CHAPTER 14

COLLATERAL DAMAGE IN THE CLASSROOM

How Race and School Environment Influence Teachers' Attitudes and Behaviors Toward Their Students

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This study examined how school safety and fairness directly influences teachers' classroom attitudes and behaviors and indirectly shapes student outcomes. Researchers used critical race theory and humanism as heuristic frameworks to conceptualize the process by which children of diverse backgrounds learn and develop in the classroom and how teachers experience the school environment. The study participants included all Black, Latino, and White students who completed the National Crime Victimization Survey: School Crime Supplement of 2009 (NCVS-SCS). Students of all races, who perceived their teachers as more caring, respectful, and empathetic, and less punitive, generally reported higher grades. Black

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students were less likely than White students to perceive empathy and respect from their teachers, even when they were making good grades. Similarly, Black students perceived their teachers to be significantly more punitive. Implications included suggestions for developing effective teacher education programs.

Racial disparities in discipline, grade retention, placement in special education, and assignment to honors classes suggest that Black students' in the United States have a very tenuous presence within the school system. According to an independent analysis of the National Center for Education Statistics High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (Ingels et al., 2011), 17.9% of Black males and 13.7% of Black females have repeated a grade, compared to 8.1% for White males and 5.6% for White females. Twenty-five percent of Black males and 14.5% of Black females have been suspended or expelled from a school, when the national average is 9.8%. Twenty-nine percent of the parents of Black students reported receiving a call from the school regarding problem behavior with their son or daughter, compared to 14% of the parents of White students.

The extent to which racial biases in schools and classrooms contribute to racial disparities in academic success is a subject of debate. Today, of the more than 6 million teachers in the United States, nearly 80% are White, 9.6% are Black, 7.4% are Hispanic, 2.3% are Asian, and 1.2% is another race (Toldson, 2011b). Eighty percent of all teachers are female. Relative to the composition of P–12 students in the United States, the current teaching force lacks racial and gender diversity. Black men represent less than 2% of the teaching force, of a student body that is 7% Black male. By comparison, White female teachers comprise 63% of the teaching force, of a student body that is 27% White female (Toldson, 2011b). Some school advocates suspect that teachers who lack cultural proficiency may relate to Black and Hispanic students in a manner that undermines their potential. This study specifically examines how race and school environment influence teachers' attitudes and behaviors toward their students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Race, School Environment and Student Discipline

Elevated public awareness and perceptions of violence have increased schools' reliance on suspensions, zero tolerance and other exclusionary disciplinary policies (Christle, Nelson, & Jolivette, 2004; Skiba & Peterson, 1999). One study found that Black students with a history of disciplinary referrals were more likely to receive negative perceptions and less deference from teachers (Gregory & Thompson, 2010). There are also

general concerns about the reliability and subjectivity in disciplinary referrals (Vavrus & Cole, 2002; Wright & Dusek, 1998). Through ethnographic research, Vavrus and Cole (2002) found that many suspensions resulted from a buildup of nonviolent events, where one student often carries the brunt of many students' misbehaviors. However, some studies suggest that school culture and administrative leaders can mitigate high suspension rates (Mukuria, 2002). For example, regular monitoring and analysis of narrative disciplinary referrals have been recommended to improve precision and application of disciplinary measures that are consistent with the students' infractions (Morrison, Peterson, O'Farrell, & Redding, 2004; Sugai, Sprague, Horner, & Walker, 2000).

With respect to disproportionate suspension rates among Black students, many studies have noted the influence of ecological variables beyond the school (Day-Vines & Day-Hairston, 2005). Eitle and Eitle (2004) found that Black students were more likely to be suspended in majority Black grade schools. Cultural expressions of certain behaviors, such as movement and speech, may be misinterpreted as threatening to teachers who lack cultural awareness (Day-Vines & Day-Hairston, 2005). Another study revealed that natural adaptations to life in some impoverished areas indirectly influence the students' chances of being suspended from school (Kirk, 2009). Few studies have examined suspensions and disciplinary referrals among Hispanic students. One study noted Hispanic students' rates of suspensions and number of referrals were generally greater than Whites, but less than Blacks (Kaushal & Nepomnyaschy, 2009).

Improving teacher efficacy and teacher–student dialogue and aligning their mutual understanding of school rules also demonstrated effectiveness (Pas, Bradshaw, Hershfeldt, & Leaf, 2010; Thompson & Webber, 2010). "Whole-school" and schoolwide interventions that focus on schoolwide improvements in instructional methods, positive reinforcement, such as teacher "praise notes" (Nelson, Young, Young, & Cox, 2010), behavioral modeling, and data-based evaluation, have also demonstrated effectiveness (Bohanon et al., 2006; Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006; Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005). Resilience and skill building among students also reduced behavioral problems and subsequent disciplinary referrals among students (Wyman et al., 2010). Attention to students' mental health may also reduce suspensions and disciplinary referrals among Black male students (Caldwell, Sewell, Parks, & Toldson, 2009).

Race, School Environment, and Empathy, and Respect

Research evidence suggests that persons of a privileged social group need to make conscious adjustments to develop authentic relationships

with less privileged groups (Ullucci, 2011). Standard rubrics of evaluating teachers, such as knowledge, pedagogy and organization, are insufficient because they do not account for the vast diversity in the classroom or the sociocultural context of education (Nieto, 2006). Therefore, the teaching force, which is approximately 80% White, needs to develop mechanisms for teachers to cultivate empathy and respect for students of a different race. Empathy, moral and spiritual values, and self-interest are three factors that motivate people from privileged social groups to promote equity in the classroom (Goodman, 2000).

Exposing teacher educators to different cultures is one strategy to increase their cultural awareness and empathy toward racially different students (Houser, 2008; Marx & Pray, 2011). Multicultural training workshops have also been identified as a strategy to help teachers develop an awareness of their personal biases that may threaten their capacity to empathize with other races (Pickett, 1995). Some pedagogical methods have been evaluated that have demonstrated effectiveness in helping teachers develop and convey empathy toward their students. For example, one approach instructs teachers to allow students to self-reflect and connect classroom lessons to their community environment (Rios, Trent, & Castaneda, 2003). A sense of social justice, insight, and the ability to challenge conventional wisdom help teachers to cultivate an empathetic understanding of their students (Nieto, 2006).

A relationship between respect and academic success for Black males was found through analyzing three national surveys (Toldson, 2008). High-achieving Black male students reported that their teachers were interested in them "as a person," treated them fairly, encouraged them to express their views and gave extra help when needed. Teachers who were effective also routinely let their students know when they did a good job. Overall, Black male students who were successful perceived their teachers to be respectful people who treated them like they matter and nurturing people who builds up their strengths, instead of making them "feel bad" about their weaknesses.

Toldson (2011a) found that schools with more gang activity had lower overall levels of academic achievement among students. Students in schools with gang activity were also more likely to report being distracted from doing schoolwork because of other students misbehaving. These findings collectively suggest that, teachers and administrators in schools with more gang activity are perceived by students to spend more time confronting problematic students, which may compromise the academic priorities of the school.

Students in schools with less gang activity are more likely to report that teachers care about students, treat students with respect, spend less time punishing students, and are less likely to report that teachers do or say

things that make students feel bad about themselves (Toldson, 2011a). Black students are significantly more likely to experience disillusionment with their teachers (Lewis, James, Hancock, & Hill-Jackson, 2008). Many teachers, particularly in urban school districts, may become disenchanted because they feel they have little control over the conditions and circumstances that weaken student achievement (Toldson, 2011a).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Researchers used critical race theory and humanism as heuristic frameworks to conceptualize the process by which children of diverse backgrounds learn and develop in the classroom and how teachers experience the school environment. Critical race theory (CRT) examines White privilege and institutional racism. When viewing a racially diverse classroom with the tenants of CRT, a White teacher who takes a "colorblind" approach to teaching Black and Latino students, and ignores social inequalities, inadvertently promotes a racially prejudiced hegemony (Kohli, 2012). In previous studies, critical race theory has been used to demonstrate instructional techniques to develop agency and activism with students (Knaus, 2009), as well as the dynamic that leads to harsher punitive measures at majority minority schools (Zirkel et al., 2011).

This study also used humanistic perspectives to explore interpersonal dynamics between teachers and students that are conducive to a healthy learning environment. Humanistic psychology is based on the principles that in order for a person to grow and mature, they require a nurturing environment that provides them with genuineness, unconditional positive regard, and empathy (Rogers, 1992). Genuineness is defined as an openness and self-disclosure, unconditional positive regard is the feeling of acceptance, and empathy is expressed in the ability to listen to and understand. Humanistic theorists believe that both educators' feelings toward their students and knowledge of culture are important to the learning process (Barr, 2011). Humanistic teachers do not separate the cognitive and affective domains; rather they insist that schools need to provide students with a nonthreatening environment so they will feel secure to learn. Once students feel secure, learning becomes easier and more meaningful (Boyer, 2010).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Studies have found that teachers who lack cultural proficiency may not be able to relate to minority children and therefore may undermine their academic potential. Teachers' level of empathy, feelings of safety, and racial

views can influence students' performance, grades, and disciplinary actions (Day-Vines & Day-Hairston, 2005). Toldson's (2011a) findings suggest that schools with more gang activity distract administrators and teachers from academic instruction and refocus priorities to problematic student behaviors. A noticeable void in the literature was research that examined the intersection of race and school environment on teachers' attitudes and behaviors toward their students. Four research questions are proposed for further investigation:

1. Do teachers' attitudes and behaviors toward students influence their academic success?
2. Does students' race influence teachers' attitudes and behavior toward their students?
3. Does the school environment influence teachers' attitudes and behaviors toward students?
4. Does the influence of the school environment depend on the race of the student?

METHOD

Participants

The study participants included all Black, Latino, and White students who completed the National Crime Victimization Survey: School Crime Supplement of 2009 (NCVS-SCS). The database was selected for this study because it had a clear indicator of academic success; had adequate Black and Latino adolescent representation; was a national survey that included multiple states and geographic areas; and had adequate measures of contributing factors, such as school environment and school safety measures. The database is indexed for public analysis at the *Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research* (United States Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2010).

Procedure

Using data from the Bureau of the Census, the Bureau of Justice gathered data for the SCS as a supplement to the NCVS. The NCVS-SCS used a stratified, multi-stage cluster sample design. The Bureau of Justice described their selection of respondents as a "rotating panel design," in which households were randomly selected and all age-eligible individuals became members of a panel. Those selected in the panel were interviewed every six

months for a total of seven interviews over a three-year period. The Bureau of Justice designated the first interview as the incoming rotation and the second through the seventh interview were in the continuing rotations. After the seventh interview, the household leaves the panel and a new household is rotated into the sample.

The NCVS-SCS surveyed 12- to 18-year-old adolescents who attended school in 2009. The survey population responded to questions regarding crime prevention measures employed by their schools, their participation in after-school activities, their perception of school rules, the presence of weapons, drugs, alcohol and gangs in their schools, and their fear of victimization at school. The NCVS-SCS used paper and pencil interviewing and computer-assisted telephone interviewing. Initial interviews were conducted in respondents' households and subsequent computer-assisted interviews were conducted by an interviewer calling from a centralized telephone facility using an automated version of the paper instrument to administer the questions.

The Census Bureau's Disclosure Review Board (DRB) vetted data collected for the NCVS-SCS. For confidentiality and anonymity, recoding procedures and a control number scrambling routine were performed before the file was released for public use. Responses to the NCVS-SCS are confidential by law under BJS Title 42, United States Code, Sections 3735 and 3789g and by the Census Bureau under Title 13, United States Code, Section 9.

Measures

School Environment and Classroom Dynamics

Fourteen continuous items were used that allowed students to rate various aspects of their school environment and dynamics within their classrooms. With the exception of the first two items, students rated these questions on a four-point scale with 1 indicating "strongly agree" and 4 indicating "strongly disagree." For the first two questions, the response options ranged from 1 indicating "never," to 4 indicating "most of the time." Where appropriate, items were reverse coded for analysis.

The first group of questions measured the level of distractions the students experienced from other students' misbehavior and teachers' disciplinary practices. The two questions asked, "How often do teachers punish students during your classes?" and "In your classes, how often are you distracted from doing your schoolwork because other students are misbehaving, for example, talking or fighting?"

The second group of questions measured students' knowledge, understanding and perception of school rules. The survey items included, (a) If a school rule is broken, students know what kind of punishment will follow;

(b) The school rules are strictly enforced; (c) The punishment for breaking school rules is the same no matter who you are; (d) "Everyone knows what the school rules are; and (e) The school rules are fair.

The third group of questions asked students whether they believed their teachers were caring, respectful, and nice. Specifically, the survey asked whether students agreed with the following statements: (a) Teachers do or say things that make students feel bad about themselves; (b) Teachers treat students with respect; and (c) Teachers care about students.

The final group of questions measured whether students had adults at school that cared about them. The survey asked if students agreed to the following: (a) At school, there is an adult who helps me with practical problems, who gives good suggestions and advice about my problems; and (b) At school, there is an adult I can talk to, who cares about my feelings and what happens to me.

Grades

NCVS-SCS recorded academic achievement with the item, "During this school year, across all subjects have you gotten mostly . . . " Students who participated in this survey responded by indicating the letter grade, A through F, that they were most likely to achieve during the school year. Codes for the categories were modify so that students who reported mostly A's received scores closer to 4.0, and those reported mostly F's received scores closer to zero.

School Safety

School safety was recorded with an index that included students' responses to questions that inquired about gang activity at the school and behaviors in response to threats at the school. Twelve dichotomous, yes or no questions were used to determine if students altered behaviors in response to violent threats at the school. Examples include staying away from hallways or stairs, cafeteria, school restrooms, activities, or avoiding school all together.

Gang activity was measured with two questions. The first question was a dichotomous yes or no question asking, "Are there any gangs at your school?" The second was a continuous variable that asked, "During this school year, how often have gangs been involved in fights, attacks, or other violence at your school?" The response choices were: (a) Never; (b) Once or twice this school year; (c) Once or twice a month; (d) Once or twice a week; or (e) Almost every day. To normalize distribution of responses, these two questions were reconfigured to create the following categories for this study: (a) No gangs—those responding "no" to question one; (b) No gang activity—those responding no to question one, and "never" for question two; (c) Some gang activity—those responding "once or twice this school year" or "once or twice

a month" to question two; and (b) A lot of gang activity—those responding "once or twice a week" or "almost every day" to question two.

The resulting index ranged from 1 to 16. A score of 1 indicated the students' school has no gangs and the student does not feel he or she needs to avoid any areas of the school to remain safe. A score of 16 indicated the student attends a school with a lot of gang activity, has to avoid most areas of the school to remain safe, and may have avoided school altogether because of safety concerns.

Analysis Plan

The principle analytic technique used in this study was a 3 x 4 factorial analysis of variance ANOVA, whereby three levels of race (Black, White, and Latino) and four levels of academic achievement were tested for their independent main effects, as well as interactions between the two factors. General linear modeling approaches were used to reveal differences in the relationship between academic achievement and associated variables along race lines. The hypothesized relationships between academic achievement and external measures were tested and accepted or rejected based on the *p*-value (tested at .01). Means plots are displayed for select variables to display the linear relationship between various indicators of academic achievement and hypothesized covariates, across races. The plots include a dashed reference line on the Y-axis that marks the estimated mean of the variable of interest. The reference line is useful for determining the distribution of scores around the mean for various levels of academic achievement.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the relationship between hypothesized causal factors and the equivalence between models that were constructed for Black, White and Latino male students. Using information gathered from multivariate analysis, the researcher selected variables for a path model to confirm their relationship in a trajectory model that evaluated the relationship between the school environment, classroom dynamics and student outcomes. AMOS 17 was used to test model fitness and calculate regression estimates of direct and indirect effects. Invariance between races was estimated for the overall model and the path estimates by imposing a series of model constraints through nested model comparisons.

RESULTS

Descriptive Information

Participants of this study included 8,986 Black, Latino, and White male and female students who completed the NCVS-SCS of 2009. The racial and

gender composition of the participants were consistent with the demographics of the middle and high school Black, Latino, and White students in the United States. Fourteen percent was Black, 21% was Latino, and 65% was White. Eighteen percent of the participants attended school in the Northeast region of the United States, 25% in the Midwest, 34% in the South, and 23% in the West. The mean age of the participants was 15 years old. Ninety-two participants attended public schools and 88% attended the regular school that most students in their neighborhood attended. The most common mode of transportation two and from school was a private vehicle (51%), followed by a school bus (37%). Most students (61%) lived within 15 miles of their school.

The Relationship Between Race, School Environment, and Academic Success

A factorial ANOVA was used as a preliminary test for three research questions: "Do teachers' attitudes and behaviors toward students influence their academic success; Does the school environment influence academic success; and Does students' race influence teachers' attitudes and behavior toward their students? Table 14.1 displays the means, standard deviations, and F-ratios of aspects of the school environment that have a hypothesized relationship with academic achievement among Black, Latino, and White male students. The table marks variables that are significant by race and academic achievement. All six of the variables analyzed had a significant relationship with academic achievement. Mean scores with a negative relationship with academic achievement, such as "Unsafe School," get smaller when reading from left to right as academic performance increases. The opposite is true for variables, such as "Teachers Care for and Respect Students," with a positive relationship with academic achievement. Two of the six variables, "Unsafe School" and "Teachers Punish Students," were significant for race prior to performing any post hoc analyses.

Although initial tests found no significance for race and "Teachers Care for and Respect Students," post hoc analysis revealed that Black students perceived care and respect from their teachers significantly less ($p < .001$) than White and Hispanic students. Figure 14.1a reveals that the difference in perception is most pronounced among higher achieving students, where Black students reporting mostly A's perceive less care and respect than the average of all students. Similar racial differences were found in students' reports of punishment from teachers. Black students were significantly more likely to report that teachers punish students, which was most pronounced as academic success diminished (See Figure 14.1b).

TABLE 14.1 Means, Standard Deviations, and *F*-Ratios of School-Related Factors That Are Related to Academic Success Among Black, White, and Latino Students

		D's & F's	C's	B's	A's	Total	*F*-Ratio	
	Race	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	Race	Achievement
Teachers Care for and Respect Students	Black	8.94 (2.29)	9.01 (1.87)	9.18 (1.67)	9.47 (1.75)	9.20 (1.77)	2.12	18.82**
	White	8.84 (1.45)	9.18 (1.57)	9.55 (1.38)	10.04 (1.44)	9.71 (1.47)		
3 strongly disagree–12 strongly agree	Latino	8.87 (1.61)	9.23 (1.67)	9.56 (1.46)	9.77 (1.44)	9.52 (1.52)		
	Total	8.87 (1.64)	9.16 (1.66)	9.50 (1.45)	9.96 (1.48)	9.61 (1.53)		
Unsafe School	Black	3.25 (2.08)	2.46 (1.83)	1.95 (1.64)	1.95 (1.65)	2.12 (1.73)	47.43**	24.47**
1 very safe–16 very unsafe	White	2.02 (1.61)	1.65 (1.28)	1.47 (1.00)	1.33 (0.88)	1.44 (1.01)		
	Latino	2.94 (1.95)	2.21 (1.54)	2.03 (1.41)	1.79 (1.29)	2.04 (1.45)		
	Total	2.51 (1.86)	1.95 (1.50)	1.66 (1.23)	1.44 (1.04)	1.64 (1.25)		
Fair School	Black	15.88 (2.45)	15.58 (2.76)	15.90 (2.44)	15.95 (2.65)	15.84 (2.56)	2.69	7.45**
5 strongly disagree–20 strongly agree	White	14.67 (2.22)	15.16 (2.14)	15.81 (2.25)	16.23 (2.29)	15.89 (2.29)		
	Latino	15.32 (2.30)	15.67 (2.27)	16.02 (2.24)	15.97 (2.25)	15.90 (2.26)		
	Total	15.07 (2.30)	15.38 (2.31)	15.87 (2.27)	16.17 (2.32)	15.89 (2.32)		
Teachers Punish Students	Black	3.13 (0.81)	2.90 (0.90)	2.59 (0.88)	2.55 (0.86)	2.67 (0.89)	4.68**	15.02**
1 never–4 most of the time	White	2.78 (0.88)	2.64 (0.83)	2.54 (0.82)	2.44 (0.79)	2.51 (0.81)		
	Latino	3.03 (0.84)	2.76 (0.93)	2.58 (0.83)	2.51 (0.87)	2.62 (0.87)		
	Total	2.92 (0.86)	2.72 (0.88)	2.55 (0.83)	2.46 (0.81)	2.55 (0.84)		

(continued)

TABLE 14.1 Means, Standard Deviations, and *F*-Ratios of School-Related Factors That Are Related to Academic Success Among Black, White, and Latino Students (continued)

		D's & F's	C's	B's	A's	Total	*F*-Ratio	
	Race	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	Race	Achievement
Classroom Distractions	Black	2.94 (1.12)	2.56 (0.99)	2.43 (0.89)	2.25 (1.01)	2.44 (0.96)	1.51	12.53**
1 never–4 most of the time	White	2.84 (0.88)	2.58 (0.91)	2.42 (0.88)	2.29 (0.84)	2.39 (0.87)		
	Latino	2.55 (1.03)	2.51 (0.92)	2.38 (0.87)	2.31 (0.84)	2.40 (0.88)		
	Total	2.77 (0.97)	2.56 (0.93)	2.41 (0.88)	2.29 (0.85)	2.40 (0.88)		
Student Feels Supported	Black	3.25 (0.86)	3.27 (0.64)	3.37 (0.56)	3.35 (0.62)	3.34 (0.60)	1.57	4.19**
1 strongly disagree–4 strongly agree	White	3.41 (0.54)	3.30 (0.57)	3.34 (0.57)	3.44 (0.56)	3.38 (0.57)		
	Latino	3.29 (0.64)	3.25 (0.58)	3.32 (0.60)	3.41 (0.58)	3.33 (0.59)		
	Total	3.35 (0.63)	3.28 (0.59)	3.34 (0.57)	3.43 (0.57)	3.37 (0.58)		

Note: *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation; $^{*}p < .01$; $^{**}p < .001$

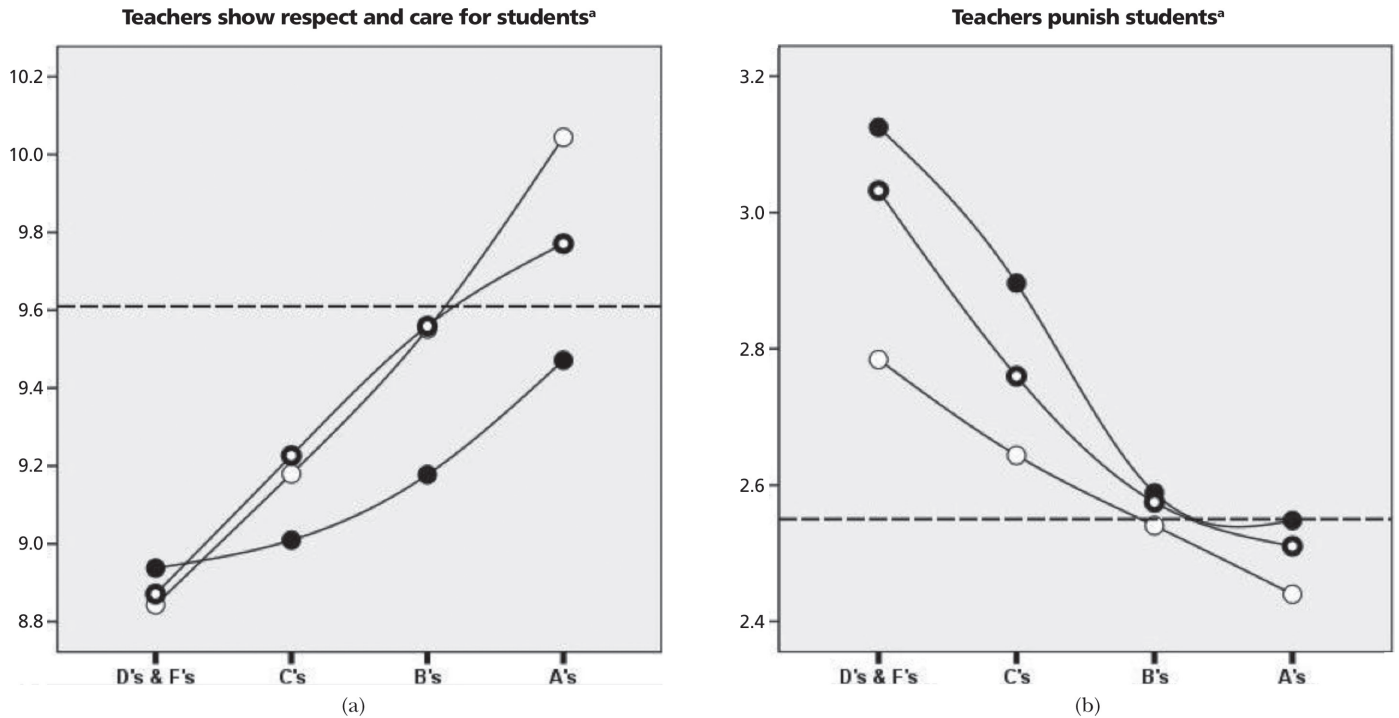

Figure 14.1a & 1b Means plots of race (separate plots) and grades (X Axis) on teacher attitudes and behaviors (Y Axes) as reported by Black, Hispanic, and White students. Note: ● = Black students; ◘ = Hispanic students; and ○ = White students. The dashed reference line on the Y-axis marks the estimated mean of the dependent variable. **Main effects for grades and race.

Black students who reported "mostly C's" reported more punitive behavior among teachers than White students who reported "mostly D's and F's."

The analyses of academic achievement revealed the largest effect size for feeling unsafe at school (eta-squared = .03). Feeling unsafe at school also had the largest effect size for race (eta-squared = .02). Post hoc analysis of feeling unsafe at school found that Black and Latino students felt significantly more unsafe at school than White students. As indicated in Figure 14.2a, although students of all races who feel unsafe at school are also less likely to have higher levels of academic achievement, Black and Latino students' feelings of being unsafe at school was above the mean, regardless of academic standing. Figure 14.2b demonstrates a relationship between academic achievement and classroom misbehavior, but no differences between races.

Although causality cannot be established, overall the results of the factorial ANOVA found evidence of a relationship between teacher attitudes, teacher behaviors and students' academic success. The analysis also found evidence that Black students perceive their teachers to be more punitive and less respectful and empathetic towards their students.

The Structural Path of School Environment, Classroom Dynamics, and Student Outcomes Across Black, Latino, and White students

SEM was used for three primary purposes. The first was to find causal links between the correlated variable in the three research questions that were tested with factorial ANOVA. The second purpose was to determine, if the school environment influences teachers' attitudes and behaviors toward students. Finally, the analysis tested if the influence of the school environment on teachers depends on the race of the student.

Exogenous and endogenous variables were selected for a path model to test their direct effects on teacher attitudes and behaviors and indirect effects on students' grades and feelings of support. In the model, events hypothesized to occur earlier were placed further to the left of the model. In this model, school safety and fairness were treated as correlated exogenous variables, classroom misbehavior, teacher attitudes and teacher behaviors were treated as mediating variables, and grades and student support were outcome variables. Figures 14.3, 14.4, and 14.5 display the path models tested for Black, White and Hispanic students, respectively. The initial maximum likelihood test of the model resulted in a good overall fit, $\chi^2(18) = 29.20$, $p = .05$, $\chi^2/df = 1.62$, comparative fit index (CFI) = .99, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .02, and normed fit index (NFI) = .98.

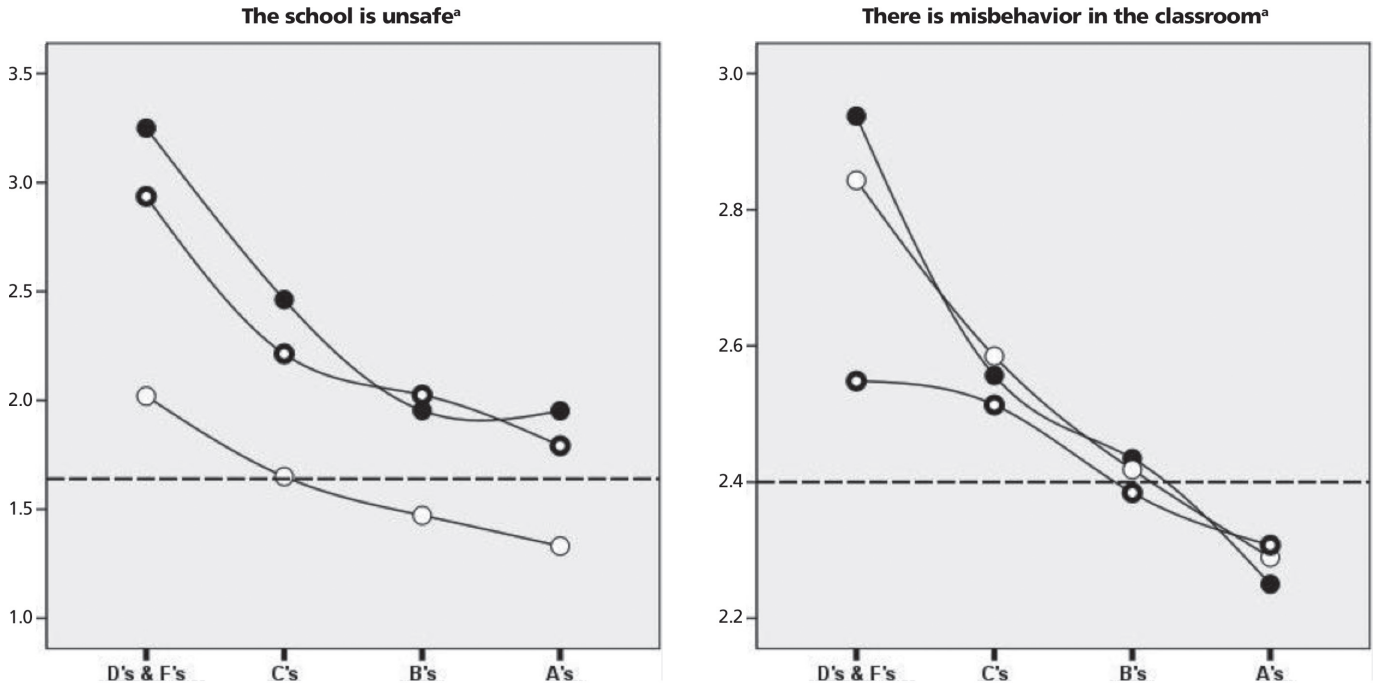

Figure 14.2a & 2b Means plots of race (separate plots) and grades (X Axis) on school and classroom dynamics (Y Axes) as reported by Black, Hispanic, and White students. Note: ● = Black students; ◘ = Hispanic students; and ○ = White students. The dashed reference line on the Y-axis marks the estimated mean of the dependent variable. *Main effect for grades. **Main effects for grades and race.

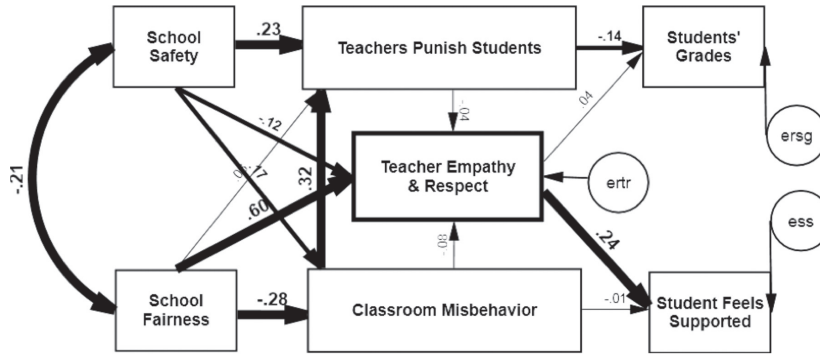

Figure 14.3 The relationship between factors associated with teacher empathy and subsequent grades among Black students. *Note:* The thickest lines represent standardized path estimates that are greater than .20, the medium lines represent estimates that are between .10 and .19, and the thinnest lines are not significant. Curved lines with two-way arrows represent covariance and straight lines with one-way arrow represent paths. The minus sign (–) indicates an inverse relationship. All path coefficients are significant ($p < .01$), except for the parameters represented by the thinnest lines. Ertr, ersq, and ess represent associated error of exogenous values (error representations for teachers punish students and classroom misbehavior are hidden from figure). Data from National Crime Victimization Survey —School Crime Supplement (2009).

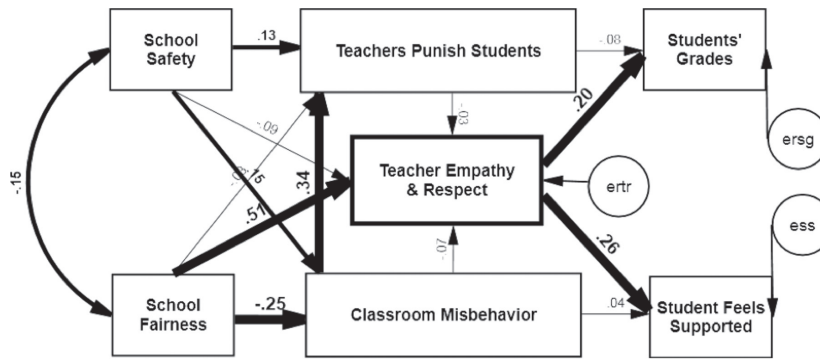

Figure 14.4 The relationship between factors associated with teacher empathy and subsequent grades among White students. *Note:* The thickest lines represent standardized path estimates that are greater than .20, the medium lines represent estimates that are between .10 and .19, and the thinnest lines are not significant. Curved lines with two-way arrows represent covariance and straight lines with one-way arrow represent paths. The minus sign (–) indicates an inverse relationship. All path coefficients are significant ($p < .01$), except for the parameters represented by the thinnest lines. Ertr, ersq, and ess represent associated error of exogenous values (error representations for teachers punish students and classroom misbehavior are hidden from figure). Data from National Crime Victimization Survey —School Crime Supplement (2009).

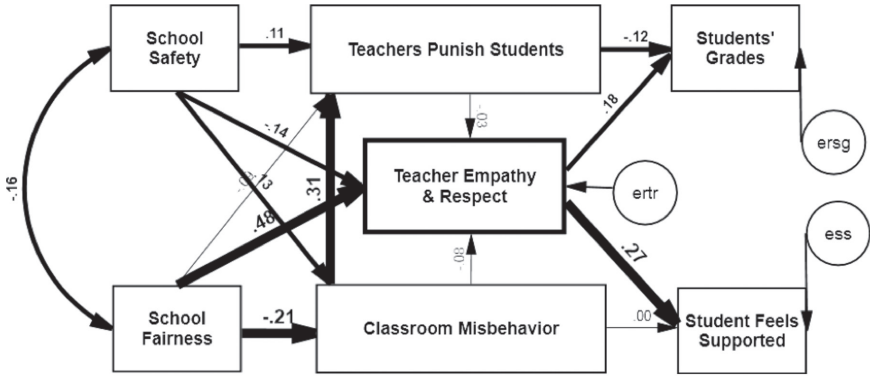

Figure 14.5 The relationship between factors associated with teacher empathy and subsequent grades among Latino students. *Note:* The thickest lines represent standardized path estimates that are greater than .20, the medium lines represent estimates that are between .10 and .19, and the thinnest lines are not significant. Curved lines with two-way arrows represent covariance and straight lines with one-way arrow represent paths. The minus sign (–) indicates an inverse relationship. All path coefficients are significant ($p < .01$), except for the parameters represented by the thinnest lines. Ertr, ersq, and ess represent associated error of exogenous values (error representations for teachers punish students and classroom misbehavior are hidden from figure). Data from National Crime Victimization Survey —School Crime Supplement (2009).

Invariance Between Races

Race differences between the path models and coefficients were further examined through SEM. The invariance of the path models across races was tested in three steps. First, the goodness of fit was calculated separately for Black, White, and Latino males. These preliminary evaluations confirmed an adequate fit of the data for all groups: for Black males, $\chi^2(6) = 8.74$, $p = .19$, $\chi^2/df = 3.8$, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .04, and NFI = .97; for White males, $\chi^2(6) = 11.38$, $p = .08$, $\chi^2/df = 1.90$, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .03, and NFI = .99; and for Latino males, $\chi^2(6) = 9.05$, $p = .171$, $\chi^2/df = 1.5$, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .03, and NFI = .97. All fit indices were similar across race groups.

Second, all regression weights in the initial models with all races combined were constrained to be equal across race. The constrained model differed significantly from the unrestricted model, $\Delta\chi^2(26) = 31.89$, $p < .01$, indicating that the regression weights were invariant across race. The third was to constrain the structural covariance, while allowing the regression weights the freedom to vary across races. Results of this analysis did not indicate a significant attrition in model fit, $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 6.80$, indicating that the covariance between school safety and school fairness was not significantly different between Black, White, and Latino males.

Direct and Indirect Effects on Disciplinary Referrals and Grades.

Nested group comparisons confirmed structural invariance between the regression weights of Black, Latino and White students. Figures 14.3, 14.4, and 14.5 illustrate the path coefficients for each race of students, whereby several distinct differences emerged. First, note the direct effects of school safety on classroom dynamics. There is no difference in the effect of school safety on classroom misbehavior between Black and White students, yet unsafe schools significantly influence Black students' perception that their teachers are more punitive and lack empathy and respect for students in general.

Second, a very strong direct effect of teacher empathy and respect emerged for White and Latino students; however, the relationship was not significant for Black students. This is likely associated with the findings that Black students at higher levels of academic achievement perceive their teachers as significantly less empathetic and respectful. Finally, teachers' punitive actions toward students had a significant the direct effect on Black and Latino students' grades, but not on White students' grades. This is related to the finding that Black students at higher levels of academic achievement are more likely to report teacher punishment than White students with similar academic standings.

Monte Carlo parametric bootstrapping was used to measure the indirect effects of school safety and fairness on student outcomes. School safety significantly ($p < .01$) indirectly effected grades among all students; however, it only indirectly effected feelings of support among Black and Latino students. School fairness had significant ($p < .01$) indirect effects of feelings of support for all students, but did not have significant indirect effects for grades only for Black students.

Overall, SEM found evidence that school safety and school fairness directly influenced teachers' perceived level of empathy and respect toward their students, and indirectly influence students' grades and feelings of being supported. Invariance between nested models for Black, Latino, and White students suggest that the path to good grades and feeling support was significantly different across races. Notably, the overall safety of the school was a much stronger determinant of teachers' punitive behaviors, lack of empathy and respect toward Black students than it was for White students. Teacher empathy and respect led to greater feelings of being supported among all students; however, no relationship emerged between empathy and respect and students grades for Black students. Compared to White students, perceived punishment among Black and Latino students had a significantly stronger impact on students' grades.

DISCUSSION

On a basic level, this study found that teachers' attitudes and behaviors toward students and the school environment had a relationship with academic success among Black, Latino, and White students. Students of all races, who perceived their teachers to be more caring, respectful, empathetic, and less punitive, generally reported higher grades. These students were also more likely than low achieving students to perceive their school environment to be safe, supportive, and fair.

Black and Latino students were more likely to feel unsafe in their school. Black students were also less likely than White students to perceive empathy and respect from their teachers, even when they were making good grades. Similarly, Black students perceived their teachers to be significantly more punitive. A Black student who reported C's was far more likely to perceive their teachers to be punitive than a White student who reported D's and F's.

The overall safety and fairness of the school influenced teachers' empathy and respect for Black students significantly more than for White students, as reported by the students. Black students at unsafe schools also reported more punitive teacher behaviors. Among students of all races, school safety significantly indirectly affected grades, however for Black and Latino students, safety indirectly affected feelings of support.

When revisiting the theoretical framework, the findings demonstrate that teacher empathy is associated with improved academic outcomes, which is consistent with a humanistic perspective. With respect to CRT, racial dynamics appeared to alter the school environment along racial lines. White students' response patterns demonstrated a structure whereby teacher empathy and respect was central to students' academic success, school safety had no measurable influence on teachers' compassion for their students, and teacher punishment had no measurable impact on students' grades. Contrarily, Black students' response patterns reflected a dynamic, whereby school safety significantly diminished the overall level of empathy and respect that students perceived from teachers and punishment from teachers significantly reduced students' grades.

The results of this study have implications for policymakers, curriculum writers, teacher preparation programs, and professional development and training sessions. Teacher preparation programs should expand multicultural class offerings and incorporate multicultural emersion experiences. Teacher trainees' educational process should allow students to examine their own beliefs, biases, and attitudes toward other races. Courses should include discussions and assignments that encourage students to understand their fears and vulnerabilities which will enable them to be conscious of their decision making process to be fair to all students regardless of race.

Readers should consider several limitations within the context of the findings. First, since data were collected about socially desirable attributes, some participants may have used impression management during self-report procedures. Although all surveys were confidential, it is likely that some respondents may have embellished grades and other desirable attributes, and denied suspensions and other negative attributes. In addition, the survey was lengthy and solicited information beyond this study's scope. The length may have created some fatigue and led to "Yea-Saying" or "Nay-Saying," whereby respondents tend to select only the positive or negative answers on the survey. Finally, this study measures students' perceptions and does not objectively record teachers' attitudes or behaviors.

A special issue of *The Journal of Negro Education* established guidelines for effective teacher education programs (Toldson, 2011b), which are relevant to the study findings. Overall, effective teacher education programs:

- Should prepare teachers of all races, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds to educate diverse classrooms
- Should contribute to eliminating the achievement and discipline gaps that exist between Black students and students of other races
- Use modern approaches to helping teacher trainees understand diverse classrooms, such as the use of multimedia, documentary film, service learning, and volunteering
- Use effective recruitment strategies to diversify America's teaching force
- Understand the influence of federal- and state-level educational policies on building teacher education programs to accommodate Black students
- Respect the unique role of historically Black colleges and universities in preparing and recruiting Black teachers
- Actively work to combat institutional racism and culturally biased assessments to promote teacher diversity and when training teachers to serve diverse classrooms

Recommendations for Educational Intervention and Future Research

Research on the effects of teachers' attitudes and its effects on Black, Latino, and White students is a vital concern as to develop culturally appropriate strategies to reduce teacher attrition, prevent high school dropout, and mitigate the impact of high stakes testing. School leaders need to understand how the teachers' negative attitudes and behaviors towards students originate and what interventions improve the learning environment. Future research should focus on studying the benefits of teacher preparation

programs. Multicultural awareness, teacher philosophy and theory, and classroom management courses should encourage open dialogue about self-awareness, identify their own biases, judgments, and behaviors towards other races.

Local and national measures and educational policies should address students' feeling of safety, fairness, and support by school personnel. A replicate study should address the limitations of the current study and design a more specific survey with fewer questions to prevent fatigue and possible false responses. Future studies should also investigate if there is a significant difference between Black, Latino and White teachers with respect to their attitudes and behaviors toward Latino and Black students and the effects that may have on students and their perception and academic performance.

CONCLUSIONS

There are several important findings from this study, which contributes to the current literature base on teachers' attitudes on race, environment, and behavior toward Black, Latino, and White students. The current research addresses a topic that is often ignored because of the discomfort with discussing biases and unfair treatment within the education system. Students' perception of their teachers' attitudes and behaviors affect their learning experiences. This has an accumulating and detrimental effect on the future of children and their education, which affect communities and society, and long-term effects on the lives of these children.

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