled with fewer discipline consequences of students leading to classroom removal. By reviewing the Texas data on teacher experience and exclusionary discipline placements (i.e., ISS, OSS, and DAEP), public school leaders can ensure that an adequate focus is being placed on discipline placements and academic achievement and dropout rates of Black students.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this multiyear investigation was to analyze the relationship between the experience level of teachers on moderate-size high school campuses and the total number of exclusionary discipline placements into in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and DAEP in Texas. Specifically examined

were the percentage of teachers with more than six years of experience in the classroom or less than six years of experience in the classroom during the three school years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019). As such, an analysis was conducted to determine if relationships were present between teacher inexperience and student discipline placements.

**Significance of the Study**

Few researchers have analyzed the removal and placement of students into an exclusionary environment and the connection to teaching inexperience level of high school campuses. In this study, the relationship between the professional experience levels of high school teachers and the exclusionary discipline placements of students was examined. The goal was to take a broader analysis of campuses to see if campuses with higher percentages of inexperienced teachers were more likely to have more student discipline placements.

Due to the continued increase in the Black student discipline placements, educational leaders need to reevaluate the educational practices and determine ways in which retention of teachers in schools can be improved and techniques which can be applied to reduce the number of students removed from classroom instruction for disciplinary consequences. The schools analyzed in this study are located within rural, town, city and suburban communities as defined by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Findings from this multiyear investigation could also shed some light on the need to train and assist novice teachers in the classroom in classroom management. Novice teachers entering the teaching profession feel the preparation they receive toward classroom management is lacking in exposure during their teaching certification program. (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006; LePage et al., 2005; Veenman, 1984). Implementation of classroom management techniques in a teacher's personal tool kit could be lacking because the instruction they received through professional development was less than ideal (Begeny & Martens, 2006; Freeman et al., 2014; Goodson et al., 2019; Stevenson et al., 2020). Establishing the relationship between teacher inexperience and student removal from the classroom for discipline consequences may assist campus and district administrators and teacher preparation programs to alter their curriculum to address teacher retention and implementation of effective classroom management techniques in school settings.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) For traditional high school campuses, during the 2016-2017 school year, what is the relationship between teacher inexperience and student discipline placements into in-school suspension at moderate-size high schools?, (b) For traditional high school campuses in the 2017-2018 school year, what is the relationship between

teacher inexperience and student discipline placements into in-school suspension at moderate-size high schools?, (c) For traditional high school campuses in the 2018-2019 school year, what is the relationship between teacher inexperience and student discipline placements into in-school suspension at moderate-size high schools?, (d) For traditional high school campuses in the 2016-2017 school year, what is the relationship between teacher inexperience and student discipline placements into out-of-school suspension at moderate-size high schools?, (e) For traditional high school in the 2017-2018 school year, what is the relationship between teacher inexperience and student discipline placements into out-of-school suspension at moderate-size high schools?, (f) For traditional high school campuses in the 2018-2019 school year, what is the relationship between teacher inexperience and student discipline placements into out-of-school suspension at moderate-size high schools?, (g) For traditional high school campuses in the 2016-2017 school year, what is the relationship between teacher inexperience and student discipline placements into Discipline Alternative Education Program at moderate-size high schools, (h) For traditional high school campuses in the 2017-2018 school year, what is the relationship between teacher inexperience and student discipline placements into Discipline Alternative Education Program at moderate-size high schools?, and (i) For traditional high school campuses in the 2018-2019 school year, what is the relationship between teacher inexperience and student discipline placements into Discipline Alternative Education Program at moderate-size high schools?

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Design

A non-experimental, quantitative, causal-comparative research design (Johnson & Christensen, 2020) was used for this inquiry. Archival data from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System were analyzed in this study. As such, the dependent and independent variables had already occurred and could not be manipulated. In this study the independent variable was the experience level of teachers (i.e., teachers with less than six years of professional experience and teachers with six year or more of professional experience). The dependent variables were the number of students who were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and DAEP) during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years.

### Participants and Instrumentation

Participants in this study were Texas public high school students who were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and DAEP in Grades 9-12 on moderate-size campuses with

1,000-1,999 students during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years. Henceforth, these campuses will be referred to as moderate-size high schools. Exclusionary discipline of students was in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and DAEP. Exclusionary discipline is defined as removing the student from the regular classroom environment (Texas Association of School Boards, 2022). In-school suspension is a disciplinary action upon where a student is removed from the regular classroom and placed into a separate classroom within the same campus for a full day or part day, not to exceed three consecutive school days (Texas Education Agency, 2023; Texas Education Code, 2023). Out-of-school suspension is a disciplinary action upon where a student is removed from the regular classroom and prevented from attending school for a full day or part day, not to exceed three consecutive school days (Texas Education Agency, 2023; Texas Education Code, 2023). The last example of exclusionary discipline is called DAEP, a temporary educational setting in which a student is expelled or placed to either an on-campus or off-campus DAEP during the current school year or as a continuation from the previous school year for a disciplinary reason (Texas Education Agency, 2007, 2023).The teacher's experience level will be less than six years of experience and six years or more years of experience. A Public Information Request was submitted and satisfied by the Texas Education Agency. Statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software.

## RESULTS

### Data Analysis

Prior to conducting correlational procedures, scatterplots were generated and were determined to be indicative of bivariate linear relationships. Next, data normality was checked, and all variables were determined to be within the range of normality (i.e., +/- 1; Slate, 2023). Because the underlying assumptions were met for all variables, parametric correlation procedures, specifically Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients, were calculated to answer the research questions**.**

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics for Average Number of Exclusionary Discipline Consequences by School Year for Moderate-Size Texas High Schools*

| School Year | ISS | | OSS | | DAEP | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *M* | *Mdn* | *M* | *Mdn* | *M* | *Mdn* |
| 2016-2017 | 243.83 | 228.00 | 112.78 | 93.00 | 53.51 | 50.00 |
| 2017-2018 | 221.28 | 211.50 | 109.65 | 87.50 | 53.43 | 50.00 |
| 2018-2019 | 233.32 | 224.00 | 110.26 | 84.50 | 57.04 | 50.00 |

**Table 2**

*Correlations Between Teacher Inexperience and Exclusionary Discipline Consequences by School Year for Moderate-Size Texas High Schools*

| School Year | ISS | OSS | DAEP |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *r* | *r* | *r* |
| 2016-2017 | .02 | .29 | .16 |
| 2017-2018 | .01 | .31 | .12 |
| 2018-2019 | .05 | .31 | .20 |

**Table 3**

*Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Experience for Moderate-Size Texas High Schools*

| School Year | 0 to 5 Years of Experience | 6 or More Years of Experience |
|---|---|---|
| | *M(%)* | *M(%)* |
| 2016-2017 | 35.20 | 64.80 |
| 2017-2018 | 36.29 | 63.71 |
| 2018-2019 | 34.90 | 65.10 |

In this section, results were presented by school year. Findings were discussed first for in-school suspension, then for out-of-school suspension, and finally for DAEP placements. Table 1 contains the descriptive statistics for in-school suspension assignments. Revealed in Table 2 are the correlations that were calculated to address the previously mentioned research questions.

**Results for In-School Suspension for All Three School Years**

Prior to calculating correlations, descriptive statistics (i.e., *Ms* and *Mdns*) were calculated for the average number of in-school suspension assignments by teacher years of experience. As revealed in Table 1, the average number of in-school suspensions ranged from a high of 243.83 in the 2016-2017 school year to a low of 221.28 in the 2017-2018 school year. The median number varied from a high of 228.00 in-school suspensions in the 2016-2017 school year to a low of 211.50 in the 2017-2018 school year.

With respect to the 2016-2017 school year, to determine whether a statistically significant relationship was present between teacher inexperience and in-school suspension assignments on moderate-size high schools, a Pearson *r* was calculated. The result was not statistically significant, $r(211) = .02$, $p = .76$, In this school year, no relationship was present between teacher inexperience and the number of in-school suspension assignments.

For the 2017-2018 school year, a Pearson *r* was calculated and did not reveal the presence of a statistically significant result, $r(216) = .01$, $p = .90$ (Cohen, 1988). No relationship was revealed between teacher inexperience and in-school

suspension assignments. Concerning the 2018-2019 school year, a Pearson *r* was calculated and did not reveal the presence of a statistically significant result, $r(203) = .05$, $p = .47$ (Cohen, 1988). No relationship was revealed between teacher inexperience and in-school suspension assignments.

**Results for Out-of-School Suspension for All Three School Years**

Prior to answering the research questions for out-of-school suspension, descriptive statistics were calculated by teacher years of experience. As revealed in Table 1, the average number of out-of-school suspensions ranged from a high of 112.78 in the 2016-2017 school year to a low of 109.65 during the 2017-2018 school year. The median number of assignments ranged from a high of 93.00 in the 2016-2017 school year to a low of 84.50 in the 2018-2019 school year. Revealed in Table 1 are the descriptive statistics for out-of-school suspensions.

Regarding out-of-school suspension for the 2016-2017 school year, a Pearson *r* was calculated and revealed the presence of a statistically significant result, $r(196) = .29$, $p < .001$, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). A statistically significant positive relationship was revealed between teacher inexperience and student discipline placements into out-of-school suspension. Squaring this *r* value indicated that teacher inexperience and student placements into out-of-school suspension overlapped 8.41%. Higher percentages of inexperienced teachers at a school campus were related with high number of out-of-school suspensions.

With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a Pearson *r* was calculated and yielded a statistically significant result, $r(202) = .31$, $p < .001$, moderate effect size (Cohen, 1988). A statistically significant positive relationship was revealed between teacher inexperience and student discipline placements into out-of-school suspension. Squaring this *r* value indicated that teacher inexperience and student placements into out-of-school suspension overlapped 9.61%. Higher percentages of inexperienced teachers at a school campus were related with high number of out-of-school suspensions.

Concerning the 2018-2019 school year, the Pearson *r* yielded a statistically significant result, $r(194) = .31$, $p < .001$, moderate effect size (Cohen, 1988). A statistically significant positive relationship was revealed between teacher inexperience and student discipline placements into out-of-school suspension. Squaring this *r* value indicated that teacher inexperience and student placements into out-of-school suspension overlapped 9.61%. Higher percentages of inexperienced teachers at a school campus were related with high number of out-of-school suspensions.

**Results for DAEP Placement for All Three School Years**

Descriptive statistics were computed for the average number of DAEP assignments by teacher years of experience prior to correlation calculations. The average number of DAEP assignments ranged from a high of 57.04 in the 2018-

2019 school year to a low of 53.43 during the 2017-2018 school year. The median number of DAEP assignments remained constant at 50.00 across all three school years studied. Delineated in Table 1 are the descriptive statistics for DAEP assignments.

With respect to the 2016-2017 school year, to determine whether a statistically significant relationship was present between teacher inexperience and DAEP placements at moderate-size high schools, a Pearson *r* was calculated and revealed the presence of a statistically significant result, $r(191) = .16$, $p = .03$, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). A statistically significant positive relationship was revealed between teacher inexperience and DAEP placements. Squaring this *r* value indicated that teacher inexperience and student placements into DAEP overlapped 2.56%. Higher percentages of inexperienced teachers at a school campus were related with higher numbers of DAEP placements.

Regarding the 2017-2018 school year, a Pearson *r* was calculated and did not reveal the presence of a statistically significant result, $r(201) = .12$, $p = .10$. A statistically significant relationship was not revealed between teacher inexperience and student discipline placements into DAEP. Regarding the 2018-2019 school year, a Pearson *r* was calculated and yielded a statistically significant result, $r(176) = .20$, $p = .007$, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). A statistically significant positive relationship was revealed between teacher inexperience and DAEP placements. Squaring this *r* value indicated that teacher inexperience and student placements into DAEP overlapped 4.00%. Higher percentages of inexperienced teachers at a school campus were related with higher numbers of DAEP placements.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this investigation, the relationship between teacher inexperience and student discipline placements into in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and DAEP on moderate-size Texas high school campuses in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years was addressed. Teachers were categorized by their experience into two areas: (a) teachers with six or more years of experience (Experienced Teachers) and (b) teachers with less than six years of experience (Inexperienced Teachers).

Regarding in-school suspension, statistically significant relationships were not present between teacher inexperience and in-school suspension during any of the three school years analyzed. Regardless of the percentages of inexperienced teachers and experienced teachers, similar numbers of in-school suspensions were observed.

With respect to out-of-school suspension, statistically significant relationships were established between teacher inexperience and out-of-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years. More out-of-school suspensions were assigned when higher percentages of inexperienced

teachers were present than experienced teachers at the school campus. Concerning teacher inexperience and DAEP placements, statistically significant relationships were present in the 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 school years. A statistically significant relationship was not present in the 2017-1028 school year. During the 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 school years, more DAEP placements were assigned when higher percentages of inexperienced teachers were at the school campus.

**Connections to Existing Literature**

In this multiyear investigation, the average number of student discipline placements based on the experience level of teachers was discussed. In this study, positive relationships were revealed between teacher inexperience and students assigned to an exclusionary discipline placement for moderate-size Texas high school campuses. In the three school years analyzed in this study, about 35% to 36% of the teachers had less than 6 years of experience. Limited research investigations have been conducted about the connections between the inexperience of teachers and exclusionary discipline placements. As teacher experience in the classroom grows, they will depend more on tried-and-true methods of discipline that let misbehaving students stay in their regular learning setting (Caples & McNeese, 2010). Williams et al. (2020) reported that OSS rates of Black children in middle school classrooms with teachers who had less than three years of experience can be predicted. Furthermore, a shortage of experienced instructors in the classroom will probably slow down efforts to stop or minimize discipline inequalities among Black kids in urban schools (Feng, 2010; Greenlee & Ogletree, 1993; Meister & Melnick, 2003). Therefore, it is critically important to maintain educators in the teaching profession past their fifth year in the workforce to address classroom management and discipline and keep students in the classroom.

**Implications for Policy and Practice**

Implications for policy and practice can be made from this study. Although the analysis from this study revealed some instances in which a relationship between teacher experience and student discipline placements did not exist, campus leaders can address disparities in student discipline placements among their less experienced teachers by implementing a mentor program with experienced teachers that focuses on classroom management and student discipline. State and local school district leaders should take the necessary actions to keep teachers in the teaching profession past the fifth year of experience. School administrators are encouraged to disassemble their data regarding exclusionary discipline placements at their campus.

It is important that administrators at the district level analyze their placement policies to the DAEP as this type of discipline assignment reduces the chances that a student will graduate from high school (Lenderman & Hawkins

(2021). University teacher preparation programs should analyze how they prepare new teachers for classroom management. Approaches and resources to manage student misbehaviors in the classroom are areas alternative teacher certification services should evaluate internally in their curriculum provided to new teacher candidates.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

As shown in the trends of this statewide analysis, some statistically significant relationships were documented in the average number of students assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences based on the percentages of experienced and inexperienced teachers. The 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years were analyzed for this study. These three years are the last school years prior to the interruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year a three-year statewide analysis of the relationship between teacher inexperience and student exclusionary discipline placements is recommended post COVID-19. The extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic influenced student discipline is recommended for future research. A similar study about student discipline and teacher inexperience on Texas high school campuses with Grades 9-12 but with larger student enrollments should be conducted. This inquiry was focused on student discipline exclusionary assignments that were determined by enrollment rather than location. Using the geographic definitions from the National Center for Education Statistics, student discipline assignments and teacher experience levels by geographic locales should be investigated.

Piloting a study about the relationship between teacher inexperience and student discipline at the elementary and middle school level is recommended. Researchers should conduct a study between teacher inexperience and student discipline assignments in other states. In addition, future research should conduct a similar study as this one except focus on student race, not just the aggregate as analyzed with this investigation. Underlying reasons for other student discipline assignments, those not included in this study, by campus enrollment based on the experience levels of teachers are encouraged to be investigated, especially within other states.

## CONCLUSION

In this Texas multiyear investigation, the relationship between teacher inexperience related to student discipline placements of in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension and DAEP on Texas moderate-size high school campuses was discussed. Over the course of three school years analyzed, the relationship between teacher inexperience and student exclusionary discipline placements were mixed. There was no statistically significant relationship present among in-school

suspension assignments. However, a statistically significant relationship was present among two school years for out-of-school suspension assignments. Regarding DAEP placements, a statistically significant relationship existed for all three school years revealing a higher percentage of inexperienced teachers were related to a higher number of DAEP placements.

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