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JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

Church Personnel Perceptions of Disorderly Students: A Case Study of Misconduct in Child Ministry Programs

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to

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Doctor of Ministry

By

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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The problem: undisciplined children in church settings disrupt biblical teachings and provide the impetus for other children to act inappropriately. Therefore, discipline issues must be addressed. Christian teachers have a unique responsibility to establish high moral and ethical standards in their classrooms based on God's Word, thus, student discipline issues must be addressed for the wellbeing of all concerned.

The purpose of this Qualitative Case Study is to understand the student discipline issues experienced by teachers in child ministry programs and how they coped with these issues. Student discipline issues can be defined as incidents of disruptive behaviors exhibited by children while in attendance in child ministry classes. It is construed that control of student discipline and good classroom management practices are crucial for all who undertake the profession of teaching. Essentially, the classroom environment must be conducive for learning without unnecessary interruption, thus understanding the dilemmas experienced by child ministry teachers is paramount.

The author of this study was guided by twenty research questions in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaires were emailed to church leaders who then assumed the responsibility for identifying and selecting available participants via convenience sampling. Fifteen respondents, i.e., eleven females and four males were selected by church leaders. The latter then emailed the completed questionnaires to the researcher who analyzed the results. This was a Qualitative Case Study and data was analyzed via Content Analysis, i.e., reoccurring respondent words in the questionnaires were coded and categorized. Data was also analyzed by Descriptive Statistics. The findings of this study revealed that disruptive behaviors cited by respondents were as follows: (1) student talking, (2) student inattentiveness, (3) disabled students acting inappropriately as determined by respondents, and (4) student lacking discipline and failing to follow the rules. Additionally, it was found that boys caused more disruptions than girls and these disruptions were viewed by teachers as minor and infrequent. It was found that teachers used a myriad of coping strategies to mitigate student disruptive behavior to include the following: (1) expecting students to be respectful, (2) requesting intervention by middle management church leaders like Deacons, Team Leaders and Children Directors, and (3) one-on-one talks with disruptive students. It was determined that the latter was the primary coping strategy. It was also found that teachers rarely consulted with the senior church hierarchy to off-set student discipline issues. It is anticipated that this research will enhance awareness as to how students behave in church settings. Furthermore, it is also hoped that church leaders will incorporate a policy to assist teachers with student disruptive behaviors and to intervene as needed.

Keywords: student discipline, disruptive behaviors, classroom management, qualitative study, content analysis, descriptive statistics, trustworthiness

Dedication

I would like to thank the Lord, our dear Heavenly Father, for giving me the strength, the fortitude, and the capability to complete this study. I thank God for blessing me with a loving family that has always supported, inspired, and encouraged me to persevere and to never give up. It would be very remiss of me not to acknowledge a special and loving individual who dedicated their time and energy even during their time of sickness and rehabilitation, to make sure I was on the right track with this study. This individual gave up hours, days, weeks and months to ensure that I completed this project. This individual is a retired school administrator, school psychologist, veteran officer of the United States Air Force, my hero and my dad, Dr. Charles B. Davis.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank all of the individuals from the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University and the staff of professors and administrators who supported, encouraged, and guided me through this collegiate endeavor. I would like to extend special thanks to my mentor, Dr. Kitchens who stepped in during my greatest time of need and offered support and assistance. He never faltered to supply answers to my countless emails. Thank you for your support, Dr. Lester David Kitchens!

Contacting over one hundred churches during the COVID19 pandemic proved to be challenging and difficult. Thus, I would like to acknowledge and thank the seven churches who were able to participate in this study, who are true pillars in their communities and the epitome of Christian character. Words cannot express my gratitude for what they have done. The leaders and volunteers of these seven churches took time out of their busy schedules to participate in this project even through difficult church times. I am immensely thankful for and honored by their help in this endeavor.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Disorderly students in classroom settings can disrupt the learning capacity of other students and make it difficult for teachers to maintain control. This researcher will investigate what church personnel deem as student misconduct in their classrooms and how they maintain a positive classroom environment. According to C. M. Charles, classroom discipline is one of the most universal and troubling problems faced by teachers.[1] It is surprising that churches have students who present disciplinary problems. The church is a significant pillar of child development in society. Also, the church is an institution in which children are encouraged to behave appropriately. Well-disciplined children in church classrooms are a benefit for teachers and students. There is little research regarding discipline problems in the Christian classroom; however, religious teachers can gain from research related to dealing with discipline issues in the secular environment.

Student discipline problems related to formal instruction can be traced to our early years in education. Sunday School originated in England in the 1700's under the direction of Robert Raikes. He saw a need to provide poor children with instruction to "prevent them from taking up crime."[2] Sunday School progressed to the United States in the late 1700's. Its goal was to "install discipline, a work ethic and literacy for the working class."[3] Margaret Verble determined the lack of discipline in Sunday School is a rarely publicized and pervasive problem in many churches;

[1] C. M. Charles, *Building Classroom Disciples: From Model to Practice*, 3d ed. (New York: Longman, 1989) 3-4.

[2] Clint Archer, "Who Invented Sunday School," *The Cripplegate* (blog), May 16, 2016, https://thecripplegate.com/who-invented-Sunday-school/.

[3] Pamela L. Kester, "The Sunday School Movement," Encyclopedia.com, accessed June 10, 2021, https://encyclopedia.com/history/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/sunday-school-movement.

for example, problems such as tardiness, rowdiness, talking back to the teacher, and refusing to participate actively in the lessons prevailed.[4]

Child misconduct in classes has been prevalent since the early sixteenth century. Therefore, efforts were undertaken to maintain classroom management. For example, corporal punishment was a tactic used to maintain classroom management. According to Karen Carr, in order to maintain classroom management, boys in Athens, Greece who failed to grasp mastery of their lessons rapidly, were hit with sticks by their instructors.[5] Specifically, memory and recitation were a central facet of education and those students who performed poorly on their oral examinations were "beat with sticks," while those who did well were praised.[6]

Modern formal education began in Europe during the sixteenth century and was initially promoted as a Christian duty to save souls.[7] However, by the seventeenth century, Germany became a leader in formal education. German instructors initially relied heavily on corporal punishment to encourage student learning. Records kept by instructors revealed "blows with a rod, taps with a ruler, and blows with the hand."[8]

In the mid-seventeenth century, formal public education came to America, also relying heavily on corporal punishment when children failed to learn or when they played with other children during instruction. Corporal punishment is still permissible today in some public

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[4] Margaret S. Verble, "Tackling Sunday School Discipline," *Christianity Today*, January 22, 1982, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1982/january-22/tacking-sunday-school-discipline.html?utm_medium=widgetsocial.

[5] Karen E. Carr, "Schools in Ancient Greece- Greek Education," *Quatr.us Study Guides*, July 11, 2017, http://www.quatr.us/greeks/schools-ancient-greece.htm.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Peter Gray, "A Brief History of Education," *Psychology Today* (blog), Reviewed by Matt Huston, August 20, 2008, https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/freedom-learn/200808/brief-history-education.

[8] Ibid.

schools. Nineteen states in the United States allow corporal punishment.[9] Christina Caron noted more than 106,000 children were corporally punished in public schools during the school year 2013-2014, according to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights. There have been no outright bans of corporal punishment in K-12 public schools. However, corporal punishment is prohibited in early childhood education programs offered under the United States Department of Health and Human Services. According to Caron, Tennessee and Louisiana amended state laws to protect children with disabilities from corporal punishment.

Generally, corporal punishment is defined as paddling and spanking children who misbehave, but it can also be other forms of punishment designed to cause pain. Corporal punishment remains legal because the U.S. Supreme Court ruled five to four in Ingraham vs. Wright (1977) that corporal punishment does not fall within the parameters of cruel and unusual punishment as delineated by the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution nor does it violate the Fourteenth Amendment regarding due process. Caron noted that the North Carolina State Legislature voted to ban corporal punishment but to allow teachers and principals to use reasonable force as a means to discipline school children; thus, corporal punishment appears to be technically permitted in North Carolina. Caron further mentioned that many school districts that utilize corporal punishment are quite supportive of it and are convinced that it effectively changes student behavior.[10] However, Elizabeth Gershoff, professor of Human Development and Family Sciences at the University of Texas at Austin, noted that "the primary conclusion from the meta-analyses of 88 studies conducted over the last 62 years is that parental corporal punishment is associated significantly with physical abuse, delinquency, and anti-social

[9] Christina Caron, "In 19 States, It's Still Legal to Spank Children in Public Schools," *The New York Times*, December 13, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/13/us/corporal-punishment-school-tennessee.html.

[10] Ibid.

behavior."[11] Gershoff studied the impact of corporal punishment in public schools and found no merit for its continued use. Most significantly, Sharoni Little and La Verne Tolbert found that "Black boys were overrepresented in office referrals, corporal punishment and expulsion from school."[12] Thus, corporal punishment raises a serious question if employed unequally based on student ethnicity.

As America progressed through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, student discipline took a turn away from corporal punishment to more humane punishment. Other forms of punishment were developed to maintain classroom management. Meridith Danko noted that repetitively writing materials not learned or wearing of a hat called a "dunce cap" and sitting in the corner of the classroom became common punishments.[13] These punishments persisted in some schools until the early 1950's.[14] In the later 1900's, states began to establish new standards for serious offenses in school, setting the foundation for transferring students to the juvenile or criminal justice systems. The establishment of Zero Tolerance Polices allowed school officials to utilize suspension and expulsion for serious student offenses like bringing weapons, alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products on school property. Farnel Maxine said, "Zero Tolerance Policies disproportionately affected minority students and played a major role in the school-to-prison

[11] Elizabeth T. Gershoff, "Corporal Punishment by Parents and Associated Child Behaviors and Experiences: a Meta-Analytic and Theoretical Review," *Psychological Bulletin* 128, no. 4 (2022): 549, https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.128.4.539.

[12] Sharoni D. Little and La Verne A. Tolbert, "The Problem with Black Boys: Race, Gender, and Discipline in Christian and Private Elementary Schools," *Christian Education Journal: Research on Educational Ministry* 15, no. 3 (December 2018): 410, https://dpo/org/10.1177/0739891318805760.

[13] Meridith Danko, "21 Ways School Was Different a Century Ago," *Mental Floss*, August 3, 2021, https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/638787/how-school-was-different-100-years-ago.

[14] Ibid.

pipeline."[15] Mary Ellen Flannery reported school districts were ordered to respond to student misbehavior in "fair, non-discriminatory, and effective" ways.[16] However, Black students were suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than White students.[17] Additionally, Flannery noted Black and Latino students accounted for 70 percent of police referrals. Black children also represented 18 percent of preschool students, but 48 percent of preschool suspensions.[18] Flannery purported Black students do not act out in class more frequently than their White peers but are more likely to be sent to the principal's office for subjective offenses (e.g., disrupting class) by their White teachers, while White students are more likely to be suspended for objective offenses, like drug possession.[19]

In the twenty-first century, the onset of a worldwide pandemic dramatically changed the format of public education in the United States. Specifically, K-12 public education moved away from in person education to online or distance learning for over 1.2 billion children.[20] However, the California Department of Education noted, "suspension and expulsion is still happening during distance learning."[21] Carolyn Jones cited new student discipline problems including

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[15] Farnel Maxime, "Zero-Tolerance Policies and the School to Prison Pipeline," *Shared Justice*, January 18, 2018, https://www.sharedjustice.org/most-recent/2017/12/21/zero-tolerance-policies-and-the-school-to-prison-pipeline.

[16] Mary Ellen Flannery, "The School to Prison Pipeline: Time to Shut it Down," *NEA EdJustice*, January 11, 2015, *https://neaedjustice.org/2015/01/11/the-school-to-prison-pipeline-time-to-shut-it-down/.*

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Cathy Li and Farah Lalani, "The COVID-19 Pandemic Has Changed Education Forever. This is How," *World Economic Forum*, April 29, 2020, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/coronavirus-education-global-covid19-online-digital-learning/.

[21] Carolyn Jones, "How School Discipline-and Student Misbehavior-Has Changed During the Pandemic," *EdSource*, November 17, 2020, https://edsource.org/2020/how-school-discipline-and-student-misbehavio-has-changed-during-the-pandemic/.

"cheating on online tests, disrupting on-line classes, and increased incidents of cyberbullying while old problems like drugs and weapons violations continue to occur."[22] Jones wrote that new strategies emerged to cope with student discipline issues. For example, teachers might "mute a student's audio or turn off a student's video."[23] Fear among educators also has intensified, predicated on the belief that minority and disabled students will be disproportionately disciplined and may also experience greater economic hardships and mental health challenges due to the pandemic.[24]

Teachers must create and maintain a classroom environment that promotes learning.[25] Potentially, disruptive children may be incarcerated and lose the opportunity to attend public school. Incarceration compounds the problems faced by individuals, that is, the Bureau of Justice Report (2003), revealed "68% of State Prison Inmates did not have a High School Diploma."[26] It becomes clear that the lack of student discipline can lead to serious consequences, one of the most devasting is incarceration. Additionally, statistics indicated that Blacks represented approximately 13 percent of the US population, but 38 percent of those are incarcerated in prison or jail.[27]

Classroom management may be challenging and frustrating, but appropriate behavior in the church classroom is attainable. Classroom management is a set of procedures designed to

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[22] Jones, "How School Discipline-and Student Misbehavior."

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Christy Hill, "Elementary Christian School Teachers Utilizing Biblical Concepts in Classroom Management" (EdD diss., Liberty University, 2014), https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu.

[26] Caroline Wolf Harlow, "Education and Correctional Populations," *Bureau of Justice Statics: Special Report*, revised April 15, 2003, https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf.

[27] "Race and Ethnicity," *Prison Policy Initiative*, accessed August 10, 2022, https://www.prisonpolicy.org/research/race_and_ethnicity/.

help teachers maintain order in the classroom using both proactive and reactive measures.[28] Classroom management not only ensures order, but it also promotes student social and moral growth. Additionally, there is evidence that church classroom management can aid children as they grow into adulthood. According to the Smithtown Christian School, teaching is shepherding or discipleship; its concern is not only external behavior, but also how behavior reflects the heart of students.[29] The goal is to help students develop a heart that is shaped like Jesus's heart, so that Christlike behavior will be the students' natural life pattern.[30] Linda Kardamis suggested developing a relationship with the students in the classroom and dealing with the root problems rather than the surface issue.[31] Classroom management is paramount for all in the profession of teaching. In essence, students must be orderly, follow the rules, and adhere to teacher guidelines.

Steven Page, Beth Pendergraft, and Judi Wilson initiated a study to examine elementary teachers' sense of efficacy in three settings in the southeastern United States: urban schools (inner city), suburban schools (adjoining county), and rural schools (farm area).[32] Page et al. defined efficacy as the ability to judge teacher reaction to a situation and/or their influence on the outcome of a situation.[33] The participants taught kindergarten through fifth grade classes and were administered the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES), sometimes called the Ohio State

[28] Hill, "Elementary Christian School Teachers," 12.

[29] "Classroom Management and Discipline at SCS," *Smithtown Christian School*, accessed September 26, 2022, 1-24, https://www.learnwithscs.org/resources/elementary-classroom-management-policy.

[30] Ibid., 1.

[31] Linda Kardamis, "7 Ways to Keep Control of a Sunday School Class, Club, or Youth Group," *Teach 4 the Heart* (blog), accessed September 26, 2022, https://teach4theheart.com/7-ways-to-keep-control-of-a-sunday-school-class-club-or-youth-group.

[32] Steven Page, Beth Pendergraft, and Judi Wilson, "Examining Elementary Teachers' Sense of Efficacy in Three Settings in the Southeast," *Journal of Inquiry & Action in* Education 5, no. 3 (2014): 31-41, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ej1134226.pdf.

[33] Ibid., 31.

Teacher Efficacy Scale.[34] A total of sixty-seven teachers completed the TSES. There were twenty teachers in urban schools, twenty-one suburban, and twenty-six rural.[35]

Page et al. provided a sampling of questions on the TSES related to efficacy in classroom management: (1) How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom? (2) To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior? (3) How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules? (4) How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy? (5) How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students? (6) How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson? (7) How well can you respond to defiant students?[36]

Examining the results from the TSES and the demographics from the urban, suburban, and rural groups, the researchers were able to make an analysis. The urban schools had a greater percentage of African Americans and a higher rate of students enrolled for free lunches; rural schools had a higher percentage of White students and also a high percentage enrolled for free lunches; the suburban schools exceeded the other schools only in overall enrollment.[37] Page, Pendergraft, and Wilson wrote, "elementary teachers in the urban setting had a lower sense of efficacy than elementary teachers in suburban and rural settings."[38] Finally, they found there were no significant differences in the mean scores of teachers' overall sense of efficacy between the suburban and rural schools. In sum, "the ability to judge how one will react in a situation,"

[34] Page, Pendergraft, and Wilson, "Examine Elementary Teachers' Sense of Efficacy," 33.

[35] Ibid., 34.

[36] Ibid., 36.

[37] Ibid., 38.

[38] Ibid., 39.

appeared to be a salient variable in classroom management.[39] Thus, it is this researcher's belief that if teachers have high confidence in their ability to guide students, then students may not act out. For example, it has been this researcher's experience when teaching youth Bible study classes, that students are excited and eager to learn because their teacher is eager to teach and has high expectations for their behavior. It is disheartening to see teachers who have low expectations for student behavior.

Ministry Context

This researcher gained experience teaching youth in Vacation Bible School at Second Baptist Church of Westgate (pseudo name). Most notably, this researcher has fond memories attending Sunday School as a child, participating in the egg hunts on the front lawns of the church, and most importantly developing a strong faith in God. The greatest gift a parent can give their child is teaching them about God and His Son, Jesus Christ. Additionally, this researcher's mother, a truly devout Christian, and a beautiful woman of God, taught the Word of God to her children and encouraged them to attend church services; therefore, to this day, this researcher's love of God and the relationship with the Lord has grown exponentially. One of the Scriptures that expresses this reads, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov 22:6, KJV). The pastor during this researcher's youth was also a great man of faith who did not misrepresent the facts about God, heaven, or hell. One memory that stands out was a very vivid and frightening film about hell. The church was full to capacity (more than 250 people) so, this researcher had to sit on her father's knee. Subsequently, the author gained a reverence for God and insight to the importance of obeying God's

[39] Page, Pendergraft, and Wilson, "Examine Elementary Teachers' Sense of Efficacy," 38.

commandments. There was also clarity and understanding of the Scripture: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 6:23, NIV).

Second Baptist Church of Westgate has a long history that can be traced back to humble beginnings in the 1800's. Four acres of land was purchased by three men in 1875. For three years members met under a bush arbor of trees; it was not until 1878 that a one-room log structure was built and named Second Baptist Church of Westgate.[40] According to the Second Baptist Church of Westgate's history log, Sunday School was established around 1912. The Second Baptist Church of Westgate Church history log also recorded that because of membership growth, another 2.5 acres of land was purchased on January 20, 1926, and then an additional 3.6 acres in January 1990. According to Second Baptist Church of Westgate Church records, in 1958 the wooden church was replaced by a block structure. In 2005 a 12,000 square foot multi-use facility was built which is in use today.

Second Baptist Church of Westgate Church has had eighteen wonderful and talented senior pastors. Although these pastors preached with great enthusiasm and reverence for God, it appears pastors today are very careful with biblical exegesis and are tactful in their execution of sermons, so as to not offend or upset their congregants. Pastors in the past, such as the pastor during this researcher's youth, were not afraid to preach and teach the truth about what is written in the Bible on all topics. For example, the Bible is clear about obedience and the consequences of defiance: "the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23, KJV). According to Mike Anton and William Lobdell, there has been a shift in religion from Christian theology to being influenced by a secular society.[41] Thus, this researcher suggests the main reason there is misconduct in the

[40] The information regarding Second Baptist Church of Westgate was retrieved from their archived records.

[41] Mike Anton and William Lobdell, "Hold the Fire and Brimstone," *Los Angeles Times*, June 19, 2002, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2002-jun-19-me-hell19-story.html.

classroom is that children are not being taught to obey in the household because there is a laxity in sermonic influence and encouragement.

This researcher is of the opinion that home is where the primary obedience training should begin for children, not in the classroom. This is not to say teachers should not help with child discipline. Teachers should help with discipline, but not become the sole disciplinarian. The Bible reads, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' which is the first commandment with a promise 'so that it may go well for you, and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.' Fathers don't exasperate [provoke] your children; instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph 6:1-4 New American Standard). Children and the parents have a duty to be obedient to God's Word.

Through many years of teaching, this researcher concluded that teaching the middle school aged children during Vacation Bible Study was much more challenging than the younger children. Every summer Second Baptist Church of Westgate selected volunteers to teach their Vacation Bible School classes. Without hesitation, this researcher volunteered to teach and was assigned the younger group of children. Second Baptist Church of Westgate provided planned curricula for all the age groups, making teaching more structured and enjoyable. At the end of each summer session, the children had to present to the congregation and other students what they had learned. A few years later this researcher was assigned older children, aged ten to twelve years. The first day of class, as the children entered the classroom after having their midday snack, they were asked to sit in their seats so that Bible study could begin. A few of the students listened, however, several boys continued to laugh and play around in the classroom. Several attempts to regain control of the classroom were unsuccessful. Yelling or speaking sternly was not an option because the main instigator was the pastor's son. Feeling defeated and

frustrated, the researcher stepped away from the classroom to get help. Subsequently, a deacon managed to get the classroom under control. This experience was the reason this researcher chose to examine child discipline in church settings. Although there were standards for lesson plans, there were no guidelines, statues, or protocols in place to maintain classroom management. However, that experience was not a deterrent to teaching children, thus this researcher continues to teach adult and children Bible lessons.

Children receiving educational services within church environments should be disciplined and well behaved. The Bible teaches parents to love and discipline their children if the need arises. Proverbs illustrates, "He who withholds the rod [of discipline] hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines and trains him diligently and appropriately [with wisdom and love]" (Prov 13:24, Amplified Bible). Some parents do not believe in spanking their children as a form of discipline. Thus, they must be reminded of Proverbs. Not every infraction of the rules deserves spankings; however, parents must decipher between the times when stronger discipline (spanking) is needed. The Lord has explicitly explained how disciplining children in the Scripture should manifest itself. It is apparent which students in the classroom were disciplined at home and which were not. The students in this researcher's classroom were disciplined at home; however, there were times they became distracted or unfocused. Nevertheless, there were simple tactics used to regain their attention such as reminding them of what God expects or simply asking them to stop the disruptive behavior.

The immediate goal of discipline is to help children make good choices, while the long-range goal is for children to become self-disciplined. Chip Ingram identifies the Five Characteristics of Biblical Discipline. First, the necessity of discipline is to deter destruction. Second, the means of discipline is actions and words. Third, the motive in discipline is to express

love. Fourth, the goal of discipline is to teach obedience. The fifth and last characteristic is that the result of discipline is short-term pain and long-term gain.[42] This researcher found that incorporating Ingram's Five Characteristics of Biblical Discipline has been paramount for teaching youth in the classroom.

It is essential to maintain discipline, no matter how disruptive children may become. Disciplined lives reap rewards. Hebrews notes, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline because the Lord disciplines the one He loves, God disciplines us for our good. No discipline seems pleasant at the time. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it" (Heb 12:4-11, NIV). Additionally, Proverbs reads, "Do not lose heart when he rebukes you" (Prov 3:11-12, NIV). On occasion this researcher has met parents in church who think they are expressing love towards their children when they fail to discipline them, but parents are neglecting their responsibility to follow God's Word. It can be said that disciplining children when warranted is an expression of love for them. Hebrews indicates, "We have all had human fathers who disciplined us [and] they discipline us for a little while, but God disciplines us in order that we may share in His holiness" (Heb 12:9, NIV).

According to Stephen Maitanmi, there are three major benefits to Christian education: "(1) Christian education seeks to foster in growing persons a consciousness of God as a reality in human experience and to foster a sense of personal relationship to Him; (2) Christian education seeks to develop in growing persons an understanding and appreciation of the personality, life, and teachings of Jesus to lead them to better personal experience; and (3) Christian education

[42] Chip Ingram, "Five Characteristics of Biblical Discipline," *Focus on the Family*, August 30, 2019, https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/five-characteristic-of-biblical-discipline/.

seeks to develop in growing persons a progressive and continuous development of Christian character"[43] According to Kenneth Gangle, one of the primary purposes of Christian teaching is to enable students to become independent investigators of the Word of God."[44] This researcher includes the following essential principles in Bible Study classes: praying, studying God's Word, and developing purpose. The emphasis shifts from simply academic knowledge to helping children learn their purpose through a biblically based process. One of the core principles this researcher teaches in the classroom is that each child matters. Children are taught they are loved by their parents and family and also, they are loved by Almighty God. They are taught they are born for a purpose. Another principle taught is that each child must communicate their thoughts and ideas to the Lord. Each child has a journal they use to write "letters to God." This exercise teaches children to develop a relationship with God, to articulate their feelings, and that God is always listening and available. Christian education begins with a Christian worldview, which begins with the Word of God. The Bible is the foundation of the framework for Christian education. Gangel noted, "In the Christian classroom, thoughts and ideas are not merely opinions based on personal experience [but] rather they are understandings of the meaning of Scripture."[45] This awareness enables Christian school teachers to teach their students and the Bible becomes the pathway to academic and spiritual knowledge in the Christian school.

Although disciplining children generally begins at home, it can be reinforced in school and church settings. Parents, teachers, and others must prepare children to live in an ordered and

[43] Stephen O. Maitanmi, "Reflections on Christian Education," *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 28, no.2 (August 22, 2019): 91-92, https://doi.org/101080/10656219.2019.1649401.

[44] Kenneth Gangle, *24 Ways to Improve your Teaching* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 27.

[45] Ibid., 32.

structured society governed by laws and rules. The traditional interpretation of discipline relies on corporal punishment. However, modern society does not necessarily rely on physical discipline. Christian Dashiell claimed research demonstrated that spanking and other forms of physical discipline are unhealthy for children because it alters the structure of a child's brain.[46] In this researcher's opinion, this proposition needs further study. Christian parents might wish to challenge secular data. God is clear on child discipline in His Word. Presently, many parents at Second Baptist Church of Westgate use verbal discourse with their children to shape and correct deviant behavior. Parents and others attempt to establish clear boundaries for behavior by verbal interchanges with their children. Verbal discourse has maintained classroom management in this researcher's experience thus far; however, parents must be reminded that not all children respond to verbal interaction. Therefore, a different form of discipline may be needed. Although some parents believe child discipline should not be punitive, but corrective, disciplining children according to Scripture ensures a society characterized by godliness and order, rather than chaos and destruction.

Problem Presented

Undisciplined children in church settings disrupt biblical teachings and provide the impetus for other children to act inappropriately. Therefore, discipline issues must be addressed. Christian teachers have a unique responsibility to establish high moral and ethical standards in their classrooms based on God's Word thus, student discipline issues must be addressed for the wellbeing of all concerned.

[46] Christian Dashiell, "3 Ineffective Parenting Style Habits That Make Kids Avoidant," *Fatherly*, Updated October 31, 2022, https://www.fatherly.com/parenting/ineffective-parenting-style.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Qualitative Case Study is to understand the student discipline issues experienced by teachers in child ministry programs and how they coped with these issues. Student discipline issues can be defined as incidents of disruptive behaviors exhibited by children while in attendance in child ministry classes. It is construed that control of student discipline and good classroom management practices are crucial for all who undertake the profession of teaching. Essentially, the classroom environment must be conducive for learning without unnecessary interruption, thus understanding the dilemmas experienced by child ministry teachers is paramount.

Thesis Statement

The Thesis Statement has been defined as "a sentence that states the topic and purpose of [the] paper."[47] The thesis statement can be argumentative (reasoning), analytical (analyzing an issue), or expository (explaining a topic).[48] The thesis statement that follows is argumentative, i.e., classroom management in children's ministry programs is essential to effectively teach and for students to learn vital curriculum that can positively affect their lives now and in the future. Teachers have considerable influence over student behavior; it essential that teachers determine what misbehaviors are occurring and teach students to replace misbehaviors with appropriate behaviors. Church schools have a responsibility to establish rules of behavior for students. Mitigating disruptive behavior will improve the teacher-student relationship and promote in-depth learning.

[47] "Writing a Thesis Statement," *University of Arizona Writing Center*, accessed July 10, 2022, https://writingcenter.uagc.edu/writing-a-thesis.

[48] Ibid.

Definitions

It is important to define key terms that are utilized. The following is a list of terms associated with this project:

AWANA—Approved Workman Are Not Ashamed (2 Tim 2:15)—is an international, nondenominational, Bible-centered, nonprofit ministry[49] which provides Bible-based evangelism and discipleship curricula for two- to eighteen-year-olds in churches.[50]

Case study—an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon [the case] in-depth and within its real-world context.[51]

Category—word/phrase to describe a group of codes.[52]

Child ministry teacher—one who teaches religious principles in a church setting.

Classroom management—a set of procedures to help the teacher maintain order in the classroom using both proactive and reactive measures.[53]

Code—word/phrase representing a single idea.[54]

Coding (qualitative)—identification of reoccurring words, themes, and concepts within the [written] texts.[55]

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[49] "AWANA," *Fellowship Baptist Church*, accessed July 4, 2022, https://fbc-hr.org-awana.

[50] "AWANA," Awana.org., accessed July 4, 2022, https://www.awana.org.

[51] Robert Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2014), p. 16.

[52] Bogetz et al., "Codes, Concepts and Categories, Oh My! Building Your Skills in Qualitative Data Analysis," *Association of Pediatric Directors* (PowerPoint Presentation), 2017, https://appd.s3amazonaws.com/docs/meetings/2017springpresentations/ws10slides.pdf.

[53] Hill, "Elementary Christian School Teachers," 13.

[54] Bogetz et al., "Codes, Concepts and Categories."

[55] Amy Lou, "Content Analysis," *Scribbr*, revised May 5, 2022, https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/content- analysis/.

Confirmability—evaluative criteria to determine the trustworthiness of qualitative research, specifically a degree of neutrality, or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest.[56]

Content analysis—research method used to identify patterns in recorded communications.[57]

Convenience sample—respondents who are 'convenient' to the researcher; individuals may be recruited by merely asking those who are present in the street, in a public building, or in a workplace, for example.[58]

Credibility—evaluative criteria for qualitative researchers to determine the trustworthiness of research, specifically, confidence in the truth of the findings or that the respondents answered the questionnaire in an honest and truthful manner.[59]

Discipline—comes from the Latin word *disciplina* meaning instruction and training;[60] the quality of being able to behave and work in a controlled way which involves obeying particular rules or standards.[61]

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[56] Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publication, 1985), p. 218.

[57] Lou, "Content Analysis."

[58] Alison Galloway, "Non-Probability Sampling: Convenience Sampling," *Encyclopedia of Social Measurement,* 2005, https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/mathematic/convenience-sample.

[59] Lincoln and Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, 218.

[60] "What Does Discipline Mean?" *Focus 3: Behavior*, accessed June 15, 2022, https://focus3.com/what-does-discipline-mean/.

[61] *Collins Dictionary*, "Discipline," accessed 2021, https://collinsdictionary.com.

Disruptive behavior—any behavior from a student that impedes the productivity of the classroom environment.[62]

Qualitative research—collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (text data in this case) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences and to gather in-depth insights into a problem.[63]

Reoccur—to happen again at least once.[64]

Theme—word/phrase to describe broader, overarching ideas.[65]

Theory—provides a lens of how to view the world [and] theories explain, predict, and help individuals, in this case researchers, to understand phenomena. Theories also help individuals to evaluate the results of research.[66]

Limitations

According to Derek Jansen, "research limitations are, at the simplest level, the weaknesses of the study, based on factors that are often outside of your control as the researcher. These factors could include things like time, access to funding, equipment, data or participants.[67] Firstly, in this study a convenience sample was used rather than a random sample. Secondly, the Covid-19 pandemic prevented in-person interaction between the

[62] Terri Tarr, "Handling Disruptive Student Behavior," *Center for Teaching and Learning*, revised by Anusha S. Rao, November, 2015, https://ctl.iupui.edu/resources/classroom-management/tips-for-handling-disruptive-student-behavior.

[63] Pritha Bhandari, "What is Qualitative Research? Methods & Examples," *Scribbr*, revised November 24, 2022, https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/qualitative-research.

[64] "Reoccur," Merriam-Webster.com, accessed September 15, 2021, https://www.merriam-webster.com.

[65] Bogetz et al., "Codes, Concepts and Categories."

[66] Sebastian Harnisch, Cornelia Frank, and Hanns W. Maull, *Role Theory in International Relations: Approaches an Analyses* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 11-12.

[67] Derik Jansen, "Research Limitations and Delimitations," *GradCoach*, reviewed by David Phair, September 2022, https://gradcoach.com/research-limitations-vs-delimitations/.

researcher and the respondents; thus, a questionnaire was emailed to the respondents. Thirdly, the qualitative research approach produced results less generalizable to a larger population. Lastly, a review of the literature determined there are few research studies specifically related to discipline problems associated with child ministry teachers or child ministry programs. However, a sampling of studies associated with disruptive children in church settings was reported in the literature review.

Delimitations

Delimitations are self-imposed constraints that researchers place on themselves.[68] In this research, the study population was limited to fifteen respondents. The respondents represented only the residents of the east coast of the United States. The respondents represent only child ministry teachers and not those who teach in public or private schools.

Assumptions

An assumption is "a thing that is accepted as true."[69] In this study, it is assumed that the respondents will answer the questionnaire truthfully and honestly. It is expected that the respondents' interest in participating in the research is sincere and not driven by any other motives. It is presumed the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents will be protected. It is assumed the researcher in this study, will be ethical, professional, and follow all established guidelines as it relates to conducting research. It is believed that data will be collected and analyzed in accordance with established research protocols. It is understood that collected data

[68] Steve Lowe, "Definitions, Limitations, Delimitations and Assumptions," Liberty Online Video Presentation, https://learnlibertyedu/webapps/blackboard/content/list/.

[69] "Assumption," *Oxford English Dictionary*, accessed December 10, 2021, https://www.oed.com/.

will meet the standards of trustworthiness. It is assumed that this research will be useful for church personnel who provide oversight for children discipline issues.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework illustrates what to expect to find through research, defines the relevant variables in the study and how they might relate to each other.[1] This research assumes that child ministry teachers may encounter discipline issues/problems with students as they attempt to instruct them on Christian principles. One variable in this study is problem identification. Specifically, this researcher will administer a questionnaire to fifteen respondents who teach students in a church setting to ascertain student discipline problems. The second variable is selecting the strategy or strategies utilized by child ministry teachers to manage student discipline problems identified by respondents. The final is evaluation of strategies utilized by child ministry teachers. It is expected that the overarching strategy used by child ministry teachers will be verbal dialogue with disruptive students and the expected outcome will be improved student behavior. The variables in this study can be linked together by associating them with the steps in problem solving: identifying the problem, searching for solutions to the problem, implementing those solutions, and evaluating outcomes of solutions used to solving or mitigating problems.[2]

Prelude To Literature Review

To gather a perspective to approach the thesis project selected by this researcher, twenty-nine journal studies were reviewed. All the studies related to discipline issues displayed by children in formal instructional settings. The methodologies employed in the cited studies were

[1] Bas Swaen, "Conceptual Framework," *Scribbr*, revised May 4, 2022, https:/www.scribbr.com/methodology/conceptual-framework/.

[2] "What is Problem Solving," *American Society for Quality*, accessed June 25, 2022, https://asq.org/quality-resources/problem-solving.

thirteen qualitative studies, nine quantitative studies, two descriptive analysis studies, two action research studies, one literature review, one survey study, and one meta-analysis. Qualitative research was the most engaging for this researcher. Four of the qualitative studies used a questionnaire to gather data, similar to this research. Additionally, five of the qualitative studies used content analysis, coding, and categorization to analyze data; this researcher adopted this approach. Also, two of the qualitative studies employed case study method, which this researcher also used. Finally, three of the qualitative studies reached findings similar to this researcher. Specifically, discipline issues included students talking, students not listening to the instructor, and students being non-attentive.

From another perspective, five of the studies reviewed focused on religious settings. The first two were Catholic schools, the third one was an Evangelical church, the fourth study was in Indonesia with students who identified as Christians and Muslims. The fifth was a Christian study which iterated that Black boys were disproportionally disciplined and received harsher punishment for behavioral infractions than other students. Raised in a Black culture this researcher can identify with the students cited. Additionally, coming from a Baptist perspective this researcher is open to religious freedom for all.

Introduction to Review of Literature

According to the University of South Carolina, the literature review provides foundation of knowledge on the topic, identifies areas of prior scholarship to prevent duplication and gives credit to other researchers, determines the need for additional research, and allows the researcher to place their own research within the context of existing literature and make a case for further

study.[3] Additionally, the University of Tampa notes that the literature review analyzes relationships and connections among different works. Further, according to this source, the Literature Review compares and contrasts reviews, identifies areas of consensus and dissent, reveals gaps or oversights, points out approaches and methodologies, and examines methodological strengths and weaknesses.[4]

The literature review revealed problems of student discipline as it relates to children ranging in age from five to eighteen years from three distinct perspectives: church settings (five studies), public school settings in the United States (twelve studies), and public-school settings internationally (twelve studies). The three perspectives reviewed data over a twenty-six-year period from 1995 to 2021. The three perspectives confirmed children at times do present maladaptive behavior during instruction. The coping mechanism used by teachers in the three identified settings was similar. While a plurality of research related to discipline problems in public school settings, there was significantly less research related to discipline problems in church settings. Thus, there appears to be a need for comprehensive, in-depth research to review discipline issues with children in church settings. Specifically, race and gender factors related to Christian teachers and Christian schools needs greater exploration. This researcher contends that the potential for disproportionality in discipline in churches and Christian schools must be examined and provide solutions sought as warranted.

The research methodologies in the Literature Review (Chapter Two) presented broad and varied perspectives. Multiple methods of data collection and data analysis provided insight on

[3] "Literature Review: Learning to Write a Systematic Review of Literature," *Upstate University of South Carolina*, updated May 23, 2022, https://uscupstate.libguides.com/literature.

[4] "Literature Review," *University of Tampa*, updated January 21, 2022, https://utopia.ut.edu/literaturereviews.

how research might be approached. This research project centered on the qualitative approaches to research; thus, the researcher gained valuable practical knowledge. Additionally, studies conducted in Indiana, Turkey, Hong Kong, and Indonesia, that used questionnaires and interviews to collect data, and that analyzed data via content analyses (i.e., coding and categorization and interpreted by patterns and themes) had relevance for this study. Also, of particular interest was the case study conducted in Ghana since this researcher proposes to conduct a case study. Finally, convenience sampling noted in the Turkey and Australia studies allowed this researcher to gain insight from experienced researchers.

Literature Review

An ethnographic study was guided by Chang-Yau Hoon. The purpose of the study was to "explain the disciplinary technologies, i.e., systems of rewards and punishment deployed by the school in its inoculation of discipline and character building."[5] The participants were senior school administrators, pastors, teachers, counselors, students and parents.[6] Hoon conducted twenty-two individual, semi-structured interviews and five focus group discussions, as well as observations of students in classes.[7] The research focused on two senior high schools. One was located in the Chinatown area of Jakarta catering to lower-middle class Chinese students. The second school was located in a residential estate in west Jakarta and offered education to a middle- and upper-class Chinese population.[8] The majority of teachers were Christians, although

[5] Chang-Yau Hoon, "God and Discipline: Religious Education and Character Building in a Christian School in Jakarta," *South East Asia Research* 22, no. 4 (December 1, 2014): 505, https://doi.org/10.53697/sear.2014.0232.

[6] Ibid., 510.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

two were Muslim.[9] Hoon detailed five findings. First, the students successfully internalized the discourse of discipline and character building at school; for example, "students noted rules and discipline at school were strict." Second, the schools had a set of comprehensive and strict regulations with administration of penalty points to students who broke the rules. Penalty was rendered in relation to the severity of the misconduct. Additionally, rewards were given to conforming students. Third, students residing in the lower-middle-class environment were considered loud, less refined, and less sophisticated in comparison to students residing in the upper-middle-class environment. Fourth, most of the teachers attributed the students' behavior to their social class background. Social class was deemed an important factor in the execution of disciplinary technologies. Finally, some teachers were reluctant to take disciplinary action against students, fearing complaints from their parents.[10] Lower-class students presented more discipline problem than upper-middle-class students. This might also be prevalent in many public schools.

Alysia Haveman examined "belief systems as they relate to classroom management and weighed them against a Christian Worldview."[11] This thesis was undertaken at Dordt University, a private and nonprofit evangelical university with an annual enrollment of about eighteen hundred students in Iowa.[12] Haveman found three belief systems impacted classroom management. According to Haveman, the first belief system was the behaviorist approach that hinged on positive reinforcement or a rewards system for desired behavior, while punishment or

[9] Hoon, "God and Discipline," 510.

[10] Ibid., 521.

[11] Alysia A. Havenman, "Christian Approach to Secondary Classroom Management," (MEd thesis, Dordt University, 2012), iv, https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/med_theses/32.

[12] "Dordt University Has Largest Enrollment Ever," *Dordt University*, September 12, 2022, https://www.dort.edu/news/dordt-university-has-largest-enrollment-ever-2.

negative reinforcement was employed for non-desirable behavior. Special privileges and behavior certificates the author noted could serve as a reward, while punishment could have included warnings, detention, or office referrals. The second, a humanistic or democratic belief system, focused on respect and dignity. According to Haveman, this belief system encouraged genuine caring and role-modeling by teachers. This approach allowed teachers to talk to students about how to remedy disruptive behavior. The third belief system was a Christian belief system.[13] Haveman noted a Christian belief system of classroom management followed three principles: each member of the classroom is created in the image of God, every member of the classroom has been affected by sin, and redemption as a central classroom theme.[14] This belief system allowed teachers to aid students in the development of right and wrong through modeling, imposing consequences, and loving them unconditionally.[15] The goal of discipline was positive redirecting of student behavior.[16] However, Haveman indicated students may lose privileges for minor behavioral infractions or be suspended for more serious misbehaviors.[17] This researcher sees merit in the three belief systems iterated by Haveman, but places greater credence in the Christian belief system, since it centers on the Bible.

Robert Fox, Colleen Terry, and Theresa Fox published a study in the Journal of Research on Christian Education. The purpose of this study was to develop a comprehensive discipline program for a suburban Catholic School focused around themes of respect, spirituality, and

[13] Havenman, "Christian Approach," 6-19.

[14] Ibid., 19.

[15] Ibid., 20.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., 21.

responsibility.[18] They studied four hundred and eighty students enrolled in a K-8 catholic elementary school. The discipline policies in place were varied by grade level.[19] At the K-3 level "no general discipline procedures were in place instead, teachers used individual methods for developing positive classroom behavior, like loss of recess for disruptive behavior."[20] In fourth through sixth grades, students received conduct tabulations recorded in teachers' books for behaviors like being disrespectful to adults or fellow students.[21] Finally, the oldest students received verbal warnings or detention for behaviors that interfered with a positive learning environment.[22] The researchers developed a new model of school discipline through the recommendations from principals, teachers, students, parents, parish committees, and pastoral staff and subsequently implemented them. Later surveys were administered to students, teachers, and parents to assess the new standards.[23] Fox, Terry, and Fox found that 98 percent of parents and 100 percent of the teachers responded favorably to the new standards.[24] They also found 72 percent of students agreed with detention, 64 percent agreed with the use of behavior checks, and 50 percent agreed with study checks.[25] Fox, Terry, and Fox noted no general discipline procedures were in place for the younger students, but teachers used individual methods for

[18] Robert Fox, Colleen Terry, and Theresa Fox, "Christian School Discipline: A Collaborative Approach to Improving Student Behavior," *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 4, no.2 (Fall 1995): 1, http://epublications.marquette.edu/edu_fac/218.

[19] Ibid., 2.

[20] Ibid., 3.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 4.

[23] Ibid., 5-8.

[24] Ibid., 9.

[25] Ibid.

developing positive classroom behavior.[26] Younger children were not guided by rules of discipline and older children were more prone to having behavior controlled by warnings or detention.

A meta-analysis published in the Christian Educational Journal conducted by Little and Tolbert examined this problem: "In Christian, private, and public schools, Black boys are forced to endure educational environments that promulgate the stereotype of their supposed intellectual inadequacy and troublesome behavior."[27] The goal of this research was to "examine how racial and gender stereotypes illustrate the educational plight of Black boys, and negatively influence teacher expectations, pedagogy, curricula, institutional climate culture, student assessment, and disciplinary matters."[28] The study found "in three hundred and sixty-four elementary and middle schools, Black boys were overrepresented in office referrals, corporal punishment, and expulsion from school for behavior that was similar to their White male peers."[29] Little and Tolbert wrote that according to Gilliam et al., bias begins in pre-school when Black boys are exploited at disproportionate rates.[30] This project proposes it is crucial for teachers in church settings to be fair in implementing discipline. Specifically, race, gender, and culture should not be factors in discipling children. The book of Matthew implores "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:39, NIV).

Little and Tolbert also researched a study of Minneapolis schools where Black students represented 41 percent of overall student population, but made up 76 percent of the

[26] Fox, Terry, and Fox, "Christian School Discipline," 3.

[27] Little and Tolbert, "The Problem with Black Boys," 408.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid., 410.

[30] Ibid., 411.

suspensions.[31] Additionally, in a study of 3,900 public middle and high schools in Texas, Little and Tolbert found that suspensions and expulsions of Black students may contribute to high dropout rates and involvement in the criminal justice system.[32] They noted research conducted by Badger et al. and Noguera found that Black school-age boys are more likely to be disciplined and experience increased rates of suspension and expulsion from school.[33] Little and Tolbert examined a study conducted by Grissom and Redding in which African American students with comparable test scores to White students are underrepresented in gifted programs.[34] Finally, Little and Tolbert highlighted a study by DeCastro-Ambrosetti, Cho, and Rist which found teachers own prejudices against Black students resulted in lower expectations, which ultimately affected the academic achievement of Black students.[35] This researcher believes teachers must expect the best from all students without regard to race, wealth, power, or other non-essential factors. Thus, this researcher urgently implores teachers in a church setting to set standards (even when disciplining) that promote love and healthy self-esteem. The Scripture reads, "Love is patient, [love] does not dishonor others" (1 Cor 13:4-5, NIV).

Daniel Philippe et al. conducted a study published in the Journal of Catholic Education. The focus of the study was to evaluate written discipline policies of Catholic high schools in the midwestern Unites States.[36] Philippe et al. used descriptive analysis to identify behaviors

[31] Little and Tolbert, "The Problem with Black Boys," 411.

[32] Ibid., 410.

[33] Ibid., 412.

[34] Ibid., 413.

[35] Ibid., 416.

[36] Daniel Philippe et al., "A Content Analysis of Catholic School Written Discipline Policies," *Journal of Catholic Education* 21, no. 1, article 2 (October 2017): 10, http://dx.doi.org/10.15365/joce.2101022017.

commonly included in Catholic high school discipline policies and consequences.[37] The sample represented thirty-five Catholic high schools. Each school's policies were coded and included misbehaviors and consequences.[38] These misbehaviors were characterized mild, moderate, and severe and the data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The researchers detailed the frequency of mild behavioral infractions in school policies: truancy was in 100 percent of the discipline policies; dress code violations and tardiness was in 97 percent of the discipline policies included; food/beverages and gum violations were in 91 percent; and cheating or plagiarism were found in 85 percent of the discipline policies. Philippe et al. also reported the consequences of violating the mild infractions. That is, truancy leading to expulsion was in 58 percent of the discipline policies and cheating/plagiarism expulsion in 52 percent of the discipline policies.[39] Philippe et al. described moderate behavior infractions, like fighting with peers and vandalism in 94 percent of the policies and bulling/cyberbullying in 85 percent of the discipline policies were noted and their consequences examined. Vandalism led to expulsion in 73 percent of the discipline policies. Fighting with peers resulted in expulsion in 67 percent of the policies. Bulling/cyberbullying led to expulsion in 58 percent of the discipline policies.[40] Philippe et al. wrote that severe behavioral infractions included alcohol and/or drug offenses (in 97 percent of discipline policies) and theft/burglary (in 91 percent). Alcohol offenses required expulsion in 94 percent of the discipline policies. Drug offenses merited expulsion in 94 percent of the policies. Theft/burglary offenses required expulsion in 79 percent of the discipline policies. Weapons

[37] Philippe et al., "A Content Analysis," 10.

[38] Ibid., 11.

[39] Ibid., 13.

[40] Ibid., 14.

offenses also resulted in expulsion in 79 percent of the policies. Gang behavioral offenses mandated expulsion in 64 percent of the discipline policies.[41] Phillippe et al. highlighted policies of Catholic high schools that set standards for discipline that could be employed in secular institutions. Faith-based institutions and constituencies should be the pillars of society. Therefore, this researcher believes that some students may not have been trained as young children to be orderly in faith-based institutions, resulting in disruptive behavior. The Bible is the foundation for godly living and anything in contrast to God's Word is unacceptable in church settings.

A study by Michael Tulley and Lian Hwang Chiu was published in the Journal of Educational Research. The purpose of this study was to "investigate student teachers' perceptions about the discipline problems they encountered during student teaching of elementary and secondary students and to examine strategies they used when dealing with these problems."[42] The participants were one hundred and thirty-five undergraduate student teachers affiliated with Indiana University. The sample included one hundred and nineteen women and sixteen men.[43] Data was collected by "detailed written narrative responses and analyzed using content analysis," i.e., the teacher's responses were coded and subsequently placed into categories.[44] Tulley and Chiu noted three findings. First, the majority of discipline problems were related to disruption, defiance, and inattention. Second, almost all incidents were managed effectively. Third, despite the ages of students, there were similarities in discipline problems

[41] Philippe et al., "A Content Analysis," 14.

[42] Michael Tulley and Lian Hwang Chiu, "Student Teachers and Classroom Discipline," *The Journal of Educational Research* 88, no. 3 (January 1995): 164, https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.1995.9941295.

[43] Ibid., 164.

[44] Ibid., 164-65.

described and the strategies they used to deal with behavior.[45] This researcher posits teachers in church settings experience some of the same disciplinary issues teachers encounter in primary and secondary schools. Thus, intervention is paramount to mitigate chaos.

A study conducted by Jeffrey Jordan and Bulent Anil was published in the Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics. The participants were eighth grade students enrolled in four Georgia middle schools between the years 2006 and 2008. This was a quantitative research study that used "an Ordered Logit Model to estimate the odds of a student having a higher number of discipline referrals."[46] The researchers tested two hypotheses: (1) the odds of a student being referred for disciplinary action increased if the student is male, Black, in special education classes or is poor; gender and (2) race of teachers who referred students for disciplinary action had a significant impact on the first hypothesis.[47] Jordan and Anil noted Black boys were disproportionately underrepresented in the lower categories of discipline referrals (i.e., non-serious offenses) and over-represented in the higher categories of discipline referrals for more serious offenses. They further illustrated that children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, measured by free and reduced lunches, were less represented in the lower categories of discipline referrals and over-represented in higher discipline referral categories. Gifted students and special education students were less likely to have a high number of referrals compared to other students.[48] Jordan and Anil found no significant difference between female and male teachers, when only considering gender of the teachers. However, a Black student was

[45] Tulley and Chiu, "Student Teachers," 164-65.

[46] Jeffrey Jordan and Bulent Anil, "Race, Gender, School Discipline, and Human Capital Effects," *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics* 41, no. 2 (August 2009): 420, https://doi.org/10.1017/ S1074070800002893.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., 424.

1.4 times more likely to be sent to the office by a Black male teacher than any other race.[49] According to Jordan and Anil, the gender of the teacher was not relevant to how students were disciplined in the classroom.[50] Jordan and Anil's research demonstrated race as a major criterion for discipline. This researcher did not include race, gender, or lower socio-economic factors impacting student discipline. However, it is hoped these are not factors for the teachers in this study.

Constance Lindsay and Cassandra Hart published a study in the Journal of Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis. The purpose was to "explore whether exposure to same race teachers affects the rate at which Black students receive exclusionary discipline such as out of school suspensions, in-school suspensions, and expulsions."[51] The sample included elementary, middle, and high school students enrolled in North Carolina public schools during school years 2007- 2013.[52] The dependent variable was the measure of student exposure to exclusionary disciplinary consequences, such as in-school suspension, out of school suspensions, or expulsions.[53] Lindsay and Hart noted the predictor variable [manipulated or independent] was the proportion of teachers who were Black or non-Black.[54] Lindsay and Hart found exposure to Black teachers was associated with lower discipline rates for Black students across elementary, middle, and high school grades. The foregoing findings were true for subsidized lunch categories

[49] Jordan and Anil, "Race, Gender," 425-26.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Constance A. Lindsay and Cassandra M. D. Hart, "Exposure to Same Race Teachers and Student Disciplinary Outcomes for Black Students in North Carolina," *Journal of Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 39, no. 3 (September 2017): 485, https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373717693109.

[52] Ibid., 489.

[53] Ibid., 491.

[54] Ibid.

and all grades. Black students saw modest, but consistent reductions in exclusionary discipline exposure when they were matched with larger numbers of Black teachers and also, Black teachers were associated with fewer office referrals.[55] This researcher suggests Lindsay and Hart's results may indicate that the students were less inclined to misbehave because they felt a commonality or bond with their teachers because of race or that Black teachers were less inclined to report misconduct of Black students to their superiors because they feared harsher student punishment. In this researcher's study, teachers rarely reported student discipline issues to their highest-level supervisors.

Nathan Barret et al. oversaw a study published in the Journal of Education Research Alliance examining disparities in student discipline. The purpose of this study was to "examine gaps in exclusionary discipline [practices] between Black and White students and poor and non-poor students during school year 2000-2014."[56] Students in grades K-12 in Louisiana public schools and charter schools represented the sample in the study. Barret et al. noted 83 percent of Black students and 42 percent of White students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.[57] The researchers coded race into three categories: Black (46 percent of sample), White (48 percent of sample), and other races (5 percent of sample). Male students were 51 percent of the sample; female students accounted for 49 percent and students with disabilities 12 percent.[58] The researchers examined discipline gaps across districts, across schools, within same districts, and within schools. Regression models were used to examine the size and predictions of various

[55] Lindsay and Hart, "Exposure to Same Race Teachers," 492-97.

[56] Nathan Barret et al., "Disparities in Student Discipline by Race and Family Income," *Education Research Alliance*, updated January 4, 2018, 4, https://educationresearchalliancenola.org/files/publications/ 010418-Barret-McEachin-Mills-Valent-Disparities-in-Student-Discipline-by-Race-and-Family-Income.pdf.

[57] Ibid., 14.

[58] Ibid.

types of disparities. The researchers studied discriminatory school practices by comparing the punishments when Black and White, or poor and non-poor students, got into fights with each other.[59] Barret et al. found Black students accounted for 46 percent of student population, but 67 percent of student suspensions. Poor students were 62 percent of the population, but 74 percent of suspensions. Black and poor students were more likely than their peers to be suspended for both non-violent and violent infractions. When Black and White students with similar discipline records fought each other, Black students tended to receive slightly longer suspensions.[60] Barret et al. illustrated harsher discipline when students were identified as Black and poor. Discipline must be implemented fairly and justly without regard to race and family economics. The Scripture teaches there is a penalty for the wrong that people do. Paul reads, "For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality" (Col 3:25, ESV).

Kaitlin Anderson et al. published a study to "estimate the relationship between seven types of disciplinary responses to student behavior and two academic outcomes, i.e., math test scores and grade retention" in the Journal of Educational Research.[61] Anderson, Ritter, and Zamarro noted seven disciplinary responses/consequences of maladaptive behavior: (1) in-school suspension (noted 37.3 percent of the time); (2) non-specific consequences (noted 27 percent of the time); (3) out of school suspension (noted 21.8 percent of the time); (4) corporal punishment (noted 12.6 percent of the time); (5) no action (noted 0.8 percent of the time); (6) referral to alternative learning environment (noted 0.3 percent of the time); and (7) expulsion (noted 0.1

[59] Barret et al., "Disparities in Student Discipline," 16.

[60] Ibid., 14-15, 40.

[61] Kaitlin Anderson, Gary Ritter, and Gema Zamarro, "Understanding a Vicious Cycle: The Relationship Between Student Discipline and Student Academic Outcomes," *Educational Researcher* 48, no. 5 (2019): 251, https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X19848720.

percent of the time).[62] To estimate the relationship between each consequence type and two academic outcomes, math test scores and grade retention, the researchers used a linear regression model incorporating only the school year 2016-2017. This study included all K-12 public schools in Arkansas for school years 2007-2008 through 2016-2017, a ten-year period.[63] The researchers found exclusionary consequences related to poor academic outcomes (i.e., lower math test scores and higher rates of grade retention). According to Anderson et al., replacing out of school suspension with in-school suspension did not eliminate academic decline of disciplined students; that is, in-school suspension was also associated with negative academic outcomes for students. The researchers noted that the first student disciplinary consequence in a given year was associated with larger academic decline. They further noted that regarding grade retention, the association between suspensions, expulsions, and negative academic outcomes was larger for students from historically underserved backgrounds. Less exclusionary consequences like Saturday school, detentions, and parent/guardian conferences were associated with better outcomes, relative to both out of school suspension and in-school suspension.[64] There appears to be a relationship between low math test scores and higher-grade retention for students exhibiting maladaptive behavior. Misbehaving students seem to perform poorly academically as it relates to actual academic grades and promotion to the next grade level. It also appears students identified from "underserved backgrounds," might be seen as Black and poor.

[62] Anderson, Ritter and Zamarro, "Understanding a Vicious Cycle," 253.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid., 254-59.

Andy Whisman and Patricia Hammer conducted a study published by the West Virginia Department of Education Office of Research. The purpose of this study was to "examine the academic performance of students who behave inappropriately as a result of being referred for disciplinary intervention."[65] It was a quantitative research study; three research questions (RQs) were presented. RQ1—Are students with discipline referrals for inappropriate behaviors at increased odds of scoring below mathematics proficiency compared to students with no discipline referrals? RQ2—Does the level of disciplinary involvement, i.e., the number of discipline referrals, increase the odds of scoring below mathematics proficiency? RQ3—Do the odds of scoring below mathematics proficiency vary by disciplinary involvement, i.e., student race, disability status, or socioeconomic status?[66] Whisman and Hammer's study included 160,480 students enrolled in third though eleventh grades in public school districts in West Virginia during the 2012-2013 school year.[67] These students were evenly divided by gender and grade level. However, White students represented 91 percent of the sample, Black students 5.2 percent, and other races 3.3 percent.[68] Additionally, 49.3 percent of the students were eligible for free or reduced lunch, while 13.8 percent of the students had disabilities.[69] Fort-five percent of students scored at or above proficient levels of mastery in mathematics.[70] The dependent variable in the study was academic performance as measured by mastery of mathematics, while the

[65] Andy Whisman and Patricia Cahape Hammer, "The Association Between School Discipline and Mathematics Performance: A Case for Positive Discipline Approaches," *West Virginia Department of Education*, September 2014, 3, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED569903.pdf.

[66] Ibid., 3-4.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., 5.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

independent variable was discipline referrals.[71] Additionally, the Chi Square Tests and Binary Logistic Regression Analysis was used to test the null hypothesis (no differences) and (no interactions).[72] On RQ1, the data suggested students with one or more discipline referrals were 2.4 times more likely to score below proficiency in math than their counterparts with no discipline referrals. Regarding RQ2, there was sufficient evidence students with two to four referrals were about 2.7 times more likely to score below proficiency in math, whereas students with five or more referrals were about 4.6 times less likely to reach proficiency. On RQ3, whether the association between disciplinary involvement and academic performance varied by disability, socioeconomic status, and race,[73] "the data indicated that disciplinary involvement increased students' likelihood of performing poorly academically; that is students with disabilities, were at an increased odds of scoring below proficiency, as were students with economic challenges and Black students."[74] Whisman and Hammer illustrated that those students with disciplinary issues that performed poorly academically were also, economically poor, and Black.[75] This researcher did not attempt to determine if there was a relationship between students exhibiting discipline issues and their race or economic status. However, this might be researched in studies that follow in the future.

A study by Russell Skiba et al. was published in the Journal of School Psychology Review. The purpose of this study was to describe a national investigation exploring the extent

[71] Whisman and Hammer, "The Association Between School Discipline," 5.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid., 6-9.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

of, and patterns in, racial and ethnic disparities in school discipline at the Elementary and Middle School level.[76] The participants were drawn from four hundred and thirty-six schools. The research included 120,148 elementary (K-6 grade level) students and 60,522 middle school (seventh through ninth grade) students.[77] This was a quantitative research study involving descriptive statistics, and logistic regression analysis to analyze data. Skiba et al. addressed two research questions (RQs). First, to what extent does racial/ethnic status contribute to rates of office discipline referrals (ODRs) in elementary or middle school? Second, in which categories of ODRs are racial or ethnic disparities evident?[78] Skiba et al. found African American elementary students were overrepresented among those referred for ODRs. Skiba et al. also noted that Black students represented 25.8 percent of the total school enrollment, but 35.3 percent of ODRs. White and Hispanic/Latino students were underrepresented relative to enrollment among those referred to the office in elementary school. The researchers further noted that in middle school, African American students were overrepresented and White students underrepresented in the rate of ODRs compared to percentage of the sample. Hispanic/Latino students appeared to be roughly proportionately represented in middle school ODRs.[79] The researchers revealed that at both the elementary and middle school levels, African American students were significantly overrepresented in ODRs across all infraction types: tardiness, truancy, disruption, and noncompliance. The researchers' study illustrated that elementary Hispanic/Latino students were underrepresented compared with White students in ODRs for

[76] Russell J. Skiba, et al., "Race is Not Neutral: A National Investigation of African American and Latino Disproportionality in School Discipline," *School Psychology Review* 40, no. 1 (2011): 88-89, https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2011-07091-006.

[77] Ibid., 90.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid., 92.

minor misbehaviors, disruption, noncompliance and moderate infractions. Middle school Hispanic/Latino students appeared to be overrepresented relative to White students for all ODR categories.[80] Skiba et al.'s research illustrated that racial disparity in classroom discipline is an issue of great concern and that fair treatment of all students must prevail.

A study conducted by Prasetyarini, Hikmat, and Thoyibi was published in the Indonesian Journal of Learning and Advanced Education. The purpose of this study was to identify discipline problems faced by senior high school teachers in Indonesia and to determine the strategies used by teachers to cope with discipline problems.[81] This was a qualitative research study involving thirty high school teachers and thirty students randomly selected as participants. The participants were administered a questionnaire, followed-up with interviews.[82] Data was analyzed using a coding mechanism which looked for similar words or phrases in the participants' responses to the questionnaire and interviews. Subsequently, "similar codes were grouped into categories."[83] Prasetyarini, Hikmat, and Thoyibi found students were not listening to the teacher, not paying attention to their lessons, and talking during instruction. Teachers used corporal punishment, classroom cleaning, and rote learning of religious material to have students internalize the rules.[84]

A study was published in the Journal of Educational Sciences on classroom management by Mehmet Erdogan et al. The purpose of the study was to "reveal misbehaviors and discipline

[80] Skiba, et al., "Race is Not Neutral," 93.

[81] Aryati Prasetyarini, Mauly Halwat Hikmat, and Muhammad Thoyibi, "Strategies to Cope with Students Discipline Problems in Senior High School," *Indonesian Journal on Learning and Advance Education* 3, no.1 (January 2021): 40, http://doi.org/10.23917/ijolae.v3il.9474.

[82] Ibid., 41.

[83] Ibid., 41-42.

[84] Ibid., 42.

problems that information technology teachers encountered in primary and secondary schools in Turkey."[85] This was a qualitative research study with participants selected through convenience sampling. The participants included fourteen school principals and vice principals, fourteen information technology teachers, and seventeen family members of children enrolled in information technology courses.[86] Each category of participants was interviewed and data was collected. The researchers used coding and categories to analyze the data.[87] The discipline problems and misbehavior encountered by teachers were students listening to music in class, noisily talking, walking aimlessly, and inappropriately using classroom materials.[88] This researcher used content analysis, i.e., coding, and categorization. Additionally, similar disciplinary issues were found by this researcher to include students talking and students being inattentive.

Rachel Sun and Daniel Shek conducted a research study published in the Scientific World Journal. The purpose of the study was "to examine classroom misbehavior from the perspective of students".[89] The participants were eighteen students in seventh through ninth grades in three different Hong Kong schools. The participants had low, medium, or high academic competencies. The students were randomly selected by their teachers and consisted of nine boys and nine girls. The primary instrument was audiotaped and transcribed interviews.

[85] Mehmet Erdogan et al., "A Qualitative Study on Classroom Management and Classroom Discipline Problems, Reasons, and Solutions: A Case of Information Technologies Class," *Journal of Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice* 10, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 881, https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ889196.

[86] Ibid., 885.

[87] Ibid., 886.

[88] Ibid., 887.

[89] Rachel Sun and Daniel Shek, "Classroom Misbehavior in the Eyes of Students: A Qualitative Study," *The Scientific World Journal* 2012 (July 31, 2012): 2, https://doi.org/10.1100/2012/398482.

Data was coded using similar wording or phrases then placed into categories of similar codes.[90] The researchers also used observations to identify student misbehavior.[91] Sun and Shek identified several misbehaviors, i.e., students were out of seats and sleeping; talking out of turn; disrespecting the teacher (e.g., refusing to follow instructions, talking back, and arguing); utilizing verbal and physical aggression; and engaging in other student misbehaviors like non-attentiveness, making noise, and playing.[92] This researcher used coding and categorization to analyze data. Additionally, the study findings in Sun and Shek's research was similar to this researcher's findings, i.e., students talking and being inattentive.

Ramon Lewis published a study in the Journal of Psychology of Education. The purpose of this study was to "assess teachers' level of concern about discipline in fifteen government secondary schools in metropolitan Melbourne, Australia."[93] The participants were a convenience sample of one hundred and ninety-four teachers, 60 percent women and 40 percent men, representing fifteen schools.[94] Questionnaires evaluated three discipline models: (1) teachers control student behavior with rules, rewards, and consequences; (2) teachers manage classrooms by allowing students to make their own decisions; and (3) teachers influence students to decide to behave well. Many teachers used the first approach to discipline students based on clear rules, punishment for misbehavior, and rewards for good behavior.[95] Teachers who professed more

[90] Sun and Shek, "Classroom Misbehavior in the Eyes of Students," 2-3.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid., 3-6.

[93] Ramon Lewis, "Teachers Coping with the Stress of Classroom Discipline," *Journal of Social Psychology of Education* 3 (September 1999): 155, https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1009627827937.

[94] Ibid., 160.

[95] Ibid., 158-59.

desire to involve students in classroom decision-making (the second and third model) and less desire to control them reported most concern about the inability to discipline classes.[96] Lewis noted teachers encountered less stress when they put more time into their work and when they sought support from others.[97] Additionally, women were more likely than men to respond to stress by working hard and sharing their concern with others.[98] Like Lewis's study, this researcher used convenience sampling and questionnaires and addressed the coping strategies of teachers. It seems reasonable for teachers to encounter less stress when they receive support from other teachers, professionals and parents. Finally, clearly stated rules that govern student behavior appears to be paramount for classroom management.

Nicholas Simba et al.'s study in the Journal of Education and Practice "determined the extent of discipline on academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Kenya."[99] The researchers used a questionnaire to collect data on discipline and academic performance, evaluating "pupil academic performance was based on teacher ratings of pupils."[100] Simba et al. noted discipline related positively with academic performance, that is, an increase in discipline corresponded to an increase in poor academic performance.[101] It would appear that the goals of secular schools centers on students performing satisfactorily academically with few or no

[96] Lewis, "Teachers Coping with the Stress of Classroom Discipline," 158-59.

[97] Ibid., 162.

[98] Ibid., 164.

[99] Nicholas Simba, John Agak, and Eric Kabuka, "Impact of Discipline on Academic Performance of Pupils in Public Primary Schools in Huhoroni Sub-County, Kenya," *Journal of Education and Practice* 7, no. 6 (2016): 164, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1092484.pdf.

[100] Ibid., 166.

[101] Ibid., 167-69.

discipline issues. Similarly in religious schools the goal is for students to learn from Biblical teachings and to behave appropriately.

A study was conducted by Samuel Amoah et al. published in the British Journal of Psychology Research to explore teacher and student perceptions on disciplinary strategies in two Junior High Schools in Ghana.[102] A random sample of participants included twelve teachers and twenty-four students. The researchers used interviews and observations to collect the data that was analyzed using a thematic approach, i.e., the researchers looked for common themes offered by the respondents.[103] Amoah et al. noted four themes: judgmental, supportive, evaluative, and interpretative."[104] Judgmental teachers employed discipline instructively and sought clarification before administering discipline. Supportive teachers were empathetic in applying discipline. Evaluative teachers relied on using discipline measures adopted by the school. Finally, interpretive teachers carefully considered the outcomes before administering discipline.[105] It is difficult to ascertain if the teachers in this researcher's study applied the themes, herein identified. However, all four themes appear to have merit as it relates to student discipline. Proverbs 13:16 appears to apply to all four themes, i.e., "Wise people think before they act: fools don't and even brag about their foolishness."

A study by Ali et al. published in the Journal of Social and Behavioral Sciences was examined. The purpose of this study was to "determine the most frequently encountered

[102] Samuel Amoah, et al., "Managing School Discipline: The Students' and Teachers' Perception on Disciplinary Strategies," *British Journal of Psychology Research* 3, no.2 (June 2015): 1, www.ejournals.org.

[103] Ibid., 5-6.

[104] Ibid., 7.

[105] Ibid.

disciplinary problems in elementary schools (6th, 7th and 8th grade) in Istanbul."[106] The sample included five hundred and fifty-four teachers, three hundred and eight women and two hundred and forty-six men from fifty-five elementary schools.[107] The researchers used a Likert Scale which included thirty-two disciplinary problems and SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software analysis.[108] The most frequent disciplinary problems were wandering in class, interrupting the teacher, making noise, speaking without permission, not doing homework, littering, not participating in the lessons, and using rude words.[109] The researchers found that senior teachers and male teachers encountered less disciplinary problems in comparison with junior teachers and female teachers; however, female teachers punished students more often.[110] This researcher experienced a similar gender issue with males when a few students refused to listen when told to be seated during Vacation Bible School. However, when the deacon came into the classroom, students immediately obeyed.

Horace Duffy III conducted a quantitative research study. It presented two research questions: "How does the use of disciplinary action vary by racial composition? How does the use of disciplinary action vary by student characteristics, i.e., race, gender, economic disadvantage, [and] aptitude?"[111] The participants were 199,549 students in kindergarten through twelfth grades, drawn from the Houston Independent School District (HISD) during school year

[106] Hamedoglu Mehmet Ali et al., "Encountered Disciplinary Problems in Elementary Schools of a Low Socioeconomically Status District," *Journal of Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 55 (October 5, 2012): 502, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.09.530.

[107] Ali et al., "Encountered Disciplinary Problems," 506.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid., 507.

[110] Ibid., 508-09.

[111] Horace J. Duffy III, " Predictors of School Discipline," *RICE/HERC* 6, no. 4, (September 2018): 3, https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED598189.

2014-2015.[112] The dependent variables included out of school suspensions (OSS), in school suspensions (ISS), assignment to alternative education programs, disciplinary action related to truancy, and other state reported disciplinary violations.[113] Predictor variables were race/ethnicity, gender, grade level, special education assignment, gifted/talented, and homelessness and economic disadvantage.[114] Duffy found that Black, male, special education, homeless, and economically disadvantaged students were overrepresented among disciplined students. Intermediate, middle, and high school students had higher odds of being disciplined compared to elementary students. Duffy further noted that Black students were 3.85 times more likely to receive either an ISS or OSS compared to White students. Duffy found that male students were about three times more likely to be disciplined than female students. He also found that special education students were about 10 percent more likely to be disciplined, while gifted/talented students were about 61 percent less likely to be disciplined. Economically disadvantaged students were about 11 percent more often disciplined compared to students with no economic disadvantage and homeless students were 14 percent more likely to be disciplined compared to their peers.[115] This researcher also found that there was a higher tendency to need discipline for middle school children than elementary children. In fact, this researcher found little to no disciplinary issues with the younger group of children. The prevailing problem appears to be disproportional discipline of students who are male, in special education, poor, and/or Black.

[112] Duffy III, " Predictors of School Discipline," 4.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid., 5-6.

Dorothy Joy Sichon and Eugenio Guhao Jr. conducted a qualitative phenomenological study to understand and interpret the experiences of thirteen school heads of elementary and secondary schools in the Philippines related to implementing effective student discipline.[116] The purpose of this study was to "set out ideas, knowledge and understanding on the challenges in the implementation of student discipline."[117] They gathered data through interviews and focus group discussions which were transcribed, translated, and coded to produce themes.[118] In a similar fashion, the purpose of this researcher's study was to understand discipline issues experienced by teachers in child ministry programs. Sichon and Guhao noted six themes with supporting core ideas. First, parental participation and involvement of parents in implementing student discipline and parents and faculty crafting discipline policies together. Second, parental inattention and non-engagement occurred when parents entrusted the entire discipline to the schools. Third, the child protection policy was used as a basis for discipline action. Fourth was diverse levels of teacher acceptance of student discipline implementation. Fifth, teachers were unhappy because they could not apply the desired discipline and some opposed the school's policy, preferring corporal punishment. Teacher inadequacies and inconsistencies occurred when some teachers needed further seminars regarding student discipline. Sixth, continued indiscipline of students involved students no longer deterred by their teachers, students lacking respect, and lacking courtesy and deference, and students involved in vicious gangs.[119] Coping mechanisms employed by school heads included parental engagement and collaboration, provision of teacher

[116] Dorothy Joy S. Sichon and Eugenio S. Guhao Jr., "Implementing an Effective Student Discipline: School Heads' Perspective," *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research* 9, no. 3 (March 2020): 3168-69.

[117] Ibid., 3169.

[118] Ibid., 3169, 3174-75.

[119] Ibid., 3175-76.

guidance and support, positive discipline, and creative approaches approaching indiscipline on a case-by-case basis.[120] Finally, the study reported the school heads' insights, i.e., they expressed that parental involvement was essential to student discipline and the most effective strategy was the involvement of all stakeholders. This researcher is of the opinion that schools should be steadfast in the implementation of discipline policies. This researcher is also of the opinion that teachers need the broad-based support of parents and all stakeholders. Finally, this researcher believes student discipline is essential in the classroom to mitigate chaos. Scripture reads, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing" (1 Thess 5:11, NIV).

A study by Colleen Eddy et al., published in a Psychology Review, was designed to explore the following question: "Does teacher emotional exhaustion and efficacy predict student discipline [sanctions]?"[121] The study examined the association between teacher emotional exhaustion and efficacy to student discipline resulting in ODRs, ISSs, and OSSs.[122] This was a quantitative study using multilevel logistics regression model. The sample included one hundred and five teachers and 1,681 kindergarten through third grade students representing nine elementary schools in St. Louis, Missouri.[123] The teachers in this study were primarily female (97 percent), were predominantly White (75 percent) and ranged in teaching experience from one to forty-three years.[124] Black teachers were 21.9 percent of participants and 3 percent identified

[120] Sichon and Guhao, "Implementing an Effective Student Discipline," 3175-76.

[121] Colleen L. Eddy et al., "Does Teacher Emotional Exhaustion and Efficacy Predict Student Discipline Sanctions?" *School Psychology Review* 49, no. 3 (2020): 243, https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966x.2020.1733340.

[122] Ibid., 242.

[123] Ibid., 243.

[124] Ibid.

as other.[125] The majority of the students were Black (75 percent), 22.2 percent were White, 2.2 percent were Latino, and 0.6 percent were Asian/Pacific Islanders. Sixty percent of the students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch.[126] Teachers used an online survey to rate student discipline as it related to ODRs, OSSs, or ISSs.[127] Teachers were administered the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), a measure of emotional exhaustion, and the Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Self-Efficacy Scale to measure the teachers' evaluations of their own success in teaching.[128] An independent contractor observed the interactions between teachers and students when students disrupted instruction, for example, students talking to peers or shouting out in class.[129] Each student was administered the Woodcock Johnson III Cognitive Ability and Achievement Test, with a focus on reading scores. Eddy et al. found higher teacher emotional exhaustion was associated with increased use of ODRs and ISSs, but not OSSs. For teachers experiencing burnout, the odds of receiving an ISS increased by a factor of 1.74. Greater teacher efficacy was associated with lower use of OSS, but not ODR or ISS. Black students received about three times greater instances of all three types of discipline compared to White students. Boys also were about three times more likely to receive these types of discipline. Students with higher levels of reading ability had a lower likelihood of being disciplined. Sixty percent of the students did not display any disruptive behaviors in the observation windows.[130] The correlation between ISS and teacher burnout may be related to the students being disciplined on school

[125] Eddy et al., "Does Teacher Emotional Exhaustion and Efficacy," 243.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid., 243-44.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid., 245.

property, i.e., teachers potentially interact with students who are disciplined, whereas with OSS, teachers may feel more successful since the students have been sent home. This researcher has witnessed teachers feeling more successful when student with discipline issues are sent home.

A study published in the Journal of Pediatrics by Catherine Bradshaw et al. was conducted to reduce student behavior problems. The sample included 12,344 elementary school children in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade.[131] This sample was 52 percent male, 48 percent female, 46.1 percent White, and 45.1 percent Black. Approximately 49 percent of the sample received free or reduced-priced lunch and 12.9 percent were enrolled in special education.[132] This was a longitudinal quantitative study conducted over a 4-year period in thirty-seven elementary schools in the state of Maryland. The researchers examined two hypotheses. First, children in schools implementing School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS—a program where students expect appropriate behavior from one another) would experience better adjustment and fewer problem behaviors relative to their peers in comparison schools. Second, children in SWPBIS schools would be less likely to be given ODRs or be suspended.[133] Teachers were instructed to complete a classroom adaptation checklist for each child. The checklist was a measure of the child's "level of aggressive and disruptive behaviors (e.g., fights), concentration problems (e.g., pays attention), prosocial behavior (e.g., child cooperates with teacher, obeys rules, and conforms to acceptable standards of behavior), and emotion regulation (e.g., the child stops and calms down when angry or upset)."[134] The data

[131] Catherine Bradshaw, Tracy E. Waasdorp, and Phillip J. Leaf, "Effects of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports on Child Behavior Problems," *Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics* 130, no. 5 (November 2012): 1136, https://doi:10.1542/peds.2012-0243.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid., 1138.

[134] Ibid., 1139.

was analyzed via linear models to examine the effect of SWPBIS on children's changes in behavior (disruptive behaviors, prosocial behaviors concentration problems, and emotion regulation) over the course of intervention.[135] Prosocial behaviors include sharing, helping, comforting, cooperating, and lying to protect someone's feelings.[136] Emotional regulation encompasses both positive and negative feelings, along with how one can strengthen them, use them, and control them.[137] Additionally, the researchers conducted logistic regression analyses to examine the effects of SWPBIS on receiving ODRs and suspensions.[138] The researchers noted children in SWPBIS schools had lower levels of aggressive and disruptive behaviors compared with those in control schools. The researchers found that children in SWPBIS schools had lower levels of concentration problems, better emotion regulation than those in control schools, and higher levels of prosocial behavior compared with those in the control group. Bradshaw et al. also found that children in SWPBIS schools were 33 percent less likely to receive an ODR. The researchers noted that girls in SWPBIS schools were less likely to receive an ODR than girls in comparison schools, but there was no difference for boys. There were no significant differences in suspension rates between SWPBIS and comparison schools.[139] This was an intense study over a four-year period. Students who expected appropriate behavior from one another, had fewer disciplinary issues. Thus, it can be inferred that expecting appropriate behavior from children leads to appropriate behavior. In this researcher's study, many teachers expected that students

[135] Bradshaw, Waasdorp, and Leaf, "Effects of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions," 1140.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Ibid., 1141-42.

would respect each other thereby, minimizing discipline issues (please refer to Appendix E on page 145).

Ron Oostdam, Marie-José Koerhuis and Ruben Fukkink conducted a study to "determine the relationship between maladaptive behavior of secondary school students [eighth and ninth grades] and the degree to which both teachers and peers address their needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness."[140] The researchers defined competence as students' ability to act successfully and effectively and the volition to learn something.[141] Additionally, the researchers defined autonomy as students' need to set, pursue, and attain their own goals, values and interests. The researchers defined relatedness as "the extent to which students feel connected, safe and respected."[142] The researchers define maladaptive behavior as any type of behavior by students in a classroom or school environment that violates a written or unwritten social norm or school rule.[143] Examples of maladaptive behavior related to this study included inattentiveness, talking, and refusing to get to work.[144] Oostdam et al. noted that maladaptive behavior increased with age and peaked during adolescence. Male students were prone to display more externalized maladaptive behavior at school than female students, and female students tended to display more internalized behavioral problems in the classroom than their male counterparts.[145] The researchers presented two hypotheses: (1) teachers who met the three basic psychological needs

[140] Ron Oostdam, Marie-José Koerhuis, and Ruben G. Fukkink, "Maladaptive Behavior in Relation to the Basic Psychological Needs of Students in Secondary Schools," *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 34, (July 10, 2018): 601, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-018-0397-6.

[141] Ibid., 604.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Ibid., 602.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid.

of their students were confronted with less maladaptive behavior and (2) the extent to which students met each other's basic psychological needs decreased the likelihood students would display maladaptive behavior in their classroom.[146] This study was conducted during academic year 2013-2014 at several secondary schools in the Netherlands. Five hundred and eighty-five students took part in this study; a majority of the students identified as Dutch, although there were also students who identified as Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, and other cultural backgrounds.[147] The researchers administered three instruments: a questionnaire on socially maladaptive behavior at school, a teacher's social context questionnaire, and a peer-oriented social context questionnaire.[148] Oostdam, Koerhuis, and Fukkink found that students reported relatively little maladaptive behavior. Teachers satisfied the need for competence more than peers according to the students. Autonomy by peers showed a negative correlation with maladaptive behavior. Students who were supported by their teachers and peers reported less maladaptive behavior. This finding supported both hypotheses i.e., there was a negative correlation between maladaptive behavior and the extent to which students perceived teachers met their need for autonomy and relatedness.[149] One of the core findings from Oostdam, Koerhuis, and Fukkink's research study was that students who were supported by their teachers and peers had fewer behavioral issues. This researcher also found student support to be true in teaching Bible study lessons. Additionally, this researcher found when students were encouraged, they tended to do much better in their studies.

[146] Oostdam, Koerhuis, and Fukkink, "Maladaptive Behavior," 605.

[147] Ibid., 606.

[148] Ibid., 607.

[149] Ibid., 609-10.

Ashley Woodson guided a study to "explore Black students lived experiences of school discipline through stories they tell about getting into trouble."[150] According to Woodson, the purpose of the study was to develop greater insight into the funds of knowledge through which Black students interpret and respond to rules, discipline, and authority at school.[151] The researcher employed phenomenology and critical race theory (CRT) as the methodological framework.[152] According to Woodson, the tenets of CRT are that racism is endemic to American society, and that possessing Whiteness affords authority, value, and an entitlement to the pursuit of self-interest and self-defense while other social categories do not.[153] The researcher further postulated Whiteness provides certain benefits within disciplinary systems, while Blackness results in certain deficits.[154] Using phenomenology research method, the lived experiences of individuals were chosen for their emphasis on the importance of personal perspective, and the potential for developing insight into individuals' motivations and actions.[155] Lived experiences revealed stories and constituted how school discipline was seen and understood by students; CRT explored the experiences and responses of those whose stories were often distorted and silenced.[156] The study was set in Saginaw, Michigan and the participants in the study were taught

[150] Ashley Woodson, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil: Black Students' Church-Based Funds of Knowledge Concerning School Discipline," *Journal of Educational Controversy* 7, no.1, article 8 (2013): 2, https://cedar.www.edu/jec/vol7/iss1/8.

[151] Ibid.

[152] Ibid.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Ibid.

[156] Ibid., 2-3.

by White teachers.[157] In the city of Saginaw, Woodson noted, "Black students represented over 70 percent of the student body, but approximately 75 percent of suspensions, compared with White students who comprised about 15 percent of the student population and less than 10 percent of suspensions.[158] Data was collected by focus groups over a six-month period and then transcribed and subsequently analyzed for themes. The researcher described three themes. The first was the nature of racism in the lives of participants; Blackness emerged as a barometer of how not to be, what not to wear, what not to listen to, or how not to speak. For example, one participant was instructed to remove a shirt with a hip-hop record label logo on it because his teacher referred to it as a gang symbol while a White student was allowed to wear a shirt featuring a rock artist, Kid Rock. The researcher noted another student was reprimanded for not expressing gratitude for an intended compliment about her unique hairstyle. The second theme was negotiating self-expression and emotion. For example, students recognized that their teachers spoke differently; the inclination to mock that way of speaking revealed a shared awareness of and preference toward certain modes of self-expression. The third theme was evaluating authority and legitimacy in learning environments. Specifically, students noted that "behavior was not punished equally by school authorities also, there was a lack of recognition for performance, unjustified accusations, broken promises, violations of personal space and privacy, the use of disrespectful language or tones, and accusations of appearing lazy or unkempt."[159] Woodson summarized, "The evidence supported arguments that the act of discipline was

[157] Woodson, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil," 2-3.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Ibid., 4.

subjective in both its imposition and interpretation."[160] This researcher believes no child should be treated differently because of race, use of language, hairstyles, or other characteristics. God showed the world what love is in the book of John: "For God so loved the world, He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NIV). Colossians reads, "And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Col 3:14, NIV). It is written in Acts, that "God shows no partiality" (Acts 10:34, NRSV). Lastly, John writes, "Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment" (John 7:24, ESV).

Steven Sheldon and Joyce Epstein spearheaded a study titled, "Improving Student Behavior and School Discipline with Family and Community Involvement."[161] The purpose of this study was "to learn which school, family, and community practices implemented by schools were most likely to affect student behavior and school discipline."[162] The researchers administered a baseline survey to determine the estimates of disciplinary actions during the 1998 academic year, ratings of the seriousness of behavior problems at school, partnership activities to improve student behavior, and the overall quality of the school-family-community partnership program.[163] At the end of the school year, the respondents were administered a follow-up survey on disciplinary actions taken during the 1999 school year, the effectiveness of the partnership activities implemented to improve student behavior and observed changes in student behavior

[160] Woodson, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil," 9.

[161] Steven B. Sheldon and Joyce L. Epstein, "Improving Student Behavior and School Discipline with Family and Community Involvement," *Education and Urban Society* 35, no.1 (November 2002): 12, https//:doi.org/10.1177/001312402237212.

[162] Ibid., 13.

[163] Ibid., 11.

and the overall quality of the partnership program.[164] The sample included forty-seven schools in twelve states; more than half of the schools were in Maryland and Ohio. Elementary schools represented, "71% of the sample, while the remaining 10 schools were middle schools, high schools, or a middle-high-school combination."[165] Large urban schools were 24 percent of the sample, 22 percent were small urban, 22 percent were suburban, and 31 percent were rural.[166] Student enrollment at the schools averaged four hundred and thirty students and the participating schools served students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.[167] Respondents reported that on average 41 percent of their students received free or reduced-price lunches and a small percentage of the students lived in homes where English was not spoken.[168] Sheldon and Epstein characterized classroom disruptions as fooling around, disobeying rules, disturbing others in class, and cheating or copying. Sheldon and Epstein examined five variables:

1) Disciplinary actions: The respondents estimated the percentage of students in 1998 and 1999 who were sent to the principal's office, given detention, suspended, disciplinary removal, expelled, and involved in an incident reported to the police.
2) Student behavior: Respondents reported whether behaviors were not a problem, a minor problem, or a major problem.
3) Use of partnership practices: Respondents were asked to report whether their schools implemented any of the thirteen family and/or community practices to improve student behavior.

[164] Sheldon and Epstein, "Improving Student Behavior," 11.

[165] Ibid.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Ibid., 11-12.

4) Effectiveness of partnership practices: Respondents judge the degree to which practices could be effective for improving student behavior.
5) Partnership program rating: Schools rated the quality of their family school and community partnership program for the 1999 school year.[169]

Sheldon and Epstein's study, noted that respondents reported minor problems with behavior issues. The most serious problems that school officials faced were classroom disruptions. On average, about 11 percent of students were sent to the principals' office and about 10 percent of students received detention. Four percent of students received in school suspension, 3 percent received out of school suspension, and 2 percent received disciplinary removal. Less than 1 percent of students were expelled. Additionally, elementary schools had smaller percentages of students involved in all disciplinary actions than secondary schools, with the exception of disciplinary removals. Schools considered all the partnership practices generally effective to improve student behavior at school. Workshops for parents on school goals and expectations for student conduct were the most effective practices for improving student behavior. The implementation of family and community involvement activities was related to decreases in several disciplinary actions; fewer students were sent to the principal's office and given detention.[170] Family and community involvement had a positive impact on student behavior. Thus, it can be inferred that students with parental and community support tend to have less disciplinary issues because the students have a multitude of positive community influences.

[169] Sheldon and Epstein, "Improving Student Behavior," 12-13.

[170] Ibid., 14-20.

Ken Espinosa led a study in the Philippines called, "Implementing a School Disciplinary Program Through a Participatory Action Research Approach."[171] Its focus was to determine the student compliance with the school disciplinary rules and regulations after the implementation of a participatory approach theory: Visual, Mentoring, Organized Activities and Competition Theory (V.M.O.C.).[172] The researcher administered a survey to participants associated with a local university, followed by a focus group discussion with the participants. The study included ten administrators, ten teachers, ten parents, and ten students.[173] Espinosa found that administrators and teachers strongly agreed that the majority of students were able to follow the school disciplinary rules and regulations; that is, students acted appropriately and maintained their behavior while in and out of school. Students and parents saw a need for constant reminders and guidance to students on the proper adherence to school rules and regulations. Administrators observed an improvement in school attendance. Teachers reported students were at school on time, wearing the proper uniform, and appropriately using school facilities. Administrators, teachers, and parents agreed students were able to follow the guidelines in terms of substance use.[174] Thus, implementing a new participatory approach theory to minimize disciplinary issues can be advantageous, specifically as it relates to this current study. There appears to be merit in students following the rules as noted in the Espinosa study as well as this researcher's study.

[171] Ken Paul M. Espinosa, "Implementing School Disciplinary Program through Participatory Action Research Approach," *The Araneta Research Journal* 43, no. 1 (2021): 42, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344219454_implementing_school_disciplinary_program_through_particapatory_action_research_approach.

[172] Ibid., 43.

[173] Ibid., 46.

[174] Ibid., 50-52.

Munir Sadruddin conducted a study in Pakistan, published in the Journal of Managerial Sciences to "examine the strategies used to maintain discipline in the classroom through action research."[175] The researcher focused on determining whether punishment and de-motivation (i.e., teacher's use of harsh language, threats, and criticism) are better reinforcing tools to maintain discipline and the correlation with punishment and de-motivation to learners' behavior.[176] The action research design used the "Skinnerian Model to maintain discipline in classrooms through positive reinforcement instead of punishment."[177] The methodology was personal observations, the use of a reflective diary, and audio recordings. The sample included sixty students, thirty boys and thirty girls in ninth and tenth grade.[178] Sadruddin noted students were more relaxed when positive reinforcement was adopted. The students were more engaged in class when punishment and de-motivation were avoided. Positive reinforcement (e.g., verbal approval, rewards, prizes, and high grades) maintained discipline and improved learner's behavior.[179] Sadruddin's research showed that verbal approval, rewards, and high grades had a positive impact on student behavior. This researcher also believes positive reinforcement has greater merit than punishment. Matthew 5:16 reads, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

[175] Munir Moosa Sadruddin, "Discipline—Improving Classroom Management through Action Research: A Professional Development Plan," *Journal of Managerial Sciences* 6, no. 1 (2012): 23, https://ssrn.com/abstract=2173330.

[176] Ibid., 28.

[177] Ibid.

[178] Ibid., 29.

[179] Ibid., 36-37.

Rifa Hidayah et al. conducted a study in Indonesia about "learning worship as a way to improve student's discipline, motivation, and achievement at school."[180] The participants were four sixth grade students (average age of twelve), two teachers, and one principal, The researchers employed in-depth interviews with teachers and the principal, and observed students to gather data.[181] The methodology was a qualitative case study using content analysis and data coding.[182] Hidayah et al. found that learning worship techniques contributed significantly to internal and practical discipline efforts and behaviors. After religious teachings, basic attitudes of students' discipline improved. Student motivation was 40 percent before teaching worship and 90 percent after. Worship instruction increased academic achievement a minimum of 75 percent.[183] This researcher also observed that teaching children about the Lord improves behavior. Proverbs reads, "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov 22:6, KJV).

Theological Foundations

Disruptive behavior in a church setting is not characteristic of godly behavior. Moreover, misconduct can impede the curricula being taught. Scripture teaches obedience: "Obey your leaders and submit to them" (Heb 13:17, ESV). Scripture teaches respect: "Respect those who labor among you" (1 Thes 5:12, ESV). Scripture also teaches having a Christ-like demeanor: "Be imitators of Me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1, ESV).

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[180] Rifa Hidayah et al., "Learning Worship as a Way to Improve Students' Discipline, Motivation, and Achievement at School," *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies* 8, no. 3 (2021): 292, https://dx.doi.org/10.29333/ejects/748.

[181] Ibid., 297.

[182] Ibid., 296.

[183] Ibid., 298-99.

Chris Taylor postulated a need for student discipline to be Gospel-centered and scripturally based.[184] According to Taylor, the goal of redemptive discipline is "for students to be conformed into the image of Christ and subsequently, become self-disciplined."[185] The role of teachers is to set, monitor, and enforce rules.[186] Taylor also compared and contrasted redemptive discipline with punitive discipline that could be applied when children fail to follow the rules.[187]

J. Wittwer wrote, "Western societies are primarily rule based."[188] He noted that rules should be applied universally; all people should be treated equally. For example, there should be no differences in the application of rules related to wealth, gender, or race.[189] Most significantly, Wittwer asserted rules in Western societies can be traced to God and the Ten Commandments. God governs using universal rules that rules order and safety when followed and lead to consequences when violated.[190]

Daniel Choe, Sheryl Olson, and Arnold Sameroff formulated a study to ascertain "the interplay of disruptive behavior problems and (1) physical discipline and (2) reasoning discipline during childhood."[191] This was a longitudinal study of two hundred and forty-one children (49

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[184] Chris P. Taylor, "The Need for Redemptive Discipline in the Christian School," *Journal of Christian Perspectives in Education* 6, no. 1, article 1 (December 2013): 1, https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu.

[185] Ibid., 1-2.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Ibid., 3.

[188] J. Wittwer, "Relationship-vs. Rule-Based Cultures: Socially-Based Control vs. Individual Autonomy," *Success Across Cultures*, August 16, 2019, https://successacrosscultures.com/2019/08/16/relationship-vs-rule-based-cultures-socially-based-control-vs-individual-autonomy/.

[189] Ibid.

[190] Ibid.

[191] Daniel E. Choe, Sheryl L. Olson, and Arnold J. Sameroff, "The Interplay of Externalizing Problems and Physical and Inductive Discipline during Childhood," *Journal of Developmental Psychology* 49, no. 11 (March 2013): 3, doi:10.1037/a0032054, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3741355/pdf/nihms464270.pdf.

percent girls and 51 percent boys); 86 percent of the children were White, 8 percent were biracial, 4 percent were Black, and 2 percent identified as other. Eight percent of the children resided in single-parent households. The families were recruited through newspaper ads, fliers at childcare centers, and pediatrician referrals. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews with mothers and teachers when the children were three, five and a half, and ten years of age. Additionally, the mothers completed an inventory, rating how often they would remind their children of (1) the rules and how often they would talk to the child to discuss behavioral alternatives.[192] The mothers also completed a harshness of discipline scale, in which they reported how frequently they resorted to (2) physical discipline, i.e., spanking with hand or object or would shake the child.[193] The researchers found the following: children who were (1) physically disciplined were at an elevated risk for disrupted behavior problems; however, conversely, (2) maternal reasoning and reminding the child of rules, was associated with fewer child disruptive behavior problems.[194] It appeared that the researchers found greater merit in maternal reasoning in contrast with physical disciplining when attempting to correct the behavior of children and according to the researchers, reasoning as postulated above leads to true knowledge. Additionally, it was deemed that rules were central for appropriate behavior.

Rebecca Ryan et al. found there is evidence that discipline strategies differ by family socioeconomic status (SES).[195] Specifically, higher SES families are more likely than lower SES families to use (1) non-physical discipline strategies that include reasoning and promote child

[192] Choe et al., "The Interplay of Externalizing Problems," 4.

[193] Ibid.

[194] Ibid., 7-8.

[195] Rebecca Ryan et al., "Socioeconomic Gaps in Parents' Discipline Strategies From 1988 to 2011," *American Academy of Pediatrics* 138, no. 6 (December 2016): 2, https:/doi.org/10.1542/peds.2016-0720.

autonomy. Lower SES families (2) spank and use corporal punishment more often than higher SES families.[196] It can be said some parents, teachers, and others responsible for guiding children may employ child training and instruction to mitigate disruptive behavior i.e., reasoning in lieu of punishment. In the forementioned study by Choe et al., it was noted that "inductive discipline techniques include limits-setting, reminding of rules, and reasoning to elicit understanding [knowledge] from children about socially-appropriate conduct and the potential harmful consequences of their behavior on others."[197] It is construed that knowledge in many cases is gained via instruction. A sampling of the theological foundations found in Scripture relating to (1) training, (2) instruction and (3) knowledge are listed below:

1) "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov 1:7, NIV).
2) "For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way of life" (Prov 6:23, NIV).
3) "Whoever loves discipline, loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid." (Prov 12:1, NIV).
4) "A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a mocker does not respond to rebukes" (Prov 13:1, NIV).
5) "A fool spurns a parent's direction, but whoever heeds correction shows prudence" (Prov 15:5, NIV) [Note: the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines direction as "an explicit instruction."].[198]

[196] Ryan et al., "Socioeconomic Gaps in Parents' Discipline Strategies," 4-5.

[197] Choe et al., "The Interplay of Externalizing Problems," 2.

[198] Merriam-Webster, accessed February 9, 2023, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/direction.

6) "Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge" (Prov 23:12, NIV).
7) "Fathers, do not exasperate your children, instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph 6:4, NIV).

In contrast to parents and others employing reasoning to control student behavior, Eirni Flouri and Emily Midouhas conducted a study in the United Kingdom to "examine the role of harsh parental discipline."[199] It was defined as "using physical and verbal tactics [like] smacking, shouting, and telling off a child."[200] The study included 16,916 children in a longitudinal study where parental discipline practices were examined when the children were three, five, and seven years of age. The children were 52 percent male and 48 percent female; 77 percent of sample was White and 24 percent was non-White.[201] The researchers found that harsh parental discipline predicted increased emotional symptoms. For example, children often seemed worried. Girls experienced more emotional symptoms than boys. Harsh parental discipline also predicted behavioral problems, often characterized as temper tantrums or hyperactivity in children restlessness. In general, girls were at a lower risk of behavioral problems than boys. Most significantly, children with the most serious behavioral problems were socioeconomically disadvantaged and/or had experienced adverse life events like a death in the family, parental divorce or separation, or parental job loss.[202] The researchers proposed mitigating harsh parental discipline practices to reduce the levels of child problem behaviors.

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[199] Eirni Flouri and Emily Midouhas, "Environmental Adversity and Children's Early Trajectories of Problem Behavior: The Role of Harsh Parental Discipline," *Journal of Family Psychology* 341, no. 2 (2017): 234, http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/fam0000258.

[200] Ibid., 234.

[201] Ibid., 235-37.

[202] Ibid., 237-41.

A sampling of the theological foundations found in Scripture related to employing physical punishment are provided as follows:

1) “Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish them with the rod, they will not die. Punish them with the rod and save them from death” (Prov 23:13-14, NIV).

2) “Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them” (Prov 13:24, NIV).

3) “Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far away” (Prov 22:15, NIV).

4) “Blows and wounds scrub away evil and beatings purge the inmost being” (Prov 20:30, NIV).

5) “A rod and a reprimand impart wisdom, but a child left undisciplined disgraces its mother” (Prov 29:15, NIV).

6) “Discipline your children, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to their death” (Prov 19:18, NIV).

7) “No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it” (Heb 12:11, NIV).

Thus, teachers, parents and others who interact with children, must decide which perspective has merit in light of the circumstances, which perspective is legally condoned, and which perspective leads to the desired results. In sum, two diametrically opposed theological foundations may undergird one’s perspective in regard to scripturally based student discipline. One is aligned with reasoning and instruction of children, while the other supports reprimand and punishment of children.

Theoretical Foundations

Theory explains human behavior and allows one to make predictions about that behavior.[203] This study will be primarily undergirded by social learning theory as documented by Albert Bandura.[204] Students model their behavior by imitating the behavior of others; students learn inappropriate behavior in social groups. While teaching children Bible classes this researcher personally observed that some children are inclined to model the bad behavior of other students. This causes disruption and impedes teaching Bible principles. Additionally, valuable time is lost redirecting children's attention to the planned lesson.

A second theory closely aligned to Bandura's theory is Abraham Maslow's theory of human motivation.[205] Motivation is the force that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviors.[206] Motivation can be broadly defined as "the forces acting on or within a person that cause the arousal, direction, and persistence of goal-directed, voluntary effort".[207] Motivating theory is concerned with the processes that explain why and how human behavior is activated.[208] Maslow proports the fundamental desires of human beings are similar, despite the multitude of conscious desires. According to his theory, humans possess higher and lower order needs that are

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[203] Michael Leslie, "Introduction to Theory," *University of Florida*, accessed June 17, 2022, https: www.faculty.jou.ufl.edu/mleslie/spring96/theory.html.

[204] Saul Mcleod, "Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory," February 5, 2016, *Simply Psychology*, medically reviewed by David Susman, https://www.simplypsychology.org/bandura.html.

[205] Nicole Celestine, "Abraham Maslow, His Theory & Contribution to Psychology," PositivePsycology.com, accessed July 15, 2022, https://www.positivepyschology.com/abraham-maslow/.

[206] Kendra Cherry, "What Motivation Theory Can tell Us About Human Behavior," *VeryWell Mind*, updated April 17, 2021, medically reviewed by Amy Morin, https://www.verywellmind.com/theories-of-motivation-2795720.

[207] Ibid.

[208] "Motivation and Motivation Theory," Encyclopedia.com, accessed July 15, 2022, https://www.encyclopedia.com/management/encyclopedias-alamanacs-transcripts-and-maps/motivation-and-motivation-theory.

arranged hierarchically (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs): physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization.[209] The third in the hierarchy is the need for love and belonging because humans are wired for connections. In the absence of these connections, one may fall susceptible to states of ill-being, such as clinical depression.[210] It might be said that children are impressionable and strive to belong to groups. This researcher witnessed students self-grouping in religious training classes. Specifically, students inclined to talk during instruction sat close together and conducted conversations while instruction was presented. This self-grouping indicated a need to belong. Therefore, the two theories cited appear to have great relevance for this study.

A tertiary theory that may have relevance for this study is critical theory. According to Max Horkheimer, "Individuals attempt to liberate themselves from circumstances that enslave [control] them."[211] From this perspective, children may visualize a power struggle between themselves and their teachers to control their behavior; thus, they may act out behaviorally, causing a disruption in instruction. This researcher noted that in one class taught, the pastor's son acted out by interrupting instruction. It could be he was vying for attention on par with his father, while also attempting to control the teacher's class.

[209] Saul McLeod, "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs," *Simply Psychology*, updated April 4, 2022, https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html.

[210] Ibid.

[211] Max Horkheimer, "Critical Theory," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed September 15, 2021, https://www.plato.stanford.edu/entries/critical-theory/.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Child misconduct is a matter church personnel must confront in child ministry programs. Many children behave appropriately, but a few on occasion disrupt instruction. This project sought to understand teachers' perceptions of disorderly students in churches located in the eastern part of the United States and how they coped with disruptive students.

The Research Problem and Purpose Revisited

John Creswell noted, "Problems arise from issues, difficulties, and current practices. The research problem in a study begins to become clear, when the researcher asked, what is the need for this study or, what issue influenced the need to undertake this study?"[1] These issues are the starting point for identifying research problems. Creswell offered guidelines for developing the problem statement. First, "Indicate why the problem is important by citing numerous references."[2] In Chapter Two, this project illustrated several studies in which discipline problems were prevalent in public schools and in church programs. There were measures also discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Two which mitigate classroom disruptions by implementing specific forms of punishment or by using reasoning. Creswell also said, "The problem must be framed in a manner consistent with a research approach, i.e., qualitative (examining relationships), quantitative (providing for predictions), or mixed method inquiry."[3] The problem in this thesis project was designed to employ the qualitative case study methodology. Creswell noted that the

[1] John Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Productions, Inc., 2009), 103.

[2] Ibid, 104.

[3] Ibid.

research problem "should stimulate reader interest as well as convey an issue to which a broad audience can relate."[4] In this regard, the National Congregational Study Survey determined that there are "an estimated 380,000 churches in the U.S."[5] If only a fraction of these churches experienced disruptive child behaviors during instruction in Sunday School-type settings, it could be a monumental problem. The question investigated for this project was twofold: that is, what did the respondents deem as child misconduct in their church classrooms and how did they mitigate those issues? The questions are paramount because undisciplined children in church settings disrupt biblical teachings and provide the impetus for other children to act inappropriately and thus, discipline issues must be addressed. The foundation for Christian behavior is found in Scripture; therefore, it is essential teachers relay to students what God's Word states about godly behavior. Student discipline issues must be addressed for the well-being of all concerned. An open-ended questionnaire focused on participants' own words and attempted to ascertain the experiences of church personnel related to disruptive student behaviors in church settings.

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand the student discipline issues experienced by teachers in child ministry programs and how they coped with these issues. Student discipline and good classroom management practices are vital for all teachers. Fundamentally, the classroom environment must be conducive for learning without unnecessary disruption by undisciplined students.

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[4] Creswell, *Research Design*, 104.

[5] Rebecca Randal, "How Many Churches Does America Have? More Than Expected," *Christianity Today*, September 14, 2017, https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2017/september/how-many-churches-in-america-us-nones-nondenominational.hml.

This study focused on the perceptions of child ministry teachers relevant to student discipline issues in the classes they teach. That is, it explored disruptive behaviors exhibited by children in child ministry programs and the strategies implemented by child ministry teachers to offset student disruptive behaviors. Again, it can be stated that this researcher chose the qualitative approach and gathered and analyzed data. In Chapter Two, this researcher examined twenty-nine studies of discipline issues related to children in classroom settings. Some of the methods used to collect and analyze data were similar to the approach this researcher used. Additionally, some of the discipline issues found in the literature were similar to this researcher's study. The intervention design and the specific steps employed in this project follow.

Intervention Design

The intervention design methodology in this study was a qualitative case study. Intervention Design can be defined as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process or a social unit."[6] According to Shona McCombes, a case study is "a detailed study of a specific subject, such as a person, group, place, event, organization, or a phenomenon."[7] The problem in this study is that children who misbehave in church classrooms disrupt other children from learning and/or provide the impetus for other children to misbehave. To understand the respondent's perception of disorderly students and the measures taken to mitigate misconduct, this researcher chose to employ qualitative research case study methodology. That which follows delineates the step-by-

[6] "Intervention Design," Merriam-Webster.com, accessed September 15, 2021, https://www.merriam-webster.com.

[7] Shona McCombes, "Case Study/Definition, Examples & Methods," *Scribbr*, revised May 5, 2022, https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/case-study/.

step tasks accomplished in this study, which will be followed by citing ethical issues regarding this project.

Step-by-Step Tasks Accomplished in this Study

Steps 1-3 were addressed in Chapter One. Step 1 was to identify a researchable problem within ministry context. Step 2 was to determine the purpose of the study. Step 3 was related to identifying and securing resources and materials for study to include development of questionnaire. Step 4 was to identify ethical issues (noted in the paragraph that follows) associated with study. Step 5 was accomplished in Chapter Two of this paper (i.e., conduct literature review to ascertain the magnitude of the problem). Steps 6-10 were covered in Chapter Three, i.e., Step 6 identified research methodology (qualitative case study). Step 7 secured Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the study (please refer to Appendix I to view the IRB approval letter). Step 8 was to email a pastoral research packet to potential churches. This packet included a pastoral letter, and a pastoral approval letter template. In Step 9, upon approval from each pastor, respondent recruitment letters and the questionnaires were then prepared to be emailed to potential respondents. The respondent recruitment letter included information about the research, the benefits and risks of participation, and an informed consent form. (See Appendices L-N.) Step 10 pastors identified and secured participants for the study and the questionnaires were then released to be emailed.

This researcher used convenience sampling, and subsequently informed participants of the benefits and risks of participation in study, and ensured participants reviewed and agreed to participate in study. Step 11 was to comply with anonymity. Leaders of all the churches were asked to select the respondents and email their completed questionnaires to the researcher. After contacting over one hundred churches, seven churches agreed to participate in this study.

Respondents were from North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, and Florida. Upon receipt of the questionnaires, Step 12, data was analyzed via content analysis and descriptive statistics. In Step 13 results were then interpreted and recorded in Chapter Four of this project. Step 14 was to develop and present conclusions as noted in Chapter Five of this research project.

Ethical Issues

In a research project "ethical issues should be considered early on in the planning process before any data collection begins."[8] Bhandari determined, "Ethical considerations in research are a set of principles that guide your research design and practices. These considerations work to (1) protect the rights of research participants, (2) enhance research validity, and (3) maintain scientific integrity."[9] He noted, "Research ethics matter for scientific integrity, human rights and dignity, and collaboration between science and society" and that these principles make sure that participation in studies is voluntary, informal, and safe for research subjects.[10] Additionally, Bhandari wrote, "Defying research ethics will lower the credibility of research, because it's hard for others to trust the data if the methods are morally questionable."[11] Finally, Bhandari reiterated the types of ethical issues researchers must consider: voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and potential harm to participants.[12] These issues were brought to the attention of this researcher by the IRB before this research was approved.

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[8] "Ethical Issues Considered Early," *University of the West of England*, accessed May 28, 2001, https://www.uwe.ac.uk/research.

[9] Bhandari, "What is Qualitative Research?"

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

Ethics is defined as "a branch of philosophy that deals with the conduct of people and guides the norms or standards of behavior of people and relationships with each other. It refers to an ethos or way of life [and] social norms for conduct that distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Ethics leads to the creation of social norms which focus on the behavior that a person is expected to uphold in a particular situation."[13] Research ethics, according to Stephen Akaranga and Bretta Makau, are a requirement "that researchers should protect the dignity of their subjects and publish the information that is researched."[14] Akaranga and Makau noted two dominant philosophical approaches associated with research ethics, teleology and deontology. They wrote that the teleological view holds that the ends served by the research justify the means.[15] This implies an unethical approach to research because, the ends do not justify the means. Essentially unethical and immoral measures do not lead to desired results. "The deontological view states that the ends served by the research can never justify an unethical approach."[16]

Akaranga and Makau deemed consideration must be given to the following ethical issues: the researcher must explain the purpose of the study and the benefits participants will accrue; the researcher must avoid deception and tell participants the entire truth about the research; and the researcher, if conducting research with vulnerable groups or special populations, must seek consent from parents or guardians.[17] Additionally, they noted that the researcher must also

[13] Stephen Akaranga and Bretta Makau, "Ethical Considerations and their Applications to Research: A Case of the University of Nairobi," *Journal of Educational Policy and Entrepreneurial Research* 3, no. 12 (2016): 1-2, https://profiles.uonbi.ac.ke/kuria_paul/files/429-825-2-pb.pdf.

[14] Ibid., 2.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

address anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent from participants. Finally, the researcher should adhere to copyright and patenting policies when publishing the research."[18]

Michael Patton illustrated a salient point in qualitative inquiry. "Qualitative inquiry may be intrusive, and participants may reveal things they [participants] never intended to tell."[19] Patton recommended researchers have an ethical framework to deal with participant revelations.[20] In accordance with Patton's recommendation, this researcher subscribes to the ethical principles and code of ethics for pastors drafted by the National Association of Evangelical Pastors (National Association of Evangelicals).[21] This is a code of ethics across denominational lines; it focuses on personal integrity, trustworthiness, purity, accountability, and fairness.[22] Specifically, this code of ethics requires protecting information that respondents might share with ministers, with the caveat that legal issues might require disclosure or reporting to authorities.[23]

This researcher assured participants of confidentiality and anonymity. To protect the confidentiality and anonymity of participants, informed consent forms were given to each participant in accordance with the guidelines of the IRB. From this researcher's perspective, ethics is choosing what is deemed "good" over that perceived to be "bad." The overarching guidance for making "good" decisions is found in Scripture. For example, Deuteronomy reads,

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[18] Akaranga and Makau, "Ethical Considerations and their Applications to Research," 6-7.

[19] Michael Q. Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3d ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002), 405.

[20] Ibid., 406.

[21] "Code of Ethics for Pastors," *National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)*, accessed May 18, 2022, https://www.nae.org/code-of-ethics-for-pastors/.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

"Today I am giving you a choice between good and evil, between life and death. If you obey the commands of the Lord your God, which I give you today, if you love Him, Obey Him, and keep all His laws, then you will prosper" (Deut 30:15-16, Good News Translation). In the book of Psalms, it is written to "Depart from evil and do good, so you will abide forever" (Psalms 37:27, NASB). Finally, "Do not be wise in your own eyes, fear the Lord and turn away from evil" (Prov 3:7, NASB). The next section will address data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness of the research.

Implementation of Intervention Design

Data Collection

Once the steps in the research process were met, the actual implementation of research began with the approval from the IRB. Oregon State University defined IRB: "The Institutional Review Board is an administrative body established to protect the rights and welfare of human research subjects recruited to participate in research activities, it is charged with the responsibility of reviewing all research [and] is concerned with protecting the welfare, rights, and privacy of human subjects."[24]

This researcher selected case study methodology. The data was gathered from 2021-2022. In selecting participants for the case study research, this researcher preferred participants who were expected to be objective, that is, credible participants.[25] Additionally, this researcher employed convenience sampling to select participants.

[24] "What is the Institutional Review Board (IRB)?" *Oregon State University*, accessed October 2, 2021, https://research.oregonstate.edu/irb/frequently-asked-questions/what-institutional-review-board-irb.

[25] Lincoln and Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, 218.

Stake identified three types of case studies: (1) a single instrumental case study focuses on an issue or concern, and then selects one case within a bounded system; (2) a collective case study only selects one issue or concern is, but the inquirer selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issues; and (3) in an intrinsic case study, the focus is on the case itself, to evaluate a program or to study an individual student having difficulty.[26] This study is best characterized as an instrumental case study.

This researcher employed the procedures for conducting a case study delineated by Stake: First, a case study is a good approach when the inquirer has clearly identifiable cases with boundaries and seeks to provide an in depth understanding of the cases. Second, the cases may involve an individual, several individuals, a program, an event, or an activity. Third, in a case study data collection is extensive and may draw upon questionnaires, observation, interviews, documents, and audiovisual material. Fourth, analysis of data might focus on a few key issues, like themes. Fifth, there is an interpretive phase, in which the researcher reports the meaning of the case.[27] This researcher closely aligned with Stake and adhered to the procedures herein identified.

This case study was guided by twenty research questions in the form of a questionnaire. Matthew Miles and Michael Huberman recommended researchers draft at least twelve research questions.[28] According to Creswell, qualitative method involves collecting data using open-ended questions in an interview or document.[29] The data from the questionnaires was then

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[26] Robert. E. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995), 3.

[27] Ibid., 8.

[28] Matthew B. Miles and Michael Huberman, *An Expanded Sourcebook: Qualitative Data Analysis*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 25.

[29] Creswell, *Research Design*, 131.

analyzed and interpreted via patterns and themes. According to Kimberlee Leonard, a case study provides an in-depth look at one subject.[30] Therefore, the goal for using case study for this project was to provide an in-depth look at how teachers in religious settings cope with students who initiate disruptive behavior (see Appendix N).

The questionnaires were e-mailed to church leaders who then identified and selected available participants via convenience sampling. Samuel Stratton defined convenience sampling as, " a non-probability [subjective method, i.e., non-random] form of sampling."[31] Stratton indicated, "Convenience sampling for qualitative research depends on the motivation of those who participate in the research [and] this introduces motivation bias into the study; for example, some participants may be disgruntled and wish to express specific opinions."[32] However, this researcher believes that the topic of student discipline in church settings provides minimal incentive for participants to be disgruntled. Contrastingly, convenience sampling is advantageous because "it is not costly, not as time consuming as other sampling strategies and is simplistic."[33] Finally, Stratton offered methods to improve the dependability of convenience sampling: "(1) avoid complex and vague study objectives, (2) recruit as many participants as possible, (3) describe the characteristics or demographics of those who participate in the study, (4) use descriptive analysis methods, and (5) identify possible external bias that may affect

[30] Kimberlee Leonard, "Six Types of Qualitative Research," *Bizfluent*, January 22, 2019, https://bizfluent.com/info-8580000-six-types-qualitative-research.html.

[31] Samuel J. Stratton, "Population Research: Convenience Sampling Strategies," *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine* (August 2021): 373-74, https://doi.org/10.1017/51049023X21000649.

[32] Ibid., 373.

[33] Ibid., 374.

participants."[34] This researcher asserts that these methods to improve the dependability of convenience sampling were met in this study.

The completed questionnaires were e-mailed back to the researcher. There were fifteen participants, eleven women and four men. Patton wrote, "There are no rules for sample size in qualitative research [and] that in depth information can be gathered from a small number of people."[35] The participants taught children in Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Bible camp, AWANA or other child ministry programs. Additionally, the participants represented churches in multiple denominations in the eastern part of the United States. Approximately half of the participants were identified as White and approximately half were identified as Black; one participant did not indicate ethnicity. The researcher did not personally know any of the participants, i.e., church leaders selected the participants via convenience sampling. It is probable that the participants not knowing the researcher minimizes favoritism and bias. This affords participants the opportunity to be honest in their responses to the questionnaire and supports the trustworthiness of the findings. Subsequently, upon receipt, this researcher analyzed the questionnaires and offered findings. The questionnaires were composed of twenty open-ended questions, drafted from an interview template designed by Christy Hill.

In qualitative research, the intent is to explore the complex set of factors surrounding the central phenomenon (student disruptive behaviors in this case) and present the varied perspectives or meaning that participants hold.[36] Creswell offered guidelines for developing research questions which provided the framework for data collection: begin questions with the

[34] Stratton, "Population Research," 374.

[35] Patton, *Qualitative Research*, 244.

[36] Creswell, *Research Design*, 129.

words "what" or "how" to convey an open and emerging design; focus on a single phenomenon (student disruptive behaviors) or concept; use open-ended questions without preference to the literature or theory; and specify the participants and research site for the study.[37] In sum, employing qualitative case study methodology, this researcher collected data from child ministry teachers with questionnaires and analyzed the data by content analysis and descriptive statistics.

Data Analysis

Data in this study was analyzed using Content Analysis. According to Patton, this "refers to searching text for reoccurring words or themes to see how many times and in what contexts they used a phrase."[38] Patton wrote, "Content analysis was used to refer to any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings. Case studies, for example, can be content analyzed."[39] Lou noted, the researcher looks for patterns (reoccurring words)[40]—in this case, patterns in how the respondents answered the questionnaire. Columbia University School of Public Health (CUSPH) defined content analysis as "a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data (i.e., text); and in using content analysis, researchers can quantify and analyze the presence, meaning, and relationships of certain words, themes, or concepts and then make inferences about messages within the texts."[41] The

[37] Creswell, *Research Design*, 130-31.

[38] Patton, *Qualitative Research*, 453.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Lou, "Content Analysis."

[41] "Population Health Methods: Content Analysis," *Columbia University School of Public Health*, updated June 7, 2022, https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/research/population-health-methods/content-analysis.

source for data collection in this study was open-ended questions in the format of a questionnaire, which was administered to all participants.

CUSPH continued, "To analyze the text using content analysis, the text must be coded or broken down into manageable codes for analysis [and] then further categorized to summarize data even further."[42] CUSPH also noted, "There are two general types of content analysis: conceptual analysis and relational analysis and that conceptual analysis determines the existence and frequency of concepts in a text, [while] relational analysis examines the relationship among concepts in a text."[43] This researcher was aligned with conceptual analysis. The goal of the data interpretation was to examine the occurrence of specific terms. This researcher only determined existence of explicit terms [stated clearly] by the participants. The explicit terms were then coded and categorized. Coding and categorization is "a process of selective reduction."[44] Contrastingly, "coding implicit terms [not plainly expressed] is more complicated [and] involves using a dictionary or contextual translation of rules or both."[45] Thus, the researcher in this study avoided coding implicit terms and thus, relied exclusively upon explicit terms used by the participants.

CUSPH underscored the uses of content analysis with three concepts: (1) identify trends in an institution; (2) describe attitudes and behavior; (3) and reveal patterns in communication content. The latter was most relevant for this researcher's study. Essentially, content analysis was deemed an appropriate tool to analyze data for this researcher's project.[46] Advantageously, content analysis directly examines communication using text, provides an unobtrusive means to

[42] "Population Health Methods," *Columbia University School of Public Health*.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

analyze data, provides insight into human thought and language use, and is a readily understood and an inexpensive research method.[47] Contrastingly, three disadvantages of content analysis are that it can be (1) extremely time consuming, (2) it is inherently reductive [over simplified], and it can be (3) difficult to automate or computerize.[48] This researcher determined the advantages of using content analysis outweighed the disadvantages. Stake focused on searching for respondent patterns, which subsequently led to understanding the meaning of phenomenon.[49] This researcher also searched for codes (or patterns) followed by categories (groups of coded data). The patterns in this study were reoccurring words used by the respondents to answer the questionnaire. Lou indicated the researcher "codes and categorizes data and then analyzes the patterns to draw conclusions."[50] This researcher looked for patterns, that is, data was coded and subsequently sorted or grouped into broader categories. This was an inductive process [reasoning] starting with a specific observation [of reoccurring participant words] and ending with generalizations.

To recapitulate, content analysis is a "research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data."[51] According to Lou, "content analysis is advantageous because data can be analyzed without the direct involvement of participants."[52] Additionally, "content analysis is a systematic procedure that can be replicated by other researchers and implemented at low costs."[53]

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[47] "Population Health Methods," *Columbia University School of Public Health*.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, 78.

[50] Lou, "Content Analysis."

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

This researcher also analyzed data using Descriptive Statistics. "Descriptive Statistics are the numerical and graphical techniques used to organize, present, and analyze data.[54] Specifically, this researcher used percentages and bar charts.

Trustworthiness of Research

(Lincoln and Guba Criteria and Robert Stake Criteria)

Lincoln and Guba wrote, "Qualitative researchers have proposed trustworthiness as the qualitative equivalent to reliability and validity in quantitative research."[55] Lincoln and Guba proposed four dimensions of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.[56] The four dimensions will be introduced in this chapter and explored in detail as to how they support the findings in Chapter Four.

(1) Credibility—According to Lincoln and Guba, "Credibility is the analog to internal validity in quantitative research."[57] Nowell et al. defined credibility as "the fit between qualitative participants own perspectives and how [they are] represented in the findings by the research—i.e., the findings must represent the participant view."[58] Lincoln and Guba described methods to ensure credibility: prolonged engagement or immersion in the phenomena under study, persistent observation, and triangulation of data. To ensure credibility this researcher read

[54] Murray J. Fisher and Andrea P. Marshall, "Understanding Descriptive Statistics," *Journal of Australian College of Critical Care Nurses* 22 (November 2008): 95, https://doi:10.1016/j.aucc.2008.11.003.

[55] Lincoln and Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, 290.

[56] Ibid., 219.

[57] Ibid., 213.

[58] Nowell et al., "Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Methods: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria," *Journal of Qualitative Methods* 16, no. 1 (October 2, 2017): 3, https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847.

and re-read respondent responses with a focus on uncovering student disruptive behavior in church settings offering religious instruction, i.e., this can be deemed as "persistent observation." This researcher then observed the reoccurring words used by respondents in the questionnaire to describe student disruptive behavior and compared the responses from different participants in this study. That is, the researcher triangulated [compared] similar responses from the respondents. Essentially, credibility focuses on identifying the participants view.

(2) Transferability—According to Lincoln and Guba, "Transferability is analog to external validity in quantitative research."[59] Susan Morrow defined transferability as "generalizability of results to context beyond that investigated in a study."[60] This researcher believes the findings in this study may be extrapolated to a larger population, i.e., students in public and private schools have the propensity to demonstrate disruptive behaviors in the classroom. Lincoln and Guba wrote that the central method to promote transferability is "thick descriptions of the data, the settings, and the participants."[61] This researcher described the data, the setting, and the participants. Thus, transferability may apply to this study. However, a limitation of qualitative research is that the results are less generalizable to a larger population.

(3) Dependability—Lincoln and Guba stated, "Dependability is analog to reliability in quantitative research."[62] Shenton noted, "Dependability means that a study may be replicated by

[59] Lincoln and Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, 290-91.

[60] Susan L. Morrow, "Quality and Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research in Counseling Psychology," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 52, no. 2 (2005): 252, https://doi.org/ 10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.250.

[61] Lincoln and Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, 124-25.

[62] Ibid., 219.

another researcher, using the same method and same content—thus, the results are expected to be the same."[63] At this juncture there has been no attempt to replicate this study.

(4) Confirmability—Lincoln and Guba specified, "Confirmability is the counterpart to objectivity in quantitative research."[64] Shenton wrote, "Confirmability strives to minimize any bias in the findings—i.e., the findings are the experiences and ideas of informants, rather than characteristics and preferences of researchers."[65] This study used convenience sampling to identify and select participants. The questionnaire was sent to church leaders, who in turn selected participants. Thus, the researcher and participants did not know each other socially, professionally, or otherwise, minimizing bias in the findings. Thus, there is reason and confidence for confirmability in this study. A competent researcher, using the same method and same content could have a high probability that leads to the same findings that this research noted.

Additionally, Stake offers four strategies for triangulation to ensure the trustworthiness of the data gathered. First, Data-Source Triangulation employs multiple data sources to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to multiple participants, providing multiple data sources for this study. Second, Investigator Triangulation allows multiple investigators to collect data for the research project. However, there was only one investigator for this study. Third, Theory Triangulation uses multiple theories to support the findings. Multiple theories were introduced to support the findings of this study; for example, Social Learning Theory and Motivation Theory support the findings in this study. Fourth, Methodological Triangulation uses

[63] Andrew K. Shenton, "Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Information Studies* 22, no. 2 (2004): 71-72, https://doi.org/10.3233/EFI-2004-22201.

[64] Lincoln and Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, 219.

[65] Shenton, "Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness," 72.

two or more sources of data collection.[66] For example, an interview and a survey were not used in this study.

[66] Stake, *The Art of Case*, 114.

Chapter 4: Results

Fifteen respondents completed the questionnaire related to the research. The respondents were randomly assigned a number from 1 to 15, in lieu of pseudonyms. The results were coded using respondent words and subsequently categorized under three broad categories: student disruptive behaviors, teacher coping strategies to off-set students' disruptive behaviors, and reflections on teaching disruptive students (please refer to Appendices D, E and F). Additionally, respondent demographics and student demographics are reported as descriptive statistics (please refer to Appendices A, B and C). Students were not administered a questionnaire and any information relevant to them was gathered from the teacher's questionnaires. Thus, demographic data related to the students is limited and noncomprehensive.

Content Analysis

The researcher of this study used content analysis to analyze data. Content analysis allows the researcher to ascertain reoccurring words in the questionnaire.[1] Reoccur means "to only happen again at least once."[2] Coding is a qualitative data analysis strategy in which some aspect of the data is assigned a descriptive label.[3] The researcher chose to code participant words with Arabic numerals. The coded words with similar data were grouped into broader categories.[4] The researcher represented the categories with Roman numerals. The representation of data in codes and categories are illustrated in Tables 1-3.

[1] Patton, *Qualitative Research*, 453.

[2] "Reoccur," Merriam-Webster.com, accessed September 15, 2021, https://www.merriam-webster.com.

[3] "Qualitative Data Analysis Strategies," *University of Illinois*, accessed July 16, 2022, https://guides.libray.illinois.edu/qualitative/coding.

[4] "Confusing Categories and Themes," *Qualitative Health Research* 18, no. 2 (June 2008): 727-28, https//journals.sage.pub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1049732308314930.

Table 1: Category I—Student Disruptive Behaviors Identified by Respondents. This table is a representation of data in codes and the category disruptive behavior.

Code	Disruptive Behavior
1	Students talking.
2	Students with disabilities identified by respondents acted inappropriately, with the following descriptors: autism, developmental disability, and mental health issues.
3	Students not listening, not focused, and with short attention spans.
4	Students who lack discipline and fail to follow rules.
5	Both boys and girls causing disruptive behaviors identified by respondents.
6	Teachers perceive above identified disruptive behaviors as minor.

Table 2: Category II—Teacher Coping Strategies. This table is a representation of data in codes and the category teacher coping strategies.

Code	Teacher Coping Strategies
1	Respondents expect students to be respectful and behave appropriately.
2	First line intervention resources are children ministry directors, deacons, and team leaders.
3	Respondents rarely sought assistance from the church senior hierarchy.
4	The primary coping strategy was a one-on-one talk with students who were disruptive.

Table 3: Category III—Teacher Reflections on Teaching Disruptive Students. This table is a representation of data in codes and the category teacher reflections.

Code	Teacher Reflections
1	Respondents classified their teaching experience as “enjoyable.”
2	Respondents noted that they were “very comfortable” teaching disruptive students.
3	Respondents indicated disruptive students had “no impact” on their continued teaching.

Data Interpretation

The following paragraphs describe the data in Tables 1-3. The reoccurring disruptive student coded behaviors represented by Arabic numerals and cited by the respondents were (1) students talking, (2) students classified as disabled (by respondents) acting inappropriately, (3)

students not listening or student inattentiveness, and (4) students lacking discipline and failing to follow the rules. Those behaviors were represented as Category I. Teachers reported both boys and girls were disruptive; however, boys caused more disruptions than girls and all student behaviors were seen as minor and infrequent.

Teacher coping strategies, detailed in Category II, were used to offset student disruptive behaviors. They were also coded and represented by Arabic numerals: (1) teachers expected students to be respectful to others during instruction; (2) teachers relied on church leaders (perceived to be mostly middle management professionals like children directors, deacons, and team leaders) as a resource to assist them in managing disruptive students; (3) teachers rarely sought assistance from the church senior hierarchy to aid in managing student disruptive behaviors; and (4) the primary coping strategy used by teachers was a one-on-one talk with those students who were disruptive.

Teacher reflections on teaching disruptive students were coded Category III and represented by Arabic numerals: (1) teachers classified their experiences teaching disruptive students as enjoyable; (2) teachers noted they were comfortable teaching disruptive students; and (3) disruptive students had no impact on their continued teaching.

Descriptive Statistics

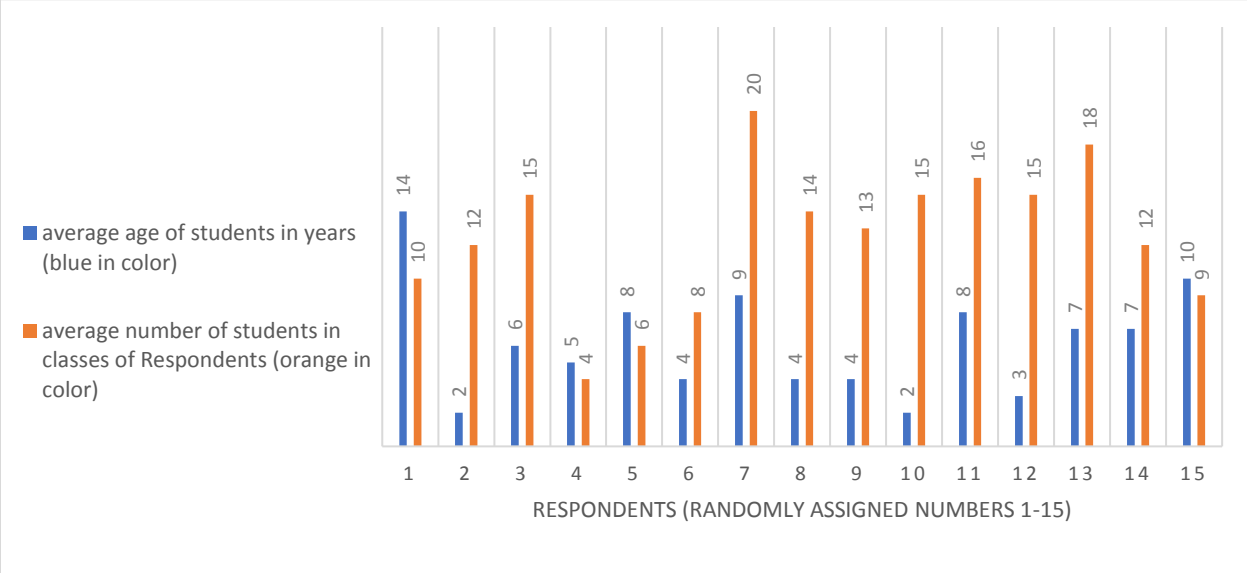
"Descriptive statistics are numbers that summarize data such as percentages, i.e., Descriptive Statistics simply describe data, but do not try to generalize beyond the data."[5] Descriptive statistics are offered in Table 4 and Figure 1.

[5] Jim Frost, "Descriptive Statistics," *Statistics by Jim*, accessed August 20, 2021, https://statisticsbyJim.com/glossary/descriiptive-statistcis/.

Table 4: Respondent Demographics. This table is a representation of Respondent demographics via descriptive statistics.

[A] Gender		[B] Ethnicity		[C] Church Affiliation		[D] Teaching Experience	
			Percentages				
Female	73.33%	Black	46.66%	Non-Denominational	40.00%	Less than 1-10 years	66.66%
Male	26.67%	White	46.66%	Baptist	33.33%	11-20 years	20.00%
		No Response	6.68%	Southern Baptist	13.33%	21-30 years	6.67%
				Christian	6.67%	31-40 years	0%
				Episcopalian	6.67%	41-50 years	6.67%

Figure 1: Student Demographics. *Chart illustrating the average age of students coupled with number of students in classes taught by Respondents.*



Note: ***age range of students is 5-18 years; average student age is 6.2 years; average number of students in class is 12.4 students***

Respondent Demographics

Table 4 demonstrates that female teachers accounted for the majority of participants (73.33 percent) and they were nearly three times more likely to participate in this study than male teachers. Black and White teachers were equally represented (46.66 percent). Finally, the largest participation by church affiliation were non-denominational (40 percent). This was followed by Baptist (33.33 percent) and Southern Baptist (13.33 percent). The smallest number

of participants defined their church affiliation as Christian (6.67 percent) and Episcopalians (6.67 percent). Most of the respondents' teaching experience (66.66 percent) ranged from less than one year to ten years.

Student Demographics

Students taught by the participants ranged in age from five to eighteen years. This age range corresponds with school-aged children. The classes taught by teachers in this study were generally small, with an average of 12.4 students per class. The descriptive data illustrated in Figure 1 shows the average age of students, 6.2 years, represented with a blue bar; the orange bar represents the average number of students in classes of the respondents. The respondents were randomly assigned numbers 1-15.

According to Rebecca Turley, non-denominational churches believe the Bible is the sole authority that dictates every aspect of the church and their beliefs and philosophies.[6] Non-denominational churches are also self-governing entities, often with elders overseeing the church's organization, structure, and traditions.[7] In a non-denominational church, one would find a stronger focus on Biblical principles than denominational rituals.[8] Baptists insist only believers should be baptized, by immersion rather than by sprinkling or pouring/water.[9] Hudson noted that although Baptists do not constitute a single church or denominational structure, most adhere to a

[6] Rebecca Turley, "What is a Non-Denominational Church," ChristianMinistryEDU.org., April 18, 2022, https://christianministryedu.org/faq/what-is-non-denominational-church/.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Winthrop S. Hudson, "Baptists: Protestantism," *Britannica*, accessed October 4, 2022, https://www.britannica.com/topic/ Baptist.

congregational form of church government.[10] Southern Baptists are the largest evangelical protestant group in the United States.[11] According to Dalia Fahmy, this group descended from Baptists who settled in the American colonies in the seventeenth century. However, Fahmy noted Southern Baptists founded their own denomination in 1845, following a rift with their northern counterparts over slavery.[12] Thus, it would appear to this researcher that Southern Baptist were pro-slavery. In congregational church government each local congregation is independent and governed by its own members.[13]

Black churches constituted a major segment of American Baptist life; many slaves were converted and became members of Baptist churches in the 1720's to 1740's.[14] This researcher is aligned with Baptist principles and beliefs. A Christian church desires to embrace all followers of Jesus Christ.[15] According to West Towne Christian Church, Christian churches believe Christ came to create one church, not simply one congregation or even one denomination.[16] West Towne Christian Church further wrote that Christian churches believe the church should be the one place in society where people from different social economic, ethnic, political, and geographical backgrounds are united by their faith in Jesus.[17] Episcopalians believe in a loving,

[10] Hudson, "Baptists: Protestantism."

[11] Dalia Fahmy, "7 Facts about Southern Baptists," *Pew Research Center*, June 7, 2019, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/03/07/7-facts-about-southern-baptists/.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Hudson, "Baptists: Protestantism."

[14] Ibid.

[15] "What is a Christian Church?" *West Towne Christian Church*, accessed April 10, 2022, https://www.followjesus.org/what-is-a-christian-church.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

liberating, and a life-giving Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the teaching of Jesus Christ, whose life, death, and resurrection saved the world.[18] Additionally, Episcopalians have a legacy of inclusion, aspiring to tell and exemplify God's love for every human being.[19]

This researcher adheres to the seven Baptist principles iterated by Anthony L. Chute. The first principle is biblical authority. That is, Baptists often describe the Bible as infallible and may affirm the Bible is inerrant. The second principle is regenerate church membership, i.e., Baptists believe the local church consist of persons professing faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior (Matt 16:13-18). Baptist practice baptism by immersion, the third principle (Matt 28:19; Gal 3:27). A fourth principle is local church autonomy, that is, Baptists do not empower any entity with authority over local church affairs (Matt 18:15-17). Baptists believe in soul competency, a fifth principle that states every Christian through the mediation of Jesus, has free access to God (Heb 4:14-16). The sixth principle is the priesthood of all believers. The latter stated specifically is that there is no need to go through a priest to have a relationship with God. Finally, the seventh principle is that Baptist believe in religious liberty for all people and right to adhere to religion of their choice.[20]

Prefrontal Cortex Development

The children taught in the child ministry programs related to this study ranged in age from five to eighteen years. Research indicates the prefrontal cortex in children's brains are not fully developed. This may account for inappropriate behavior displayed by students. Specifically,

[18] "What We Believe," *The Episcopal Church*, accessed December 3, 2021, https://ww.episcopalchurch.org/what-we-believe/.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Anthony L. Chute, "Baptist Theology," *TGC U.S. Edition*, accessed June 20, 2022, https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/baptist-theology.

research suggests that "the development and maturation of the prefrontal cortex occurs between the ages of 10 years to 25 years and reaches full development at age 25 years, thus, this region of the brain is important for complex behavioral performance that help accomplish executive brain functions."[21] Executive brain function involves three dimensions: working memory (the capacity to hold and manipulate information over short periods of time, inhibitory control (the skill to master and filter thoughts and impulses or to pause and think before acting), and cognitive flexibility (the capacity to nimbly switch gears and adjust to changed demands, priorities or perspectives).[22] Examples of executive brain function include directing attention, regulating emotions, controlling impulses, planning and organization, and self-monitoring.[23] Children need to develop executive brain function to meet the "challenges they will face on the road to becoming productive, contributing members of their communities."[24] Children are not born with these skills; those who live in toxic environments of abuse, neglect or violence may have delayed or impaired executive function development, leading to maladaptive behaviors.[25] According to Johanna Calderon, some children's executive function issues are presented as tantrums, trouble

[21] Mariam Arain et al., "Maturation of the Adolescent Brain," *Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment* 9 (April 3, 2013): 450, https://doi.org/10.2147/NDT.S39776.

[22] "Building the Brain's 'Air Traffic Control' System: How Early Experiences Shape the Development of Executive Function," *Harvard University Center on the Developing Child*, accessed July 7, 2022, https://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/How-Early-Experiences-Shape-the-Development-of-Executive-Function.pdf.

[23] "Executive Functions and Dysfunction," *Good Therapy*, accessed November 19, 2019, https://www.goodtherapy.org/learn.

[24] "Building the Brain's 'Air Traffic Control' System," Harvard University.

[25] "Executive Function & Self-Regulation," *Harvard University Developing Child*, accessed July 7, 2022, https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/executive-function/.

with impulse control, difficulty self-regulating emotions, time management issues and problems remembering instructions.[26]

Lack of attention was one of the maladaptive categories of behavior teachers in this study identified. Researchers have shown four types of management. Focused attention channels attention to a single task, commonly called paying attention. Sustained attention concentrates on time consuming tasks. Selective attention focuses on a stimulus in complex settings. Alternating attention is ability to switch attention.[27] Lack of student attention in this study might fall into one or more of these categories.

The Prefrontal Cortex has been isolated into three central parts: "(1) Medial Prefrontal Cortex—which contributes to maintaining attention and motivation: (2) Orbital Prefrontal Cortex—helps control impulses and to ignore distractions as well as helps one follow social rules: and (3) Lateral Prefrontal Cortex—allows people to create and execute plans, organize actions, and allows people to switch tasks."[28] Malfunction with the medial prefrontal cortex, the orbital prefrontal cortex and the lateral prefrontal cortex might help explain the disruptive behaviors of students in this study.

Finally, the prefrontal cortex supports rule learning; rules are necessary in an organized society.[29] If there is a deficit in the serotonin processing in the brain, impulsive or violent

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[26] Johanna Calderon, "Executive Functions in Children: Why it Matters and How to Help," *Harvard Health Publishing*, (blog), December 16, 2020, https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/executive-function-in-children-why-it-matters-and-how-to-help.

[27] "Attention Management-Types of Attention," *Tutorials Point*, accessed October 11, 2021, https://www.tutorialspoint.com.

[28] "Prefrontal Cortex," *Good Therapy*, (blog), updated September 4, 2019, https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/prefrontal-cortex.

[29] The Science of Psychotherapy, "Prefrontal Cortex," *SOP*, September 23, 2018, https://thescienceofpsychotherapy.

behavior can result. Low serotonergic (5-HT) activity [serotonin] correlates with increased impulsive-aggressive behavior [and] is associated with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)."[30] Many mental disorders appear during adolescence (age ten years to twenty-five years) to include anxiety and depression.[31] Deficits in any one or combinations of the above might lead to disruptive student behaviors.

Categories of Disabilities Under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The teachers in this study identified three potential disabilities students in this study might be experiencing which may account for student disruptive behaviors. The disabilities identified by teachers were autism, developmental disability, and mental health issues. The IDEA defines autism as "a developmental disability affecting social interactions."[32] The mental health issues cited by teachers are tentative, not based on psychological assessment, vague, and could fall under more than one of six potential categories.

(1) Specific Learning Disability—affects the ability to listen, etc.

(2) Other Health Impairments—includes Attention-Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

(3) Emotional Disturbance—includes inability to interact with peers and teachers and inappropriate behavior

[30] Robert Oades et al., "The Influence of Serotonin and Other Genes on Impulsive Behavioral Aggression and Cognitive Impulsivity in Children with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder," *Biomed Central* (BMC) 4, article 48 (October 20, 2008): 1, https://doi.org/10.1186/1744-9081-4-48.

[31] "Adolescent Mental Health," *World Health Organization* (WHO), November 17, 2021, https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health#:~:text=Mental%20health%20determinants,and%20learning%20to%20manage%20emotions.

[32] "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act," *IDEA*, accessed August 15, 2022, https://sites.ed.gov/idea/#.

(4) Intellectual Disability—below average intellectual ability coupled with deficits in adaptive behavior

(5) Deafness or Hearing Impairment

(6) Multiple Disabilities—which includes two or more of the disabilities cited or other disabilities.[33]

This study only includes teacher perception of student disabilities that might fall within the purview of IDEA. The disabilities identified by teachers may need follow-up to ascertain their accuracy as deemed appropriate by parents, church personnel, school personnel, or professionals. (This researcher gained valuable first-hand experience from a brother diagnosed with autism. That is, overtime, specialists, and clinicians changed his diagnosis several times).

Theory Interpretation

Primary Theories to Support Study Findings

There are four primary theories that may provide a lens to understand disruptive student behavior revealed by respondents in this study. The primary theories are as follows: Social Learning Theory, Motivation Theory, Critical Theory, and Constructionism Theory. Secondary theories will also be delineated in subsequent paragraphs.

(1) **Bandura's Theory of Social Learning** is based on the premise that students "learn within a social context and that learning is facilitated through modeling, observation, and imitation."[34] He indicated modeling requires "attention, retention, reproduction and

[33] "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act."

[34] McLeod, "Social Learning Theory."

motivation."[35] Additionally, "learning also occurs through rewards and punishment."[36] Social Learning Theory combines behavioral theories (stimulus-response and rewards and punishment) with cognitive processes. To reiterate, social learning requires four cognitive processes: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. First, the individual must pay attention to the behavior and its consequences to form a mental representation of the behavior. Second, the behavior may be noticed but is not always remembered [retention] which prevents imitation. Reproduction is the ability to perform the demonstrated behavior. Fourth, motivation is the will to perform the behavior, considering the rewards and punishment.[37] According to Kendra Cherry, there are three core concepts at the heart of Social Learning Theory: individuals can learn through observation; the internal mental states are an essential part of the process; and this theory recognizes that just because something has been learned does not necessarily result in a behavior change.[38] Students in this study, may have been motivated by the negative influences of other students when displaying maladaptive behaviors. In sum, there was a reasonable probability that students paid attention to the bad behavior of other students, remembered the bad behavior, reproduced the bad behavior, and had a will to imitate the bad behavior of others.

(2) **Maslow's Theory of Motivation** is also useful for interpreting and evaluating the findings in this study. Maslow purports individuals have needs. One of those needs is a need to belong to a group; group membership has the potential to encourage and support behavior that

[35] McLeod, "Social Learning Theory."

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Kendra Cherry, "How Social Learning Theory Works," *VeryWell Mind*, updated July 28, 2021, https://www.verywellmind.com/social-learning-theory-2795074.

may be either positive or negative.[39] Harriet Over noted, "in early development, children seek to affiliate with others and to form long lasting bonds with their group members."[40] Harriet Over continued that the need to belong has an impact on children's behavior.[41] This impact is generally perceived as positive, but also has the potential to be negative.[42] Students in this study could have been influenced by the negative behavior of others, causing them to act inappropriately.

(3) According to Horkheimer**, Critical Theory** "provides the impetus to liberate human beings from circumstances that enslave [control] them."[43] One social issue explored by Critical Theory implies a power struggle between the powerful and the less powerful.[44] Students may perceive a struggle between teacher control of the classroom and the students' autonomy. Thus, students may act inappropriately in a struggle for power. Additionally, as it relates to this study, children may encounter an internal struggle between the forces of good and evil. The aspects of gender, race, and culture might also be considered. For example, boys may attempt to overpower female teachers. Additionally, Black students might resist the authority of White teachers. Finally, the child rearing practices between Black and White cultures may be divergent, causing friction in the classroom. For example, according to Pamila Li, it was determined "that there are four main parenting styles: (a) permissive (parent rarely gives or enforces rules); (b) authoritative

[39] McLeod, "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs."

[40] Harriet Over, "The Origins of Belonging: Social Motivation in Infants and Young Children," *Journal of Biological Sciences* 52, no. 2, published by The Royal Society (January 19, 2016): 2, https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2015.0072.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Horkheimer, "Critical Theory."

[44] Ibid.

(parent sets clear rules and expectations); (c) neglectful (parent absent or indifferent); and (d) authoritarian (parent sets strict rules for punishment and allows only one-way communication)."[45] Thus, in a culturally diverse classroom this might set the stage for conflict, chaos, and disruptive student behavior. For example, a child raised by permissive parents may be in conflict with teachers who are authoritative or authoritarian.

(4) **Social Constructionism Theory**, according to William Shadish, "refers to constructing knowledge about reality, not constructing reality itself."[46] Greg Neimeyer noted, "All of our understandings [knowledge] are contextually embedded, interpersonally forged and necessarily limited."[47] Michael Crotty determined, "Constructionism focuses on the collective generation and transmission of meaning [knowledge]."[48] Finally, Stake noted, "Knowledge is constructed rather than discovered, i.e., knowledge is made up of social interpretation."[49] Thus, knowledge and understanding of participant responses becomes clear in the reoccurring words they used about student disruptive behaviors; many teachers used the same words to describe student disruptive behavior.

[45] Pamila Li, "4 Types of Parenting Styles and their Effects on the Child: Based on Diana Baumrind's Parenting Styles Theory," *Parenting for the Brain*, updated December 22, 2022, https://www.parentingforbrain.com/4-baumrind-parenting-styles/.

[46] William R. Shadish, "Philosophy of Science and the Quantitative-Qualitative Debates: Thirteen Common Errors," *Evaluation and Program Planning* 18, no. 1 (January-March 1995): 67, https://doi.org/10.1016/0149-7189(94)00050-8.

[47] Greg J. Neimeyer, *Constructivist Assessment: A Casebook* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications,1993), 2.

[48] Michael Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), 58.

[49] Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, 99.

Secondary Theories to Support Study Findings

(5) **Communication Theory**: Betteke Ruler posits that there is no singular Communication Theory, rather, "the term Communication Theory refers to a body of theories."[50] Ruler noted Communication Theory can be viewed through at least three different lens. First, communication is a one-way process from sender to receiver. That is, communication is successful if the sender's message reaches the receiver.[51] As it relates to this study there is probability the sender's message could be blocked by the receiver not listening (i.e., the student not listening to the teacher). Ruler's second lens noted a two-way process between sender and receiver, i.e., interaction between sender and receiver is required for a two-way-process to take place.[52] As it relates to the present study, the sender sent a message to the receiver, but there is a high probability that no interaction (communication) took place. Thus, it might be said that the message was received, but not understood, producing no interaction. Third, Ruler explained, "communication is sometimes called transactional and in regard to this lens, the sender and receiver attempt to interpret and understand each other."[53] As it relates to this study, the sender and receiver continuously attempt to understand each other, as the messages were sent and received. Thus, there may be an unspecified delay in interaction (communication) between sender and receiver and thus, a lack of understanding prevails.

(6) Another potential theory is **Frustration-Aggression Theory**. Frustration-Aggression Theory is rooted in psychology. The basic undergirding of this theory is "the existence of

[50] Betteke van Ruler, "Communication Theory: An Underrated Pillar on Which Strategic Communication Rests," *International Journal of Strategic Communication* 12, no.4 (2018): 367, https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2018.1452240.

[51] Ibid., 368.

[52] Ibid., 369.

[53] Ibid., 371.

frustration (a goal response and not an emotional experience) always leads to some form of aggression and additionally aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration."[54] Johannes Breuer and Malte Elson also noted frustration can lead to depression and retaliatory behavior directed toward individuals not responsible for the interference with the attainment of a goal (i.e. displaced aggression). The authors stated that retaliation is more intense in anonymous interactions.[55] Further, they offered evidence that "males are on average more likely to behave and act aggressively than females."[56] Breuer and Elson noted that frustration occurs when an anticipated reward is reduced, delayed, or removed completely.[57] Finally, they determined two types of aggression: overt and covert.[58] Overt aggressions iterated by teachers in the present study were students talking and making noise; covert or passive aggressions were students not listening or student inattentiveness.

(7) In employing the **Self-Regulation Theory**, Carolyn Tucker et. al. investigated three factors in the behavior exhibited by African-American children: (a) their level of self-control for engaging in activities that promote success, (b) their level of achievement motivation, and (c) their level of social support received from primary caregivers.[59] The participants were sixty-nine African American children (thirty boys and thirty-nine girls), ranging in age from seven to

[54] Johannes Breuer and Malte Elson, "Frustration-Aggression Theory," *The Wiley Handbook of Violence and Aggression*, ed. Peter Sturmey (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: John Wiley and Sons, 2017), 1, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119057574.whbva040.

[55] Ibid., 3.

[56] Ibid., 3.

[57] Ibid., 4.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Carolyn M. Tucker et al., "Maladaptive Behavior in African-American Children: A Self-Regulation Theory-Based Approach," *The Educational Forum* 66, no. 3 (September 2002): 220-27, https://doi.org/10.1080/00131720208984832.

eighteen years; their primary caregivers were women (94.2 percent).[60] The researchers used "Kendall and Wilcox's self-control rating scales to measure each child's and primary caregiver's perceptions of the child's level of self-control."[61] Additionally, the researchers used "Eccles, Wigfield, Harold, and Blumenfeld's Math Achievement Motivation Sub-Scale (MATH) to measure each child's and primary caregiver's perception of child's achievement motivation."[62] Their third instrument used was Harter's social support scale for children, measuring the degree to which each child and primary caregiver perceived significant others as being supportive of the child.[63] The researchers also administered Quay's Behavior Problem Checklist to the children and their primary caregivers as a measure of the children's maladaptive behavior, such as disruptions or bothering others.[64] Tucker et al. noted they found self-control to be a significant predictor of African American children's behavior. Specifically, children with greater ability to control or self-regulate their behavior reported lower levels of maladaptive behavior[65] and "high levels of motivation or social support were not associated with lower levels of maladaptive behavior."[66] In regard to Self-Regulation Theory, an antithesis position was taken. That is, according to the Self-Regulation Theory, many students will comply with teacher expectations and behave appropriately. However, in numerous other studies, it has been found that some students tend to disrupt classroom instruction with inappropriate behavior. The latter was found

[60] Tucker et al., "Maladaptive Behavior in African-American Children," 221.

[61] Ibid., 222.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., 224.

[66] Ibid.

in this researcher's study. Specifically, according to teachers in this researcher's study, some students were not self-regulated.

According to Aaron Lambert, Michael Gottfried and Jacob Kirksey analyzed a longitudinal study (similar to Tucker et al. in 2002). The study was undertaken at the University of California. Two research questions were presented: (a) Are children in Catholic elementary schools more self-disciplined than similar students in other schools? (b) Is the relationship between Catholic school attendance and self-discipline stronger for certain types of students?[67] The participants "included approximately 17,000 kindergarteners who attended public schools and approximately 2000 children who attended non-public schools of which about 50 percent attended Catholic schools."[68] The researchers noted three salient findings. First, students in Catholic schools were less likely to act out or be disruptive than those in other private or public schools. Second, the students in Catholic schools exhibited more self-control than those in other private or public schools. Third, regardless of demographics, students in Catholic schools exhibited more self-discipline than students in other private schools.[69] Thus, self-discipline appeared to be an asset to teachers in Catholic schools, similar to the self-discipline experienced by most teachers in the study initiated by this researcher.

(8) **Operant Conditioning** is an additional theory that could potentially support the findings in this study. "B.F. Skinner is regarded as the Father of Operant Conditioning; however,

[67] Aaron Lambert, "New Study Finds Catholic School Students Have Better Self-Discipline," *Denver Catholic*, August 22, 2018, https://denvercatholic.org/new-study-finds-catholic-school-students-have-better-self-discipline/.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid.

his theory is based on Thorndike's Law of Effect."[70] Operant Conditioning states "behavior that is followed by pleasant consequences is likely to be repeated."[71] Skinner introduced three terms to support his theory. First, positive reinforcement is a response or behavior strengthened by rewards that lead to the repetition of desired behavior. For example, a teacher may verbally praise a student who behaves appropriately or the teacher may give a student token rewards like stars in her record book or certificates. Second, negative reinforcement is a behavior implemented to remove an adverse stimulus. For example, a teacher may tell her students that she will cancel the homework for the evening (removal of an adverse stimulus) if they participate actively in the lessons (the behavior). Third, punishment is the opposite of reinforcement; it is designed to weaken or eliminate a response rather than increase it. Punishment can be the application of an unpleasant stimulus or the removal of a potentially rewarding stimulus.[72] As it relates to this study, teachers reported the coping strategy most employed to offset undesirable student behavior was to talk to the students. This might be perceived as a reprimand or punishment.

(9) Fermin Koop wrote an assessment of **Conflict Theory**. He said, "Humans are not orderly creatures [and] social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than consensus and conformity."[73] "Those with wealth and power try to hold on to it by any means possible, chiefly suppressing the poor and powerless."[74] Koop also wrote, "due to inequalities of

[70] Saul McLeod, "What is Operant Conditioning and How Does it Work?" *Simply Psychology*, January 21, 2018, https://www.simplypsychology.org/operant-conditioning.html.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Fermin Koop, "What is Conflict Theory? Looking at Marx's Main Concepts," *ZME Science*, January 28, 2021, https://www.zmescience.com/other/feature-post/what-is-conflict-theory-19092019/.

[74] Ibid.

power some individuals and groups develop more power and reward than others."[75] Koop indicated that "competition for power can lead to poverty, discrimination, and violence."[76] In the current study, it might be said that there is competition for power between powerful teachers and less powerful students, which manifested disruptive student behavior.

Data Evaluation Summary

Data was gathered with questionnaires from participants selected by convenience sampling. Data was analyzed by using content analysis (coding and categories), descriptive statistics, the prefrontal cortex development of the students ranging in age from 5-18 years, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Social Learning Theory, Motivation Theory, Critical Theory, Social Constructionism Theory, and other theories. The trustworthiness of this study was supported by templates developed by Lincoln and Guba and Stake. Most significantly, the standards set by the IRB and personal ethical principles provided guidance for initiating and completing this study. This was a qualitative case study inspired by Robert Stake's book, *The Art of Case Study Research*. The data gathered in a case study allowed a comprehensive analysis of phenomena. The data gathering instrument was open-ended and "did not rely on right and wrong answers, since it employed 'what' and 'how' questions to understand perceptions of the respondents."[77]

[75] Koop, "What is Conflict Theory?"

[76] Ibid.

[77] Creswell, *Research Design*, 130-31.

Trustworthiness

(As Delineated by Lincoln and Guba, Robert Stake and Others)

The principle of trustworthiness is crucial to the validity of study findings (please refer to Appendices G and H). Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to "four criteria, i.e., credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability."[78] This concept was introduced in Chapter Two and Chapter Three but will be explored in greater detail in this chapter to support the findings. The criteria for trustworthiness was first delineated by Lincoln and Guba and is the central mechanism to support the validity and reliability in this study.

Credibility is a vital component of trustworthiness. Credibility is "how confident the researcher is in the truth of the study's findings."[79] "The data collected is an accurate representative of the phenomenon under study."[80] This means if the "same questions were presented to different respondents who answered the same questions in an identical fashion."[81] Lincoln and Guba use data triangulation to express the foregoing, however, Gigi Devault associates credibility with validity. Irene Korstjens and Albine Moser contended credibility "establishes whether the research findings represented plausible information drawn from the participant's original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants' original data and is a

[78] "Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data: Section 3," *North Carolina Central University*, accessed February 8, 2022, https://library.ncu.edu/c.php?/.

[79] Lincoln and Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, 218.

[80] "Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data," *North Carolina University*.

[81] Gigi Devault, "Establishing Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research: Learn About the Processes," *LiveAbout Dotcom*, updated August 20, 2019, https://www.liveabout.com/establishing-trustworthiness-in-qualitative-research-2297042.

correct interpretation of the participants' original views."[82] The reoccurring words used by the participants' in the questionnaire is an expression of the participants' original view, based on their experiences. In sum, the researcher places great confidence in the findings of this research, contending the respondents accurately identified their perceptions of student behaviors.

Transferability is another important component of trustworthiness. Transferability is an indication that "the findings have applicability in other contexts."[83] Transferability also "generalizes the study findings and attempts to apply them to other situations and contexts [however], it cannot be proven definitely that data are transferable, but researchers can establish it is likely."[84] It is highly probable the findings in this study may have applicability in other settings where teachers deliver instruction to children, including church settings and public and private school settings. Although transferability is probable, it "cannot be proven definitely."[85]

An additional component to trustworthiness is dependability. Dependability implies "the findings are consistent and could be repeated."[86] Dependability is related to reliability.[87] To achieve dependability, researchers ensure the research process is logical, traceable and clearly documented.[88] Dependability is accomplished by keeping field notes and journals.[89] The latter

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[82] Irene Korstjens and Albine Moser, "A Practical Guidance to Qualitative Research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and Publishing," *European Journal of General Practice* 24, no.1 (December 2018): 121, https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.137.

[83] Lincoln and Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, 216-17.

[84] Devault, "Establishing Trustworthiness."

[85] Ibid.

[86] Lincoln and Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, 218.

[87] Devault, "Establishing Trustworthiness."

[88] Gerald A. Tobin and Cecily M. Begley, "Methodological Rigour Within a Qualitative Framework," *Journal of Advance Nursing* 48, no. 4 (October 21, 2004): 392, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2004.03207.x.

[89] Nowell, et al., "Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Methods."

was not accomplished; however, the researcher is confident that the findings could be repeated in a similar type of study. However, this study was neither replicated nor repeated.

Lastly, another facet of trustworthiness is confirmability. Confirmability is "a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of the study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation or interests."[90] Korstjens and Moser noted, "Confirmability is concerned with establishing that data and the interpretation of the findings are not figments of the inquirer's imagination, but clearly derived from the data."[91] Similarly, Norwell et al. wrote, "Confirmability is concerned with establishing that the researcher's interpretation and findings are derived from the data."[92] The findings in this study were drawn from participant input and represented their experiences; they were not shaped by researcher influence or bias. Thus, this study meets the criteria for confirmability.

Stake offers four strategies to validate gathered data: Data Source Triangulation, Investigator Triangulation, Theory Triangulations and Methodological Triangulations.[93] Each one of these strategies will be explored to support the findings in this study. According to Stake, the first strategy to validate data is Data Source Triangulation. Data-Source Triangulation is "the comparison of data from different informants or participants."[94] This researcher looks for similar patterns in the responses offered by participants. Data-Source Triangulation provides validity for this study; patterns were found in the responses of varied participants. This study focused on identifying reoccurring words used by the participants in response to the questionnaire. The goal

[90] Lincoln and Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, 218-19.

[91] Korstjens and Moser, "A Practical Guidance."

[92] Nowell et al., "Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Methods."

[93] Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, 112-14.

[94] Ibid., 113

of data gathering and analysis was to understand participant perceptions about student discipline issues in a church setting. The researcher is confident the findings are supported by data-source triangulation. There was clear evidence that reoccurring words from the respondents identified student maladaptive behavior. Stake wrote that the second strategy to validate data is Investigator Triangulation. Investigator Triangulation is that "other researchers, i.e., multiple investigators, take a look at the same scene or phenomenon."[95] In this study only one researcher was utilized, thus, Investigator Triangulation does not apply. Additionally, Stake wrote that the third strategy to validate data is Theory Triangulation. Theory Triangulation uses multiple theories to support research findings. This proposition was explored earlier in this chapter, that is, in the overview of Bandura's and Maslow's theories. Both theories imply that in social contexts, individuals are influenced by others in the group. As it relates to the study, it is possible students may have been motivated by the negative influences of other students when they demonstrated maladaptive behaviors. Therefore, Theory Triangulation applies to this study. According to Stake, the last strategy to validate data is Methodological Triangulation, i.e., two or more sources of data collection. Stake noted that he was "speaking principally of observation, interview, and document review."[96] This study used one source to collect data, a questionnaire. Heale and Forbes noted, "Methodological Triangulation is the most common type of triangulation [and it includes] two or more sets of data collection using the same methodology, for example from qualitative data sources [i.e., interviews and surveys] or alternatively two different data

[95] Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, 113

[96] Ibid., 114.

collection methods [i.e., qualitative and quantitative]."[97] Methodological Triangulation does not apply in this study.

Summary

Data in this study was analyzed via (1) content analysis wherein participants' recurring words were coded and categorized. Also, data was analyzed using (2) descriptive statistics. Further data was analyzed through (3) the lens of children's prefrontal cortex development, (4) participant characterization of student maladaptive behavior that relied on terms generally used by health professional to include physicians and others, (5) IDEA, and (6) a host of theories (including Social Learning Theory, Motivation Theory, Critical Theory, Social Constructionism Theory, Communication Theory, Frustration-Aggression Theory, Self-Regulation Theory, Operant Conditioning Theory, and Conflict Theory). Finally, the trustworthiness of this study, as delineated by Lincoln and Guba and Stake, seems to support the findings in this study.

[97] Roberta Heale and Dorthy Forbes, "Understanding Triangulation in Research," *Evidence Based Nursing*, August 13, 2013, https://ebn.bmj.com/98.full.pdf.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the student discipline issues experienced by teachers in child ministry programs and how they coped with those issues. Student discipline issues can be defined as incidents of disruptive behaviors exhibited by children in child ministry classes. Control of student discipline and good classroom management practices are crucial for all who undertake the profession of teaching. Essentially, the classroom environment must be conducive for learning without unnecessary interruption, thus understanding the dilemmas experienced by child ministry teachers is paramount.

This researcher believes the purpose statement identified the objective of this study, pointed out the study participants, identified the location of the study, noted the phenomena under study, and recognized this research as a qualitative case study. Thus, this purpose statement meets the qualifying criteria. The purpose statement was derived from the problem statement and the latter indicated children who misbehave in church classrooms inhibit other children from learning valuable Bible lessons and thus, disrupt the order needed for religious instruction. Additionally, unruly children may provide the impetus for other children to present discipline problems in the classroom. Christian teachers have a unique responsibility to establish high moral and ethical standards in their classrooms, based on God's Word. Thus, student discipline issues must be addressed for the wellbeing of all concerned. The intent of the problem statement was to understand student discipline problems from the perspective of Sunday School teachers and others providing religious instruction to children. The problem statement meets the standards of a problem statement: it is specific and manageable; it is evidenced based; it is a real issue in churches today; and it is significant and could lead to chaos in churches if not addressed.

Overview of Study

This study was guided by twenty research questions in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaires were emailed to church leaders who then assumed the responsibility for identifying and selecting available participants. Fifteen respondents, eleven females and four males, were selected by church leaders. The latter then emailed the completed questionnaires to the researcher who analyzed the results. This was a qualitative case study. Data was analyzed via content analysis, i.e., reoccurring respondent words in the questionnaires were coded and categorized. Data was also analyzed with descriptive statistics. The findings of this study revealed disruptive behaviors cited by respondents were students talking, student inattentiveness, disabled students acting inappropriately (as determined by respondents), and students lacking discipline and failing to follow the rules. Additionally, boys caused more disruptions than girls. These disruptions were viewed by teachers as minor and infrequent.

Respondents used a myriad of coping strategies to mitigate student disruptive behavior, i.e., expecting students to be respectful; requesting intervention by church leaders like deacons, team leaders and children's ministry directors; and one-on-one talks with disruptive students. The latter was the primary coping strategy. Teachers rarely consulted with the senior church hierarchy to off-set student discipline issues. This researcher anticipates that this study will enhance awareness of how students behave in church settings. Furthermore, this researcher hopes church leaders will incorporate a policy to assist teachers with student disruptive behaviors and to intervene as needed.

This study examined thirteen qualitative studies, nine quantitative studies, two descriptive studies, two action research studies, one literature review, one survey study, and one meta-analysis study. This researcher believes the qualitative studies in the literature review provided insight in how to gather and analyze data. Specifically, four of the qualitative studies used

content analysis, coding, and categorization of data. This provided a model for this researcher. Additionally, the findings in this study mirrored some findings in qualitative studies examined in the Literature Review.

What This Researcher Learned

This researcher garnered information to support the fact that in our most pristine and valued institutions, i.e., our churches, children on occasion disobey written and unwritten codes of behavior and become disruptive. This researcher also observed that church leaders in the highest positions failed to be proactive and sensitive to the needs of Child Ministry Teachers related to student discipline issues. Finally, it appeared teachers in this study did not work as a cohesive group to offset student discipline problems. Contrastingly, public school teachers appear to benefit from in-service training and workshops that help them cope with student problems.

Theological Foundations

The theological foundations for this study are delineated in the Bible and generally follow two perspectives: punishment for inappropriate behavior and reasoning that promotes child autonomy. Church officials, including teachers, must collectively evaluate and decide which approaches to use. They might consider which approach is legally condoned, which approach leads to the desired end results, and which approach meets the needs of children and the church as an organization.

Theoretical Framework

This researcher believes that at least nine theories undergird this study and support its findings. Specifically, Social Learning Theory and the Theory of Motivation appear useful for

explaining the behavior of children in this study. As the study progressed, other theories seemed to support the study findings, i.e., Critical Theory, Social Constructionism Theory, Communication Theory, Frustration-Aggression Theory, Self-Regulation Theory, Operant Conditioning Theory, and Conflict Theory.

Recommendation

First, this researcher recommends teachers might inform church leaders of problems that prevail in their classrooms. Second, teachers might also consider working as a cohesive group with church leaders to offset student discipline problems and also, invite parents to assist in solving problems. Third, church personnel should evaluate if they unwittingly administer student discipline disproportionately. Specifically, race, gender, socioeconomic status, and other student characteristics should be dealt with evenly and justly. Finally, student discipline problems in church settings appear to be rarely publicized. This researcher would encourage potential researchers to examine this dilemma with enthusiasm and clear goals.

Reasoned Opinions

A reasoned opinion can be defined as an opinion reached after consideration based on the information and knowledge available.[1] Conclusions assess gathered data and offer an opinion on the merits of the data. The following paragraphs detail seventeen reasoned opinions this researcher determined to be paramount in this project:

(1) Most saliently, the teachers in this study appear to have shielded the senior church leadership hierarchy from the disruptive behavior demonstrated by students. Teachers might

[1] "Reasoned Opinion," *Translegal*, accessed October 2, 2022, https://dictionary.translegal.com/en/reasoned-opinion/noun.

interact with the church leadership to offset student disruptive behavioral issues, so as to mitigate potential problems before these problems become serious and complex. Senior church leaders, in the opinion of this researcher, missed opportunities to become proactive and collegial and offer advice to teachers experiencing difficulties with disruptive students.

(2) Also, a few teachers noted they sought parents to assist them with disruptive students. Parents are generally perceived as the first option to resolve issues and to ensure that children behave appropriately in all settings with special focus on church settings. Parents, in the opinion of this researcher, were under-used by respondents in this study to help modify the disruptive behavior of students.

(3) Additionally, respect for other students and respect for teachers appeared to be highly valued by teachers in this study. This may have limited the number of disruptive behaviors exhibited by students. It could also serve as the building block for acceptable student behaviors.

(4) Teachers in this study steadfastly continued teaching students who demonstrated disruptive behaviors. The misbehaviors of students noted by teachers were deemed not serious and thus, potentially did not impede the safety or general welfare of the students or others. Thus, teachers in this study seemed to be committed to teaching children who misbehaved.

(5) The majority of teachers in this study appeared to be very experienced teaching children and thus, were able to anticipate how students might behave and to plan ahead as needed. This could explain why teachers noted they were comfortable teaching children who did not always display good conduct in class. Additionally, seasoned teachers may have felt in control and did not need assistance from the senior church leadership.

(6) Student discipline is a pervasive problem encountered by teachers in public and private schools. Teachers employ a number of remedies to off-set student disruptive behavior,

but there appears to be no universal agreement on what remedy works best. The teachers in this study seemed to favor one-on-one talks with disruptive students, i.e., a rational approach, over punitive approaches.

(7) Public schools and some parochial schools have written codes of conduct to guide student behavior, often with consequences for non-compliance. Teachers in this study expected students to behave appropriately, since respect for others seemed to be highly valued. However, there were no indications of established codes of behavior.

(8) Many public schools employ teacher aides to assist teachers in the classroom. A few teachers in this study noted volunteers were available to assist teachers in their classes. It would seem that this team approach to teaching might limit disruptive student behavior.

(9) Federal and case law appear to give religious schools greater discretion to handle student discipline issues. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution says, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibit the free exercise thereof." Additionally, in Hutcheson vs. Grace Lutheran School, the New York Appeals Court (1987) ruled "when a private school expels a student, a court may not review this decision." Thus, teachers and school officials in this study appear to have a right to bar disruptive students from attending classes without outside review. However, there was no indication this took place.

(10) The students taught by respondents in this study were young, averaging about 6.2 years of age. According to psychologist Jean Piaget, children at this stage of cognitive development "struggle to see things from the perspective of others." Thus, they may not have realized that disruptive behaviors might infringe negatively on others.

(11) The teachers in this study taught children ranging in age from five to eighteen years of age. Research indicates the prefrontal cortex of children in this age group is not fully

developed. Thus, this lack of development may account for inappropriate behavior displayed by children in this study.

(12) Teachers in this study reported students committing minor offenses. On the surface this is a more favorable report than students committing serious behavioral offenses. However, even minor offenses need attention before they become serious. Sunday school, unlike public school is a voluntary endeavor. As reported by teachers in this study, misbehaving students were not in attendance every Sunday, thereby potentially mitigating some incidents of misconduct.

(13) Teachers noted their years of experience teaching students, but not their training and qualifications, specifically to teach special populations of students like those misbehaving. Teacher training is essential to mitigate disruptive student behavior. The training could be in person training, video conference training, self-training, reading special topics, or adhering to other formats.

(14) The teachers in this study did not report any opportunities to work as a cohesive team. However, public school teachers may benefit from conferences and in-service training that underscore best practices and lessons learned to cope with disruptive students. In this study, teacher reliance on second line supervisors like deacons, appeared to be a short-term attempt to restore order in the classroom, rather than a well-developed plan to establish standards of student conduct over the long term.

(15) The teachers in this study noted boys presented more discipline problems than girls, but did not reveal if other characteristics of children contributed to more discipline problems. Additionally, the teachers in this study revealed the racial group that they represented, but the racial groups of students were not available. The literature notes disproportionality and stereotyping in disciplining students of color.

(16) More women than men and more participants representing non-denominational groups rather than other religious groups participated in this study. This occurred by chance instead of design. Additionally, there was no plan to determine differences in how divergent religious groups approach student discipline problems in this study.

(17) Teachers making clinical assessments of student behavior independent of professional diagnosis may be doing so without training and without licensing. Specifically, autism and developmental disabilities are diagnoses made by clinical personnel. Additionally, clinical assessment is not an exact science and thus, is subject to errors. The published articles in the paragraphs that follow support this researcher's position that the diagnosis of autism and other developmental disorders must remain within the purview of clinicians, not teachers.

Developmental Disorders Diagnoses From the Perspective of Clinicians

In her article, "Shared Symptoms of Autism and Mental Retardation," Adrienne Warber noted, "Autism and mental retardation are two separate neurological conditions with some similar symptoms and differences."[2] Warber indicated the shared symptoms are developmental delays, limited speech and vocabulary, problems understanding verbal instruction and following directions; learning difficulties, attention problems, difficulty communicating, no pretend play, echolalia, and sensory processing issues.[3] Warber underscored the differences between Autism and Intellectual Disability. That is, Autism cases vary in IQ range, while people with Intellectual Disability generally have IQ scores seventy or below. A person with Autism may not progress in a clear-cut manner, while a person with an Intellectual Disability develops and performs slower.

[2]Adrienne Warber, "Shared Symptoms of Autism and Mental Retardation," accessed August 2021, https://autism.lovetoknowcom/diagnosing-autism/shared-symptoms-autism-mental-retardation.

[3] Ibid.

A person with severe Autism may be nonverbal, while a person with an Intellectual Disability may present speech and vocabulary challenges. A person with Autism appears to lack empathy for others, while a person with an Intellectual Disability may exhibit empathy.[4] Finally, Warber noted that a person may have both Autism and an Intellectual Disability, which may be the result of an incorrect diagnosis.[5]

Emily Sohn wrote a paper titled "The Blurred Line Between Autism and Intellectual Disability." She noted, "The line between autism and Intellectual Disability remains fuzzy: [that is,] doctors often mistake one condition for the other or diagnose just one of the two when both are present."[6] Sohn further indicated, "Clinicians may err on the side of autism, particularly if they are not sure."[7] Finally, Sohn reported, "Children who have Autism, but are incorrectly flagged as having an Intellectual Disability are disproportionally children from racial and ethnic minority groups."[8]

Yolanda Loftus published an article titled, "Autism vs Intellectual Disability: Are They Synonymous." Loftus noted, "It seems almost impossible to find a definite divide separating Autism and Intellectual Disability, and when the two co-occur, the boundaries are even blurrier."[9] Loftus also explained "that the hazy line between autism and Intellectual Disability is

[4] Warber, "Shared Symptoms."

[5] Ibid.

[6] Emily Sohn, "The Blurred Line Between Autism and Intellectual Disability," SpectrumNews.org., April 15, 2020, https://doi.org/10.53053/ausr8688.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Yolande Loftus, "Autism vs Intellectual Disability: Are They Synonymous?" *Autism Parenting Magazine*, October 12, 2021, https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/autism-vs-intellectual-disability/.

challenging for clinicians, especially when it comes to accurate diagnosis."[10] Finally, Loftus recommended "referral to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) as a way to distinguish the differences between Autism and an Intellectual Disability." [11]

Summary

The teachers in this study characterized some student disruptive behaviors using clinical terms. Teacher characterizations using clinical terms without clinician verification is a risky undertaking and subject to error by teachers, especially when the symptoms overlap with other disabilities. Most profoundly, clinicians are also subject to diagnosis error. Teachers used the term "developmental disability" to describe student disruptive behavior. It should be noted that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines developmental disability as "a group of conditions due to an impairment in learning, language or behavior."[12] Examples of developmental disabilities include "Autism, Intellectual Disabilities, Learning Disorders, and Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)."[13] Additionally, teachers used the term "mental health issues" to describe student disruptive behavior. The Mayo Clinic defines mental health disorders as "a wide range of mental conditions-disorders that affect mood, thinking and behavior and examples include depression, anxiety disorders, and schizophrenia."[14]

[10] Loftus, "Autism vs Intellectual Disability."

[11] Ibid.

[12] "Developmental Disabilities," Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), accessed November 5, 2021, https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/index.html.

[13] Ibid.

[14] "Mental Illness," *Mayo Clinic*, accessed November 18, 2021, https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/symptoms-causes/.

These reasoned opinions are the most apparent after a thorough review of the study. There may be other conclusions that eluded this researcher. However, reasoned opinions offered were garnered from hours of reflection and thought. These opinions appear to represent this study favorably, honestly, and respectfully.

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APPENDIX A

Respondent Demographics

Table 5: Table illustrating Respondent Demographics

Respondent Number (randomly assigned)	Respondent Gender	Respondent Ethnicity	Respondent Church	Respondent Years Teaching *
1	Female	Black	Baptist	20 Plus
2	Female	Black	Baptist	3
3	Female	Black	Baptist	14
4	Female	White	Southern Baptist	50
5	Male	White	Southern Baptist	less than 1
6	Female	No Answer	Baptist	26
7	Female	Black	Nondenominational	less than 2
8	Female	White	Nondenominational	10
9	Female	White	Nondenominational	5
10	Male	White	Nondenominational	6
11	Male	White	Christian	1
12	Female	White	Episcopal	16
13	Female	Black	Nondenominational	4
14	Male	Black	Nondenominational	4
15	Female	Black	Baptist	4

*__Note:__ *the average years of teaching were 11.06 years*

APPENDIX B

Respondent Demographics in Percentages

Figure 1: Respondent demographics in percentages.

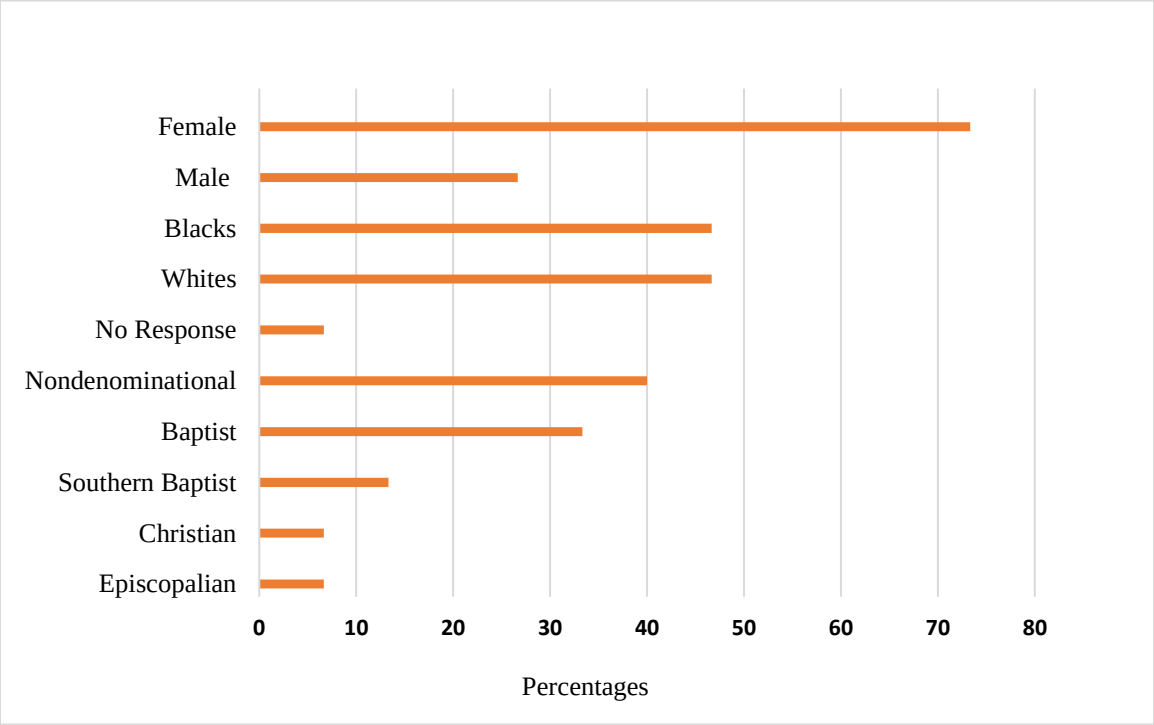

Table 6: Respondent Demographics. This table is a representation of Respondent demographics in percentages.

Gender		Ethnicity		Church Affiliation	
Percentages					
Female	73.33%	Black	46.66%	Nondenominational	40.00%
Male	26.67%	White	46.66%	Baptist	33.33%
		No Response	6.68%	Southern Baptist	13.33%
				Christian	6.67%
				Episcopalian	6.67%

APPENDIX C

Student Demographics

Table 7: Student demographics

Respondent Number (randomly assigned)	Student Age Range (in years)	Average Age of Students	Range of Students in Class	Average Number Students in Class
1	11-18	14	8-12	10
2	1-3	2	12	12
3	K-12	6	15	15
4	5-6	5	4	4
5	3-14	8	2-10	6
6	4-5	4	8	8
7	6-11	9	20 or Less	20
8	2-6	4	12-16	14
9	4-5	4	13	13
10	2-3	2	12-18	15
11	5-11	8	8-25	16
12	3	3	15	15
13	2-12	7	16-20	18
14	2-12	7	4-20	12
15	6-14	10	8-10	9

APPENDIX D

Disruptive Student Behaviors Cited by Respondents

Table 8: Disruptive student behaviors cited by Respondents

Respondent Number (randomly assigned)	Student Disruptive Behavior	Teacher Perceived Seriousness of Behavior	Student Gender Causing Disruption	Frequency of Disruptive Behavior
1	Talking	None	Boys	Minimal
2	Short Attention	Minor	Boys	Every Other Sunday
3	Hit Student	Minor	Boys and Girls	Infrequent
4	Autistic	Not Reported	Boys	None this Year
5	Lacks Discipline	Minor	Boys and Girls	Each Week
6	Teacher Patience	Minor	Boys	Sometimes
7	Talking	Minor	Boys	Not Often
8	Mental Health	Very Minor	Boys	25% of the Time
9	Developmental Disability	Minor	Boys and Girls	Every Class
10	Not Listening	All Minor	Boys and Girls	Weekly
11	Talking	Minor	Boys	50% of the Time
12	Keep Student Interest	Minor	Boys and Girls	Not Often
13	Fails to Follow Rules	Minor	Boys	Not Often
14	Loud	Minor	Boys	Not Usually
15	Not Focused	Minor	Girls	Not Often

APPENDIX E

Teacher Coping Strategies Used to Offset Student Disruptive Behaviors

Table 9: Teacher Coping Strategies

Respondent Number (randomly assigned)	Teacher Expectation	First Line Intervention Resource Used	Senior Church Hierarchy Used	Most Used Teacher Intervention
1	Be Respectful	Internet	No Problems Discipline	One-On-One Talk with Student
2	No Physical Contact	Team Professionals	Few Times	Identify Consequences with a Warning
3	Be Respectful	Senior Deacons	Not Often	Resolve Issue
4	Respect Others	Children Director	So Far No	Talk to Child
5	Treat Others with Respect	Pastor	When Warranted	Time Out
6	Sit and Listen	Church Leadership	When Needed	Talk to Child
7	Respect Others	Rules	Not Often	Stand Next to Student
8	No Inappropriate Talking	Rules	Not Often	Positive Reinforcement
9	Respect Others	Leaders	Infrequently	One-On-One Talk with Student
10	None Established	Leaders	Rarely	Comfort Child
11	Show Video on Rules	Volunteers	Infrequent	Reinforce Expected Behavior
12	Take Turns Talking	Door Keepers	Do Not Inform	Redirect Child
13	Respect Others	Assistant	Sometimes	Warning
14	Respect Others	Assistant	Not Reported	Warning
15	Respect	Parents/Teachers	Not Often	One-On-One Talk with Student

APPENDIX F

Teacher Reflections on Teaching Disruptive Students

Table 10: Teacher Reflections

Respondent Number (randomly assigned)	Classify Experience Teaching	Comfort Level Teaching Disruptive Students	Impact of Disruptive Students on Continued Teaching
1	Humbly Challenging	Very Comfortable	None
2	Intermediate	Very Comfortable	None
3	Enjoyable	Very Comfortable	None
4	Taught Various Groups	Very Comfortable	None
5	Enjoyed	Very Comfortable	Committed
6	Rewarding	Very Comfortable	None
7	Fulfilling	Comfortable	Not Much
8	Confident	Highly Comfortable	None
9	Very Good	Good	None
10	Experienced	9 on 1-10 Scale	None
11	Positive	4 on a 1-5 Scale	None
12	Experienced	Very Comfortable	None
13	Experienced	Very Comfortable	None
14	Great	Not an Issue	None
15	Enjoyable	Apply Empathetic Listening	Secure Certification in Counseling

APPENDIX G

Trustworthiness

Chart 1: Trustworthiness. The criteria marked with "X" occurred in this study.

Evaluative Criteria	Criteria Meaning	Occurred in This Study
Credibility	• Confidence in the truth of the findings • Findings represent participant view: (a) triangulation of data (patterns/similarity of data); (b) persistent observation (reoccurring words); (c) prolonged engagement (read and reread questionnaire)	X
Transferability	• Findings have applicability in other contexts (likely) • Can generalize from the study to larger population (public and private; schools and other church settings)	
Dependability	• Findings are consistent and could be repeated using same method and same context • However, no attempt to replicate	
Confirmability	• Degree of objectivity and neutrality or extent to which findings are shaped by respondent and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest • Bias minimized by researcher not knowing respondents	X

Note: *Drafted from Lincoln and Guba, Naturalistic Inquiry, 1986.*

APPENDIX H

Trustworthiness

Chart 2: Trustworthiness. The criteria marked with "X" occurred in this study.

Evaluative Criteria	Criteria Meaning	Occurred in This Study
Data Source Triangulation	• Compares data from different informants • Search for similar patterns (reoccurring words)	X
Investigator Triangulation	• Use of two or more researches in same study to determine similarity in findings	
Theory Triangulation	• Use of different theories to determine similarity in findings (social learning theory and motivation theory)	X
Methodological Triangulation	• Use of multiple data sources; for example: interviews, surveys, etc.	

Note: *Drafted from Stake, R., The Art of Case Study, 1995.*

APPENDIX I

IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

April 27, 2021

Regina Davis
Lester Kitchens

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY20-21-356 Church Personnel Perceptions of Disorderly Sunday School Students: A Study of Disorderly Students in Sunday School.

Dear Regina Davis, Lester Kitchens:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:
101(b):

Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX J

Pastor Letter

Dear Pastor,

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctoral Degree. The title of my research is "Church Personnel Perceptions of Disorderly Students: A Case Study of Misconduct in Child Ministry Programs." The purpose of my research is to determine if Child Ministry Teachers encountered disciplinary problems with students in their classes.

I am writing to request your permission to invite members of your staff to participate in my research study. Upon your approval, I would like teachers 18 years or older who have taught children 12 years or younger at your church.

Participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire. Participants will be presented with informed consent information along with the questionnaire. I will email these documents to the pastor or church leader to give to the volunteers. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval—OR— use the attached permission template. Please email letter to [ ]. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Minister Regina Davis

Doctor of Ministry Candidate, Liberty University

APPENDIX K

Pastor Approval Letter Template

[This permission letter template is provided for your convenience. Recommended information is included in brackets. Please select the desired information, remove the brackets, and remove the instructions and information that does not apply.]

[Please provide this document on official letterhead or copy and paste into an email.]

Date:

Pastor's name:
Church name:
Church Address

Dear Regina Davis,

After careful review of your research proposal entitled, "Church Personnel Perceptions of Disorderly Students: A Case Study of Misconduct in Child Ministry Programs." [I/we] have decided to grant you permission to invite our staff to participate in your study.

[Retain, delete, modify, or add to the below options as applicable.]

☐ [The requested data WILL BE STRIPPED of all identifying information before it is provided to the researcher.]

☐ [Add applicable option or delete check box.]

☐ [Add applicable option or delete check box.]

☐ [I/We are requesting a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.]

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Your Title]
[Your Company/Organization]

APPENDIX L

Respondent Recruitment Letter

Recruitment for Research

Dear Volunteer:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctoral Degree. The purpose of this research is to determine if Sunday School and Vacation Bible School teachers encounter discipline problems with students in their classes. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join this study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and have experience teaching children 12 years of age or under in Sunday School or Vacation Bible School. Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire should take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. Upon completion, the answered questions will be emailed to researcher. Participation will be kept anonymous, and no data will be linked to participants.

In order to participate, please ask your church leader to email Regina Davis at [ ].

If interested, a consent document will be emailed to your church leader. The consent document contains additional information about my research. You do not need to sign and return the consent document. The questionnaire will also be sent by email.

Sincerely,

Minister Regina Davis

Doctoral Divinity Candidate [ ]

[ ]

APPENDIX M

Respondent Consent

Title of the Project: Church Personnel Perceptions of Disorderly Students: A Case Study of Misconduct in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School.

Principal Investigator: Regina Davis, Doctor of Ministry Degree Candidate, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years old or older and have experience teaching children 12 years old or younger in Sunday School or Vacation Bible School. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of my research is to determine if Sunday School Teachers and Vacation Bible School teachers encounter discipline problems with students in their classes.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire will take approximately 30-40 minutes to complete.
2. Ask your pastor or church leader to email your completed questionnaire to [_____].

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society could include developing concepts to minimize classroom disruption which could also be used in primary and secondary schools; additionally, these concepts could prove to be beneficial to parents, assisting them with disciplinary issues with their children.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the data.

- Participant responses will be anonymous. No data will be linked to participants.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and in a locked file cabinet. The data may be used in future presentations. After completion of research project, all records will be retained for at least three years and then the electronic data will be deleted, and all physical records will be shredded.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or your church. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the questionnaire without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, do not submit your questionnaire.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Regina Davis. Your pastor or church leader can submit any questions you have now or later to Regina at [ ]. Your pastor or church leader may also submit your questions to the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Lester Kitchens at [ ].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. Please keep a copy of this document for your records. Remember, if you have any questions about the study later, you can ask your pastor or church leader to submit your questions to the contact information provided above.

APPENDIX N

Questionnaire

Questionnaire

This Questionnaire is for participants who are 18 years of age or older and have experience teaching children 12 years of age and under in Sunday School or Vacation Bible School.

2021

Gender: _____

Ethnic Background: _____

Please answer the following questions in as much detail as possible while being careful not to disclose any identifying information. When completed, please ask your pastor or church leader to email to Regina Davis at rmdavis5@liberty.edu.

1. What church facility do you work for? (name the denomination only please)

2. What age group do you teach?

3. What problems can you identify with your class management?

4. How do you cope with these problems?

5. How would you classify the problems in your class? (i.e. serious or minor infractions?)

6. What are the established rules of behavior in your class?

7. How often do students misbehave in your class?

8. What gender creates the most problems in your class?

9. What resources are available to assist you with student behavioral problems?

10. What provisions have been made to prepare you to intervene with discipline problems?

11. What behavioral intervention works best for you?

12. How long have you taught Sunday School or Vacation Bible School?

13. How would you classify your experience teach Sunday School or Vacation Bible School?

14. How many students are in your classroom?

15. How do you classify the students in your class that are disruptive (physically/mentally challenged or normal)?

16. How often do you make those in the hierarchy aware of the discipline problems you encounter?

17. What outside resources have you utilized to help with classroom management?

18. What impact might disruptive students have on your decision to continue teaching Sunday School or Vacation Bible School?

19. What is your comfort level in dealing with disruptive students?

20. What else might you wish to tell me about your experience with disruptive students in your class?