SECONDARY SCHOOL DRESS CODE COMPLIANCE ISSUES:

ANALYSIS FROM THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

A Dissertation

by

KAYCE DENAE SOLARI

Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Chair of Committee,	E. Lisako J. McKyer
Co-Chair of Committee,	Phia Salter
Committee Members	Brandy Kelly Pryor
	Kelly Wilson
Head of Department,	Richard Kreider

December 2015

Major Subject: Health Education

ABSTRACT

School dress code policy issues receive attention in school disciplinary matters, in the media and other popular press sources, and in courtroom litigation. Scientific content for this school health issue is primarily received from student records and adult input. This dissertation veers from the norm and investigates students' perspectives of school dress code issues through three separate studies.

First, a systematic literature review was conducted to assess the availability of peer reviewed publications regarding school dress code policy and student involvement. Findings from the review reveal the lack of inclusion of students in matters concerning school dress code policy development and implementation.

Secondly, a cross-sectional study was conducted to analyze student input regarding and application of their school's dress code. Participants (n=69) rated eight youth models dressed in outfits that were either in compliance, in violation, or were ambiguously dressed according to their school's dress code policy. The female youth models wore identical outfits, as did the male youth models. Ratings were based on participants' knowledge of the policy as well as their personal perceptions of each outfit. Results from the study reveal a deficiency in students' ability to assess violations of the school dress code policy and varied opinions of appropriateness of dress.

Lastly, a qualitative evaluation of ninth grade, African American girls' perspective of the purpose of school dress codes and the impact the policy has on their

school experience and personal choices for school attire. Seven participants were interviewed and findings reveal commonalities in their experiences such as being taught what is appropriate for school and professional dress as well as contradictions that exist in enforcement of the school's policy. Additionally, the girls had a common practice of maintaining their own sense of style and individuality while complying with their school dress code.

Other than school discipline records, the vast majority of current literature regarding school dress codes lacks direct student input. Therefore, the studies conducted in this dissertation serve as a foundation for future research and exploration of high school students' perspectives in policy development.

DEDICATION

       This dissertation is dedicated to Dexter, Kamryn, and Trey for their love and support throughout this entire experience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. McKyer, my committee co-chair, Dr. Salter, and committee members, Drs. Kelly Pryor and Wilson, for their guidance and mentoring throughout the course of this research. The value of a positive and supportive committee is priceless. I am forever grateful to you all.

Thanks also go to my friends and colleagues and the department faculty and staff for making my time at Texas A&M University an unforgettable experience. I also want to extend my gratitude to the students who were willing to participate in the study.

Finally, the biggest thank you is owed to my family for their encouragement and love. I cannot express how much I appreciate the support and prayers each one of you has given me in your own way. Every moment counted and helped get me to this point. I hope that I have made you all proud.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first issue on record in the United States judicial system related to school dress code violations is seen in Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969). The Supreme Court sided with the student who chose to wear an arm band to protest the Vietnam War. In their opinion, no disruption of the learning environment was cause by her armband, thus a precedent was set regarding school dress codes and First Amendment rights. The subsequent 45 years have seen a myriad of interpretations of the landmark case and massive amount of varying interpretations of what is appropriate attire for school exists today. With the current debates in mind, the proposed dissertation study expects to examine why, in spite of so much variation, there are certain groups of students seen as non-compliant to SDC policies.

Literature from years ago pointed to the notion that style of dress and the meaning of style constantly changes and is subjective (Tinker v. Des Moines, 1969). As time has passed, this concept continues to apply, and just like definition of style, school policies regarding dress code have changed over time. Where things tend to fall short during times of change is the relay of information about the changes and insurance that every stakeholder in the educational process understands what it means to be in compliance. When there is lack of effective communication and understanding, disruptions occur in the daily educational process. In the past, some schools resorted to

requiring a school uniform to address issues thought to be the cause of violations, but this was later shown to have little impact (Vopat, 2010).

It is necessary to consider the idea of style of dress as it relates to creating an identity or sense of self. Establishment of guidelines that are regularly explained and reevaluated requires a commitment to open lines of communication and a willingness to collaborate and compromise. Rather than be "reactive and emotionally based" decisions about violations should be fair and equitable (Workman & Studak, 2008). Unfortunately, most students do not experience an environment where due process is put into practice. Instead, clear discrepancies between racial and ethnic groups exist causing issues reaching far beyond what a child is wearing during the school day (Morris, 2005). The pervasive inequities in dress code violation decisions across the country are the impetus and guide for conducting this study.

The development of issues of school dress and compliance with dress codes have evolved beyond the First Amendment issues brought to light via Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969). However, students are rarely given the opportunity to speak on their behalf about their understanding of the policies they are required to abide by.

In an effort to address issues associated with school dress code compliance from students' perspective the following three chapters are presented as individual manuscripts: 1) a systematic review of the literature to evaluate depth and breadth of reported findings related to school dress code violations in secondary schools; 2) an assessment of the gap in communication and understanding about compliance as it

relates to dress code policies; and 3) a qualitative exploration of ninth grade girls experiences with school dress codes.

The first article used an established protocol to evaluate the types of reports of school dress code compliance issues and academic outcomes from the students' viewpoint in existing peer reviewed literature. An evaluation of gaps in this area was also included in the analysis.

Article two included an assessment of high school students' perceptions and application of understanding of school dress code and violations. Methodology in this portion of the study included data collection from high school students using a web-based questionnaire, analyses of the data using statistical software, and interpretation and explanation of the findings.

The third manuscript of the study is an exploration of the impact school dress code policies has on ninth grade Black/African American females using qualitative methodologies. The deficiencies in dress code compliance expectations and compliance provide an opportunity to open the lines of communication between students and policy makers. Part three of the study will involve semi-structured interviews designed to give ninth grade students an opportunity to express their opinions about their shared experience of transitioning to high school, learning about dress code compliance and violations, and the impact on their personal identity.

This research study creates an avenue for youth to voice their understanding or lack thereof of school dress code policies. The outcomes from initial findings serve to provide policymakers and other stakeholders in the education system open and multi-

directional lines of communication between members of the school community; particularly students.

CHAPTER II

SCHOOL DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS IN U.S. SECONDARY SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

INTERVENTIONS AND REPORTS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

School Dress Code (SDC) policies were founded in principles of addressing

problem behaviors related to dress (Herbon & Workman, 2000). Issues with SDC

compliance in schools are commonly combined with descriptions and reports of overall

discipline concerns in schools. Exceptions include studies associating dress with the

promotion of certain risky health behaviors (e.g., sexual behaviors, alcohol and drug use)

and connections to gangs and violence (Anderson, 2002; Ramirez, Ferrer, Cheng,

Cavanaugh, & Peek-Asa, 2011; Taylor, 2009). Additionally, school systems deal with

SDC issues through the litigation process as well as popular press media coverage.

When reporting about SDC concerns, information from the vantage point of students is

lacking overall; particularly in the scientific community.

The missing input from students in empirical studies regarding health outcomes

and other school health issues stems from a historical position of adolescents having

cognitive deficiencies during their early years (Bandura, 1993; Steinberg, 2005) and

therefore rendering their input of little value to scholars. However, the inclusion of

students in the decision-making processes at the secondary school level increases

accountability and connection to their school culture (Fletcher, 2005). Students also

perform better academically and socially in school environments where they feel included, valued, and heard (Fletcher, 2005).

An additional benefit of student involvement in SDC planning and implementation includes alignment with the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model (ASCD & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014; CDC, 2015). The collective efforts of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) created the WSCC model to expand the CDC's Coordinated School Health (CSH) approach (CDC, 2015). The effect of health outcomes on academic success and emphasis of collaboration between students and all stakeholders in school systems are essential elements of WSCC (ASCD & CDC, 2014; Gentile & Imberman, 2012). Considering the potential benefits for students, seeking existing literature on lessons learned, intervention strategies, or SDC policy reform is an initial step in incorporating the WSCC model in the school setting.

Advocating for restructuring of school policies goes beyond the increase in student engagement opportunities. It also creates an avenue for historically marginalized students to participate in the process of improving policies and the manner in which they are enforced. Currently, African American/Black (AA/B) students are disciplined at higher rates than their peers and receive harsher penalties for minor violations including SDC policy issues (Balfanz, Byrnes, & Fox, 2013; Blake, Butler, Lewis, & Darensbourg, 2011; Losen & Martinez, 2013; Skiba, Horne, & Chung, 2011). A student-centered perspective in SDC policy establishment and enforcement has the potential to positively

impact current achievement trends (Chavous, Rivas-Drake, Glover, Griffin, & Cogburn, 2008) and improve academic success.

Purpose

This review has been conducted to evaluate depth and breadth of reported findings related to SDC violations in secondary schools in the United States. Using an established protocol, the process of discovery of empirical studies was followed in a logical and efficient manner. The process also provided an avenue to develop a succinct overview of common practice in the area of school dress code policy as well as where deficits may exist. This review also seeks to highlight publications from the youth perspective and evaluate trends in peer-reviewed literature. Recommendations for additional research are also included.

METHODS

Study protocol

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol was used to gather articles for the review (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009). This included establishing search criteria, selection of databases, and following a four-phase article screening process.

Eligibility criteria

Articles located through the database search were determined using the following inclusion criteria: 1) articles written in English and published in peer reviewed journals; 2) published between January, 1995 and March, 2015; 3) reported incidences of dress code violations in U.S. secondary schools; and 4) reported student discipline issues and

academic success based on race and/or ethnicity. The selection of 1995 is based on the

dissolution of the National Science Foundation's NSFNET which allowed for both

private and public use of the internet (National Science Foundation, 2000) This time also

saw the immergence of music television channels, and formative stages of social media;

all of which are an avenue of influence on popular culture including style of dress.

Although popular press has a plethora of stories on current and past issues with school

attire, there is not a universal standard for reporting as seen in peer reviewed literature.

Therefore, popular press publications were excluded from the search.

Information sources

Four databases were utilized to search for literature meeting the eligibility

criteria. The search in ERIC was conducted on March 19, 2015 and the searches in

Education Source, Education Full Text, and Academic Search Complete were completed

on April 15, 2015. Each database yielded the following numbers of article retrieval

results: 1) ERIC = 241, 2) Education source = 158, 3) Education Full text = 74 and 4)

Academic Search Complete = 31.

Search strategy

A Research Instruction Guide on Review (RIGOR) template created by a Texas

A&M University librarian was used to organize search criteria, terms, history, syntax,

and findings for clarity and ease of replication. The online research discovery tool

EBSCO was used to conduct the database searches. This allowed for a common search

strategy to be applied in the ERIC, Education source, Education Full, and Academic

Search Complete database searches.

Table 1 provides the syntax used in the search strategy as a guide for similar searches as well as updates to the current review. The use of the syntax pattern used a universal language for EBSCO and allowed for the RIGOR guide to completed efficiently during each database search.

Table 1

Search Syntax for Dress Code Violations in U.S. Secondary Schools by Race or Ethnicity

---

EBSCO syntax level one (1):

DE "Dress Codes" OR ((dress*) w2 (code* or violat*)) OR (DE "Discipline" OR DE "Expulsion" OR DE "Suspension" OR DE "Discipline Policy" OR DE "Punishment" OR DE "Sanctions") OR AB (disciplin* or violation* or infraction* or suspension* or sanction* or expulsion*) OR TI (disciplin* or violation* or infraction* or suspension* or sanction* or expulsion*)

EBSCO syntax level two (2):

AND (DE "Secondary Education" OR DE "College Preparation" OR DE "Grade 10" OR DE "Grade 11" OR DE "Grade 12" OR DE "Grade 7" OR DE "Grade 8" OR DE "Grade 9" OR DE "High Schools" OR DE "Junior High Schools" OR DE "Secondary School Students" OR DE "Secondary Schools") OR AB ("grade 7" or "grade 8" or "grade 9" or "grade 10" or "grade 11" or grade 12") OR AB ("high schools" or "intermediate schools") OR AB (adolescen* or teen* or youth*)

EBSCO syntax level three (3):

AND (DE "Race" OR DE "African Americans" OR DE "Blacks" OR DE "Culture" OR DE "Ethnic Groups" OR DE "Ethnicity" OR DE "Minority Groups" OR DE "Racial Bias" OR DE "Racial Factors") OR (race or ethnicity or minority)

Study selection

Two researchers conducted an independent review of the 372 articles retrieved through the search strategy which is outline in Figure 1. The web-based database manager RefWorks was used to organize and share folders between researchers. In

addition, RefWorks allowed for the review of the abstracts in the initial screening and

articles that did not provide an abstract through the system were automatically included

in the full text screening phase of the review. Any discrepancies between the two

researchers were discussed until full agreement was reached for full text review. In order

to be considered for the systematic review, articles had to meet the following criteria: 1)

include a report of incidents of school discipline in an American secondary school; 2)

report race/ethnicity as a primary factor; 3) report policy compliance issues and

academic success based on race/ethnicity; 4) include dress code violations as a school

discipline factor; and 5) include student input collected during the study (via surveys,

interviews, and/or focus groups). Out of the 38 articles selected for full text review, only

two met the criteria for inclusion in the review.

Figure 1. *Flow Diagram of Systematic Review Articles*
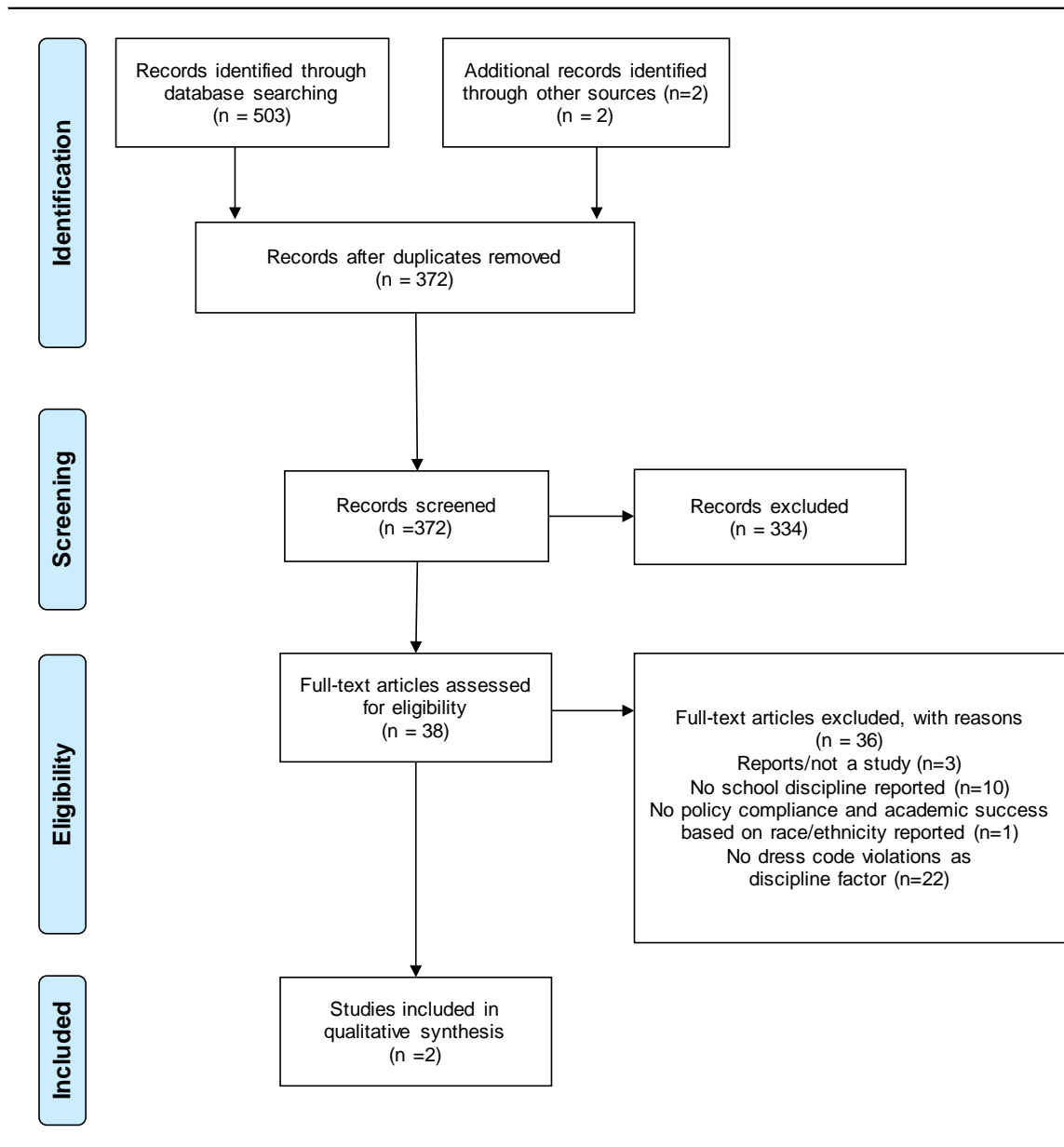
Data collection process and assessment

Data including study characteristics and findings were extracted from the articles using an adaption of the Garrard matrix method for health science literature reviews (Garrard, 2004). Study purpose, theory use, study design, participant characteristics, types of discipline issues reported, and study findings were included in the collection process.

As part of the assessment of theory utilization, articles were evaluated using the coding system established by Delissaint & McKyer (2008): 1) no evidence of race/ethnic/culture-related theory or construct (score = 0); 2) some evidence of use of race/ethnic/culture-related theory/constructs (score = 1); 3) Use of race/ethnic/culture-related theory but inferred (not clearly identified) (score = 2); and 4) Clear identification/operationalization of race/ethnic/culture-related theory/constructs use (score = 3).

In addition to theoretical assessment, each article was evaluated for conceptualization and operationalization of school dress code discipline issues. This evaluation was conducted using an adapted version of a scale created and used in a previous review focused on youth and schools (Lu et al., 2014). Adaptions were made to the language to adjust school dress code. Table 2 provides the criteria used to assess conceptualization and operationalization of school dress code violations for each article.

Table 2

Criteria for Assessing Conceptualization and Operationalization of School Dress Code Violations

Criterion	Description	Examples	Score
What did the authors mean by "school dress code violations" (SDC violations) in each article?			
Conceptualization of SDC violations	Defined or contextually described	A clear definition of "SDC violations" was provided.	2
	Contextually described, but within a broader category	School dress code violations were described as part of overall school discipline infractions.	1
	Not defined/described		0
Did the authors describe/detail how "school dress code violations" (SDC violations) were measured?			
Operationalization of SDC violations	Clearly operationalized /reported	Different items were used to measure "SDC violations" and the items were clearly described.	2
	Somewhat/slightly operationalized	Different items were claimed to be used to measure "SDC violations"; however, the items were not described.	1
		"SDC violations" were claimed to be measured; however, it is not clear what items were used.	
	Not reported/described		0

RESULTS

Study selection

Of the 372 school discipline-related articles identified through the review, 38 met the inclusion criteria for a full-text analysis. Two of the 38 were subsequently excluded because they were not empirical studies. There were 10 studies removed from consideration for the review because there were no data given about incidents of school discipline. The majority of the excluded studies (n=23) did not report issues comparing ethnicity nor did they expressly state school dress code as part of the reported discipline issues.

Study characteristics

There are two articles included in the review and an overview of the abstracted findings is shown in Table 3. The Mendez and Knoff article was published in 2003 and Farmer, Goforth, Clemmer, and Thompson published their article in 2004. Both studies were conducted in southern states. One study used a large data set from a large school district and the other location was characterized as rural (no definition of rural was given) and included a racially/ethnically homogenous sample. Mendez and Knoff (2003) analyzed data across all school levels while the Farmer and colleagues (2004) sample only included records from middle school students. By the nature of their design, the studies also differed in that one only considered students' suspension records while the other included input regarding school discipline issues from students as well as teachers from the research site.

Table 3

Systematic Literature Review Matrix

Lead author, year	Journal	Purpose of study	Theory used	Study design	Participant characteristics	Sanctions: District-based or Site-based (i.e., principal's discretion)	Types of violations reported (e.g., violence, weapons, truancy, dress code)	Definition of school dress code (Y/N)	Theory utilization score	SDC Violation Conceptualization score	SDC Violation Operationalization score	Reported findings
Farmer, 2004	Behavioral Disorders	To identify factors between middle school students with none, minor, and major discipline referrals.	No named theory (Use of social network constructs)	Cross-sectional	N = 259 (7th–8th grades) 83 boys and 176 girls ; 100% B/AA; < 96% qualified for free or reduce-price lunch	Site-based (assigned by principal)	Only reported in-school and out-of-school suspension rates and achievement percentiles for suspended students	N	2	1	0	Overall more males than females were suspended at least once. B/AA students were more likely than W or H students across gender and school level to be suspended
Mendez, 2003	Education and Treatment of Children	To address gaps in school suspension patterns at all school levels.	No named theory	Retrospective	N ≈ 145,000; 51% male 49% female; 56% W, 23% B/AA, 18% H, 3% O; 49% received free or reduced lunch	District-based	District identified 33 categories of offense; 15 account for 90% of all infractions: Disobedience/Insubordination - 20% (included dress code violation infractions) Disruptive - 13% Fighting - 13% Inappropriate behavior - 11% Noncompliance with assigned discipline - 7% Profanity - 7% Disrespect - 6% Tobacco possession - 4% Battery - 3% Threat/intimidation - 2% Left class or campus w/o permission - 2% Weapons possession - .7% Narcotics possession - .6% Sexual harassment - .6% Alcohol possession - .3%	N	0	1	0	B/AA students more likely than W or H students across gender and school level to be suspended. B/AA females over-represented in all 15 categories B/AA males: over 33% suspensions for 7 of 15 categories Largest percentage of suspensions for Disobedience/ Insubordination Large increase from elem to MS; rates drop off in HS for gender and race Disobedience suspension rates across all groups increased from elem to MS (3.62 per 100 to 35.75 per 100) and decreased in HS (26.74 per 100).

Examples of sample and study design bias are present in both studies. One study outlines the distribution of infractions and suspension rates based on race and gender (Mendez & Knoff, 2003). However, the use of retrospective analysis places limits on the study and introduces the potential for sample bias. This study limited reports to listing incident and suspension rates in one school year limiting the study's ability to provide causal inference in patterns of suspensions. Information about subsequent or previous years' discipline reports was excluded from the study design which might provide insight into suspension rate patterns and possible causes within the school district.

The second study collected data within one school location and only received input from one ethnic group and their teachers (Farmer et al., 2004). Like Mendez & Knoff (2003), this study relied on school reports to make inferences about behavior. The Farmer et al. (2004) study differed in that additional measurements were included to assess teacher and peer perception of student behavior.

Results of individual studies

Farmer, Goforth, Clemmer, & Thompson, 2004. Middle school students were the only target group for this study. Students were classified with discipline records in the following categories: 1) no offenses; 2) minor rule offenders; and 3) major rule offenders. Girls with no offenses were rated as model students by teachers and peers, tended to be associated other popular students, and end-of-year grades were higher compared to girls with major offenses. Girls who were minor rule offenders were similar to the no offenses group except that not likely to have popular students in their social group. Girls who were major rule offenders were, for the most part, opposite in

16

characterization of the no offenses group. These girls were regarded as troubled, considered inattentive by teachers, tended to be victims and perpetrators of bullying, were considered aggressive by their peers, and had end-of-year grades than the other two groups. Boys had higher discipline referral rates than girls, but no significant differences were reported between the three groups in any of the teacher and peer ratings.

Mendez & Knoff, 2003. This study investigated suspension rates by gender, race, and school level. The researchers included all school levels (i.e., elementary, middle school, and high school). At every school level, more males than females would be had been suspended at least once. This was also the case for Black students across all school levels and gender. Fifty-percent of middle school Black boys and 33% of middle school Black girls had been suspended at least one time. Additionally, middle and high school Black girls had higher suspension percentages than their White counterparts regardless of gender.

Thirty-three discipline categories were defined by the school district in reporting all cases of school suspensions. The 15 categories selected by the authors accounted for the vast majority of the causes for suspensions (90%) are outlined in Table 3. Dress code violations were included in the disobedience/insubordination category which accounted for 20% of incidents in the selected categories.

Theory utilization

Although not expressly stated as the theoretical framework for the study, one of the articles includes implied usage of constructs from social network theory (Farmer et al., 2004). A portion of the data collection included student ratings of behavior (e.g.,

17

model student; tough students) and social groupings (i.e., which students affiliate with each other). These implied constructs and methods provide the rationale for a theory utilization score of two (2).

Conceptualization and operationalization

Using an adapted version of Describe score for each and why the score was given. Both studies received a conceptualization rating of one (1) and an operationalization rating of zero (0). Farmer et al. (2004) collapsed school dress code in with minor rule offenses and Mendez & Knoff (2003) included dress code violations with disobedience/insubordination suspension incidents. While SDC violations were expressly mentioned in both studies, neither expanded on the level of severity of the SDC violations nor what constituted a violation according to policy.

Excluded school discipline studies

As mentioned previously, the majority of studies evaluated during the full-text screening phase of the review were excluded due to the lack of ethnicity as a factor in reported (n=1) or because school dress code violations were not included as part of the study or reported findings (n=22). Table 4 outlines the studies and aims to provide insight into what is being reported most frequently in the literature. Analyzing data presented to the scientific community may allow additional identification of gaps in retrospective analysis as well as cross-sectional and cohort studies.

One study (LaPoint, Alleyne, Mitchell, & Lee, 2003) initially considered for the full review reported student issues with style of dress. It was ultimately excluded because the participating school had an official uniform policy for their school dress

code. However, findings from the students surveyed indicated that even with uniforms there was concern about being judged and mistreated if they wore "out of style, ugly, or dirty" clothes (LaPoint, Alleyne, Mitchell, & Lee, 2003, pg. 411).

Although none of the studies in Table 4 conceptualized or operationalized SDC violations, nearly one-third of them included some evidence of a theoretical concept and they were scored according to the aforementioned Delissaint & McKyer scale (2008). Studies from Arcia (2007b) and Booker and Mitchell (2011) mentioned the oppositional culture theory and rational choice theory respectively, but did not make inference to or clearly define theory use within their studies and received a theory utilization score of one (1). Another two studies made inferences to the identified theories based on findings, but did not clearly define methods of usage were both given a score of two (2) (Gregory, Cornell, & Fan, 2011; Kupchik & Ellis, 2008). The remaining studies identifying theories received a score of three (3) based on the clear use and incorporation of their respective theories (Gregory & Mosely, 2004; Murphy, Acosta, & Kennedy-Lewis, 2013; Sheets, 1996).

Table 4

Summary of Selected Excluded Studies

Lead author, year	Journal	Purpose of study	Theory used	Study design	Participant characteristics	Sanctions: District-based or Site-based (i.e., principal's discretion)	Types of violations reported (e.g., violence, weapons, truancy, dress code)	Definition of school dress code (Y/N)	Theory utilization score	SDC Violation Conceptualization score	SDC Violation Operationalization score	Selected findings
Arcia, 2007a	Urban Education	To explore two alternatives for the rise in suspensions; type of student and/or grade configuration.	No named theory	Cohort	N = 26,137; 6th graders promoted to 7th grade who took standardized tests both years; 50% male	Site-based: Administrative staff (role assigned by principal)	Reports in-school and out-of-school suspension rates and achievement percentiles for suspended students	N	0	0	0	B/AA & H children transitioning from elem/K-8 schools to MS tripled suspension rates; 7th grade students overall were suspended twice the rate of K-8 students; Both elem/K-8 and MS had higher percentage of suspension rates among students scoring below the 50th percentile
Arcia, 2007b	Journal of Negro Education	To test student, school, and community factors that may explain variability between secondary schools in suspension rates of B/AA students.	Oppositional culture theory	Retrospective Cohort	N = 69 MS & HS in a large urban school district in southeastern U.S.; Analysis data from 2001, 2002, & 2003	Not reported	Reports suspension & reading achievement rates	N	1	0	0	B/AA students more likely to be suspended in schools that suspended high percentages of non-B/AA students, had disparities in achievement between B/AA and non-B/AA students, and where instructional staff average years of experience was low
Anyon, 2014	Children and Youth Services Review	To examine racial disparities and protective influence of alternatives to suspension at each stage of the school discipline process: 1) office referral; 2) suspension; 3) law enforcement referral; and 4) expulsion.	No named theory	Cross-sectional	Students (n = 87,997) in grades K to 12 enrolled in Denver Public Schools (n = 183) in 2011–2012.	Site-based (Office referrals, suspensions, and law enforcement referrals) & District based (& involve formal hearings - Expulsions)	Office referral reasons: Destruction of school property Disobedient/defiant Other code of conduct violation Bullying Detrimental behavior Third degree assault First degree assault Drug possession or distribution Dangerous weapon	N	0	0	0	B/AA, H, and Multiracial students often punished more harshly than W students for the same offenses; Schools with higher proportions of B/AA & H students were at greater risk for school exclusion after accounting for student-level demographics and behaviors; Race effects weakened as students moved from office referral to expulsion; Office referral reasons were the only significant predictors of expulsion.
Booker, 2011	Education & Treatment of Children	To describe group differences in reasons for placement and recidivism (relapse) into disciplinary alternative education placement (DAEP) settings	Rational choice theory	Cross-sectional	N=269; 52.59% B/AA, 36.30% H, 11% W; MS & HS students from 3 disciplinary alternative education schools in Texas	Site-based	Reported two categories for placement in DEAP - Mandatory (according to state education code) & discretionary (administrative decision)	N	1	0	0	80% placed in DEAP for discretionary reasons; 53% were recidivists; Compared to White students, B/AA students 2.39 times more likely and Hispanic students 12 times more likely to be placed in DEAP for discretionary reasons

Table 4 Continued

Lead author, year	Journal	Purpose of study	Theory used	Study design	Participant characteristics	Sanctions: District-based or Site-based (i.e., principal's discretion)	Types of violations reported (e.g., violence, weapons, truancy, dress code)	Definition of school dress code (Y/N)	Theory utilization score	SDC Violation Conceptualization score	SDC Violation Operationalization score	Selected findings
Carpenter, 2007	Journal of Advanced Academics	To examine variables associated with dropout behavior as a measure of achievement gaps among U.S. Black, White, and Hispanic students (between and within groups).	No named theory	Retrospective Cohort	N=17,613 measured second year of National Center for Education Statistics study NELS 88; 10.4% B, 12.6% H, 67.9% W	Not reported	Reported truancy and dropout rates	N	0	0	0	Over dropout rate 9.7%; 15% B/AA, 15.4% H, & 8.4% W student rates; High dropout rates across groups when a student had been held back (22%); Only common predictor between B/AA & W students: parent involvement; H & W students share time spent on homework, Algebra 1, & family composition
Cooper, 2013	Journal of Child and Family Studies	Used the stress-buffering framework to examine roles of family- and community-specific social support in perceived racial discrimination.	No named theory	Cross-sectional	N=4,256; 100% B/AA; 59% female; Ages 12-18 (M=15.12, SD=1.83)	Not reported	Participant self-reported number of suspensions	N	0	0	0	Boys and girls: racial discrimination positively associated with depressive symptoms; Girls reporting close to father: perceived racial discrimination related to more suspensions compared to girls with less closeness; Boys: fewer suspension and more involved at school when mother-son closeness was reported
Coulliard, 2006	The Alberta Journal of Educational Research	To study the relationship between grades, standard achievement test scores, and risk factors (e.g., academic, behavior, family, and medical problems) for K-12 students.	No named theory	Retrospective	n=430 4th graders; n=64 6th graders; n=108 8th graders; n=90 9th graders; 77% W, 10% A, 8% B/AA, 4% AI, 3% H; 49% female	Not reported	Reported student issues with anger and other behavioral issues; no rates or specific incidents	N	0	0	0	Over 50% of sample had at least one risk factor; Male, H & B/AA students more likely to have more than one risk factor; Significant correlation of multiple risk factors and low test scores
Gregory, 2011	American Educational Research Journal	To examine the relationship between structure and support in high school and suspension rates.	Authoritative parenting framework	Cross-sectional	25 9th grade students from 199 schools in Virginia 59% W, 30% B/AA, 11% H & O	Not reported	Suspension rates calculated without duplication (each student counted once regardless of total number of suspensions)	N	2	0	0	Avg suspension rates for all schools 15.1% (SD=.091); Avg rate for B/AA = 24% and W = 11%, t(199) = 25.85, p<.001; highest rates for B/AA & W students at low-level support & academic press schools (28%; 13%) and largest gaps between the two (15%)

Table 4 Continued

Lead author, year	Journal	Purpose of study	Theory used	Study design	Participant characteristics	Sanctions: District-based or Site-based (i.e., principal's discretion)	Types of violations reported (e.g., violence, weapons, truancy, dress code)	Definition of school dress code (Y/N)	Theory utilization score	SDC Violation Conceptualization score	SDC Violation Operationalization score	Selected findings
Gregory, 2004	Equity & Excellence in Education	To examine teachers' implicit theories about causes of discipline problems and how teachers consider race and culture in theorizing.	Development theory; Low achievement theory; Community and culture deficit theory; School organization & school cultural theory	Semi-structured interviews	N=19 high school teachers: 14 W, 4 B/AA, 1 H; 58% female 42% male; Avg years' experience 11 years; represented 8 of the 12 departments on campus	Not reported	Specific types of violations not reported	N	3	0	0	Most teachers did not consider issues of race and culture when theorizing about why discipline problems occur; emphasis placed on the "problem" nature of African American students, families, or communities; 2 of 19 teachers mentioned teacher stereotyping and cultural mismatch as potential contributors to discipline problems
Han, 2011	Journal of School Leadership	To examine frequency of and reasons for severe disciplinary actions and the relationship between school characteristics and severe discipline sanctions.	No named theory	Retrospective	N=1,872 secondary school principals; data from 2005-2006 School Survey on Crime and Safety,	Not reported	Attacks/fights; insubordination; drug-related behaviors; weapon use; alcohol-related behaviors; firearm use and possession	N	0	0	0	86.6% of secondary schools implemented severe disciplinary actions at least once; out-of-school suspension most common; 70.2% of secondary schools suspended students; 49.2% of secondary schools transferred students; 23.3% of secondary schools expelled students without educational services

Table 4 Continued

Lead author, year	Journal	Purpose of study	Theory used	Study design	Participant characteristics	Sanctions: District-based or Site-based (i.e., principal's discretion)	Types of violations reported (e.g., violence, weapons, truancy, dress code)	Definition of school dress code (Y/N)	Theory utilization score	SDC Violation Conceptualization score	SDC Violation Operationalization score	Selected findings
Kaufman, 2010	Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions	To examine office referral data in an urban school district across elem, MS, and HS to determine whether patterns of office referrals changed by grade.	No named theory	Cross-sectional	N=1,668 students in urban school district with at least one office referral (K-12); 56.8% (947) boys and 43.2% (721) girls. Ages 4-20 (M age = 14.6, SD = 2.4); 49% B/AA, 48% H, 2% W, 1% A	Teachers/staff (through use of district and school-approved Positive Behavior Support [PBS] electronic referral system)	1) **Attendance** (leave building without permission, skip class, skip detention, tardies); 2) **Delinquency** (weapon, drugs, alcohol, vandalism, theft extortion, cheating); 3) **Aggression** (fighting, physical threat to staff or peer, verbal harassment, endangering behavior, bullying); 4) **Disrespect** (use of profanity toward peer, staff, or other, disruptive behavior, disrespect, lying)	N	0	0	0	**1) Attendance:** HS - higher referrals than lower level; referrals increase as grade level increased; **2) Delinquency:** K–3 and 4–6 significantly fewer referrals than students in HS; 7–8 did not differ from HS; **3) Aggression:** K–3, 4–6, and 7–8 significantly more referrals than 9–12; more than 5 times higher in 7-8 compared to 9-12; **4) Disrespect:** K–3 and 4–6 significantly fewer referrals; 7–8 significantly more referrals than 9–12
Kim, 2009	New York Law School Law Review	To describe the process in Antoine v. Winner School District for public law remediation racial impact in school-to-prison pipeline litigation.	No named theory	Case study	School district in Tripp County, South Dakota; 74% W, 24% AI, 2% (B/AA, H, A, or O)	Not reported	Specific types of violations not reported	N	0	0	0	Creation of a co-construction team involving all stakeholders facilitated reconciliation between parties; assumptions of lack of parent involvement negated by explanations of a perceived hostile environment dissuading parents from attending meetings/events.
Kupchik, 2008	Youth & Society	Examines 1) B/AA & H students (mainly males) perception of fairness of school safety practices compared to W; 2) security strategies (e.g., security guards, metal detectors) impact perceptions.	Reproduction theory; control theory (p.559)	Retrospective	N = 8,370; 53% male; 89% attend public school; 55% in high school; 66% W, 16% H, 13% B/AA, and 5% A, AI, or Aleutian/Eskimo	Not reported	None reported	N	2	0	0	B/AA students gave significantly lower ratings than W students of fairness of school rules and rule enforcement; H students did not report significantly different perceptions of fairness than other groups

Table 4 Continued

Lead author, year	Journal	Purpose of study	Theory used	Study design	Participant characteristics	Sanctions: District-based or Site-based (i.e., principal's discretion)	Types of violations reported (e.g., violence, weapons, truancy, dress code)	Definition of school dress code (Y/N)	Theory utilization score	SDC Violation Conceptualization score	SDC Violation Operationalization score	Selected findings
LaPoint, 2003	Journal of Negro Education	To assess student knowledge of the use of dress codes to limit discipline issues.	No named theory	Cross-sectional	N=213; 95% B/AA, 5% H; 47% female; 28.4% 6th grade, 30% 7th grade, 41% 8th grade	Not reported	Instrument subscale: School-related Issues (Tardiness, absenteeism, vagrancy/breaking school rules, and disruptive behavior in class)	N	0	0	0	60% of participants reported knowledge of intent of dress codes and uniforms to reduce problems; 40% believed they are judged by the way they dress; 54.3% believed style of dress affects behavior; Older students less likely to adhere to adults cautioning about types of clothes and behavior.
Ma, 2004	The Alberta Journal of Educational Research	To examine disciplinary climate using school characteristics.	No named theory	Cross-sectional	N=24,599 8th grade data from National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS)*	Not reported	Fighting, theft, vandalism, alcohol/drug use, weapons possession, physical/verbal abuse of teachers, tardiness, absenteeism	N	0	0	0	Student-rated severe discipline issues: fights, theft, vandalism, use of alcohol/drugs, weapons possession, physical/verbal abuse of teachers (accounted for 24% of variance); 2 factors with most impact on achievement: class disruptions & proportion of students who talked to a counselor/teacher about discipline
Murphy, 2013	The Urban Review	To examine the experiences of girls of color with repeated discipline issues.	Intersectionality	Semi-structured interviews	7 girls (5 B/AA, 2 mixed race); 6th grade N=4, 8th grade N=3	Site-based	Reported students' recall of incidents of disrespect, insubordination, & fighting	N	3	0	0	Race and gender have an impact on school discipline issues for the participants (e.g., alienated from a complete school experience; respond to discipline by resisting "perceived injustices")
Nichols, 1999	Equity & Excellence in Education	To review discipline incidents and suspension data & make recommendations to improve reporting in a school corporation.	No named theory	Mixed methods	N ≈ 32,000 students (72% W, 23% B/AA, 5% H, less than 1% AI or A); About 12% reduced or free lunches.	Site-based	Class suspension (not on discipline record); In-school suspension (ISS); Out-of-school suspension (OSS) - All max 5 days	N	0	0	0	Inconsistent reporting between campuses (some administrators coded data & clerical staff coded at others); Administrator expressed doubt in accurate reporting of discipline by all campuses; Low SES students 3.1 times more likely to have an OSS
Rosenbloom, 2004	Youth & Society	To establish methods for future research on discrimination issues in urban high schools.	No named theory	Qualitative (interviews & observations)	20 A, 20 H, 20 B/AA 9th grade students (50% girls, mean age 14.2)	Not reported	Student-reported incidents of assault, fighting, harassment, weapons possession	N	0	0	0	A students were 2nd largest ethnic group, but considered (by B/AA & H students) least likely to interact with students from other groups; B/AA students felt if they dressed a certain way, adults perceive them as a behavior problem or threat; B/AA & H students felt teachers had low expectations for them

Table 4 Continued

Lead author, year	Journal	Purpose of study	Theory used	Study design	Participant characteristics	Sanctions: District-based or Site-based (i.e., principal's discretion)	Types of violations reported (e.g., violence, weapons, truancy, dress code)	Definition of school dress code (Y/N)	Theory utilization score	SDC Violation Conceptualization score	SDC Violation Operationalization score	Selected findings
Sheets, 1996	The Urban Review	To explore and explain disproportionate rates of discipline for males and ethnic minorities in an urban high school.	Interethnic group interactions	Qualitative (interviews & observations)	16 students (4 B/AA, 4 H, 4 W, & 4 Filipino American) & 9 teachers; 50% male	Not reported	Specific types of violations not reported	N	3	0	0	All students & the teachers included race as a factor in discipline (W thought it was unintentional & minorities felt is was "conscious and deliberate"); All agreed achievement, ethnicity, gender, & discipline history affected future discipline sanctions
Soumah, 2013	Reclaiming Children and Youth	To explore understanding and perceptions of bias from the perspective of students.	No named theory	Qualitative (interviews)	N = 8; 4 B/AA, 3 H, 1 W; Age range = 14-19	Not reported	Specific types of violations not reported	N	0	0	0	Participants felt teachers and principals expressed low academic expectations for minority students & "see no reason" to help those students; most students did not see immediate benefit of school (no future orientation) or that discipline was handled equitably (minority students received harsher punishments)
Stearns, 2006	Youth & Society	To compare differences in dropout rates and reasons by grade level and age	No named theory	Retrospective	N = 194,454 HS dropouts in North Carolina	Not reported	Specific types of violations not reported	N	0	0	0	10.66% of 9th graders & 4.3% of 12th graders dropout because of discipline issues; As they age, dropout rates decline because of discipline and increase because of academic reasons for all ethnic groups and gender except for H females.
Sullivan, 2013	School Psychology Review	To examine the influence and indicators of school policies on students' suspension risks.	No named theory	Retrospective	N ≈ 18,000 K-12 students in a Midwestern school district	Not reported	Reported suspension rates	N	0	0	0	Significant factors for suspension risk: gender, race, disability, and SES
Wallace, 2008	The Negro Educational Review	To examine discipline practices in U.S. comparing racial and ethnic groups and impact of sociodemographic factors on outcomes.	No named theory	Retrospective	Student records from 420 U.S. secondary schools; data selected each year from 1991-2005.	Site-based	Alcohol/drugs at school, weapons; reported suspension & expulsion rates	N	0	0	0	Results indicate significant differences for race and ethnicity; higher rates of suspensions for males overall, but probability is higher for girls when race and ethnicity are factored in.

Ethnicity abbreviations: A - Asian/Pacific Islander; AI - American Indian; B/AA - Black/African American; H - Hispanic; O - Other; W - White non-Hispanic

Other abbreviations: Elem - elementary school; MS - middle school; HS - high school

**US Department of Education, 1989

DISCUSSION

Summary of evidence

This systematic literature review was conducted to research patterns in the literature related to SDC violations as well as methods used to report outcomes and impact on academic performance. To my knowledge, there are no other published reviews conducted regarding this adolescent and school health issue. The two articles meeting the criteria to be included in the review both included SDC issues and input from students during data collection. Articles summarized in the excluded studies section were not a part of the final review, but warrant mentioning because they provide an indication of the type of coverage student discipline and relationships to academic outcomes receives in the literature.

A key focal point of the review was to evaluate the depth and breadth of publications about SDCs. While the two articles surviving elimination were included because of a liberal application of the "dress code violations as a discipline factor" criterion, an evaluation of their depth and breadth fell short of expectation. There was very little depth to the coverage of SDC within discipline reports as the reported incidents were chronicled by the resulting student suspension or lumped into the disobedience discipline factor.

Suspension rates were highest among students who disobeyed the SDC or another school regulation with the Farmer et al. (2004) study. This speaks to the needs of a very large school district when 20% of their school discipline issues arise from one category. Further, it supports the need for more information about what is influencing

these negative outcomes. Instead, the methods used to collect and aggregate the data perpetuate generic reporting of suspension rates and places limitations on what can be reported in detail.

The twenty-three studies excluded from review, but outlined in detail, provide insight to the major topics generally reported on regarding school discipline and academic outcomes by ethnicity. Although methods rarely included the student perspective, these articles provide the necessary background to move forward in this area.

Researchers are calling for more efforts to be made in creating and maintaining healthy school environments that are collaborative, inclusive, supportive, and offer quality learning opportunities (CDC, 2015). Establishing a comprehensive approach to school system logistics and operations as a whole can impact the methods used to resolve and report discipline issues. Incorporating a comprehensive model as part of the school's operating system, school personnel can take into account that there is more to an incident or policy violation than the final action. This may also serve as a supportive aid in terms of accountability and expectations within schools and at the district level.

This review highlights the need for a reorganized approach to discipline management especially as adolescents make the transition to the secondary level. This is a point in time that represents development and growth in young people. Along with the changes an added emphasis on student involvement in the process of policy development can improve the quality of their educational path.

Limitations

The final number of included articles in this review was small due in part to the detailed criteria for inclusion. As noted earlier, researchers primarily incorporate SDC violations into general disobedience categories and they are rarely conceptualized independently. Other limiting factors included restricting the search to peer-reviewed and publications from studies of American schools. Popular press sources have an extensive supply of publications on the matter school attire and dress code policies. However, there is no universal method for validating those publications. Likewise, countries outside of the U.S. publishing on the topic would pose comparison challenges based on policy differences as well as religious issues with dress that other countries face in the realm of SDC compliance.

Another key limitation is the exclusion of the student health perspective from the vast majority of studies on discipline and policy. Time and resources have been invested in studying the history of student behavior and performance, but those records do not always account for potential social or behavioral health factors influencing students' actions and outcomes. The sectors of research publishing from the perspective of youth voice, input, and inclusion are also limited in publications on SDC policy.

Conclusion

Making an effort to address SDC concerns and involve students in the process requires essential elements and should be made advisedly. Using formal conventions to research what has been done in the past offers guidance, prevents recurring mistakes, and exposes deficiencies and needs.

Although the literature search yielded a small number of results, the review and synthesis of the findings exposed the lack of dissemination in this area. The need to adhere to lessons learned has been explained through the limited findings resulting from the systematic search and just as the WSCC promotes collaboration and inclusion in schools, a similar mindset in the approach to researching and reporting on this topic.

There is a great need for additional research from the student perspective regarding the issues with SDC compliance. Future searches should be expanded to include alternative types of publications, such as popular press articles written by academics tailored to audience of lay readers. Similar to the comprehensive approach in teaching youth, a better approach to managing issues like SDC compliance should be one that involves every person with a vested interest in student success; particularly the students themselves.

CHAPTER III

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL DRESS CODE

POLICIES: DOES RACIAL OR ETHNIC IDENTITY INFLUENCE DRESS CODE

VIOLATION RATINGS OF THEIR PEERS?

INTRODUCTION

The first federal court case of school dress code (SDC) dealt with an arm band protesting a war (*Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, 1969). While wearing arm band with a peace symbol might not seem very controversial today, the history behind *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969) has become the cornerstone case for subsequent issues with appropriate dress for the learning environment. The case is referenced any time there is a question about SDC regulations interfering freedom of expression. School personnel contend that SDCs are not intended to infringe upon civil rights, but are safety measures aimed at protecting the quality of the learning environment (Anderson, 2002). Issues dealing with choices made regarding appropriate attire for students are argued in school offices, school district board meetings, the court system, and, at times, in the media. The numbers of disciplinary incidents (as these are categorized) increase as students transition from primary grades to the secondary level (Stearns & Glennie, 2006).

It has been established in existing literature that a disproportionate number of youth from minority groups are found in violation of school dress code (SDC) policies, those findings are from the perspective of adults (Blake, Butler, Lewis, & Darensbourg,

2011; Losen & Martinez, 2013; Skiba et al., 2011). While the adult perspective still warrants clarification, the discussion around this topic is missing a critical component – input from students. The youth perspective is absent from the conversation related to their style of dress while at school. Another component missing from literature is an assessment of how students interpret these policies and what personal factors can be taken into consideration as having an influence on students' application of understanding rules and regulations related to dress.

Youth perspective in SDC policy

As established in the previous manuscript (Chapter II), there exists a need for more research in the area of student involvement in the decision making process regarding school regulations particularly SDC policies. Findings exposed gaps in the literature regarding SDC as a factor school discipline and the engagement of students in establishment and implementation of policies. Including youth in the formative stages of policy and system administration at the secondary level goes beyond the benefits of demonstrating a collaborative spirit. Students taking an active interest in their success as well as their peers' success can increase their sense of belonging in the school community and decrease communication and strategy errors made by adult decision makers (Fletcher, 2005). Adding student policymakers to the school system can also assist with staying current and in some cases ahead of relevant fashion trends rather than being caught off-guard by sudden changes. It is also possible, through the incorporation of a youth perspective, for key school personnel to have additional means to identify fads or trends that may appear harmless, but have negative associations and meanings.

When school policies are established, students are obligated to adhere to the rules which govern their educational experience. Students are often absent from the policy creation process despite the proven benefits of their engagement in the learning environment (Marks, 2000). There are pros and cons to incorporating a younger perspective in decision-making opportunities. Supporters for positive and negative views of youth inclusion have made and will continue to make justifiable arguments for their position (Vopat, 2010). When considering student engagement as a component of management, school systems must take into account the costs and benefits for the students and community they serve. There have been efforts made to gauge the "health" of the school environment in previous studies reporting stakeholder perceptions of the school environment (Gregory, Henry, & Schoeny, 2007; Hoy & Hannum, 1997). These studies have offered differing definitions of the climate of the academic setting, but the lack of research related to school dress code from both the adult and student perspective provides an opportunity from improvement and inclusion as school systems works towards a positive and supportive client for all students and stakeholders.

Self-identity & racial identity

Another factor when considering youth involvement in the decision making process in schools is how the youth view themselves in the context of identity and how it influences decisions and behaviors. The extant literature defines self-identity (or self-concept) as a continuous reproduction of images and balancing different stages of self and is used in research related to youth risk behaviors and academic achievement (Chavous et al., 2008; Erikson, 1968; Hughes et al., 2009; Rodriguez et al., 2009;

Marcia, 1966). Racial identity emerged nearly eighty years ago as one component of self-identity (Clark & Clark, 1939). Current application of the term includes an individual identity as well as group identification which in itself can be complex since ancestral roots and what racial or ethnic group a person identifies with may differ (Phinney, 1990). These and other aspects of adolescent growth and development play a role in the decision-making process.

Actively seeking an understanding of the manner in which students define their self-identity may give guidance to a comprehensive learning environment which includes policy making and adherence. In addition to numerous physiological changes experienced by youth during high school years, they are also undergoing cognitive and personality processes commensurate with identity development. This growth is a natural part of the developmental pathway, including establishment of an identity which can be based on variety of beliefs, qualities, and characteristics (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). During puberty youth are highly influenced by physical appearance as it has been shown to be a major determinant of self-worth (Lunde & Frisén, 2011). The present study addresses several levels of development by including identity measures which offer various ways to express personal beliefs and affiliations.

Conceptual framework

The theory of identity has evolved over multiple decades and has been applied many arenas of social and behavioral science research Although Erik Erikson (1950) is credited with applying the idea of "self-concept" into the social sciences, research by Nelson Foote (1951) first applied the impact of the term "identity" on personal and social

behavior. Continued application of identity in a theoretical framework adds to Foote's notion that behavior is influenced not only by the person identifying with a certain group, but also behaving in a manner expected by those in a similar situation (Burke & Stets, 2009; McCall & Simmons, 1978). Incorporating an identity theory approach provided the guides to assess the domain or typology from which a student emerges in this phase of the study (Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Beyers, & Missotten, 2011; Brown, 2000). Understanding the manner in which students identify themselves (self-identity) can serve as guidance when creating a comprehensive learning environment which includes policy adherence. In addition to numerous physiological changes experienced by youth during high school years, they are also undergoing cognitive and personality processes commensurate with identity development.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to assess high school students' perceptions of school dress code and violations as well as assess any gap in communication and understanding about compliance as it relates to dress code policies. School discipline literature typically describes and analyzes issues with truancy, violence, and other aggressive behaviors. Rarely seen are studies expressing student opinion about policies and how students navigate through the decision process as it relates to school. The primary questions presented in this article are: 1) How well do high school students understand their school's dress code policy? 2) Do high schools students perceive peers with more physically developed bodies to be in violation of the SDC more so than their

less developed counterparts? and 3) Does a student's racial or ethnic affiliation influence their violation rating of peers belonging to the same or different group?

METHODS

Research site

The research site was a suburban high school near a large, metropolitan city in southeast Texas. The diverse student body enrollment, comprised of Black/ African American (B/AA) (38%), Hispanic/Latino (16%), non-Hispanic White (White) (19%), Asian/Pacific Islander (23%), and various other ethnic groups (4%), was just over 2,000 for the 2014-2015 school year.

Participants

Upon receiving approval from the Texas A&M Institutional Review Board (IRB), students from the research site were recruited from ten classrooms to participate in the study. There were 69 students enrolled in the study in grades 9 through 12. Participants' ages ranged from 14 to 18 (M=15.91, SD=1.067). The number of participants in each grade level varied with underclassmen outnumbering upper class by 42% (9th n=23, 10th n =26, 11th n=9, 12th n=11). Similar to the racial and ethnic distribution at the school there were more B/AA students, but overall participants were from diverse backgrounds (27 B/AA, 13 Hispanic/Latino, 14 White, 8 Asian, 2 American Indian, and 5 other/multiracial) and 53% of the sample were females (n=37). Based on household income reported by parents, less than one percent of the participants qualify for the school free and reduced lunch program and the vast majority of the participants live in a household with two married parents/guardians (n=53).

Procedures

One of the computer labs in the research site was used to administer the web-based survey instrument. Prior to logging on to the computers, participants were assented. Participants were instructed to open a web browser window and were given the URL (web address) that would take them to the Qualtrics survey website. Each participant used a unique numerical identifier (ID) which they entered on the computer to begin the questionnaire. The ID also allowed research staff to connect each student to the sociodemographic provided by their parent/guardian during consent.

After participants entered their ID number, indicated their gender and grade level, they were shown a copy of their school's dress code policy. They were also instructed to ask a member of the research staff for a paper copy of the policy if they needed to refer back to it while responding to subsequent questions. After reviewing the school's dress code policy, participants were asked to give their opinion about eight model's outfit as to whether the outfit was appropriate (Appropriateness) and how likely each outfit would violate their school's dress code (SDC Policy). They were also asked to express their opinion of specific qualities about each outfit to quantify the participants' perception based on gender, race, dress code level (i.e., C, A, V) and development (Perception Score).

Once participants completed all questions and submitted their responses, a researcher checked their screen for the submission confirmation page. Then they were instructed to log off the computer and go the table designated for incentive distribution. All participants were issued a $10 gift card upon completion of the questionnaire.

Measures

The survey instrument was comprised of Tanner scale-rated photographic images showing students in various types of school clothes (Tanner, 1962) and two ethnic identity scales. The questionnaire included randomized photographs of eight students (2 B/AA girls, 2 White girls, 2 B/AA boys, & 2 White boys) in various outfits that were dress code compliant (C), ambiguous in compliance (A), and in violation of the dress code (V). The instrument was designed to assess students' understanding and perception of compliance with the SDC rules.

Tanner-rated photographs. The photographic images shown included de-identified (faces completely blocked out) youth models in the ninth-grade who were either in the pre- or post-pubertal stage of development according to the Tanner Stages scale (Tanner, 1962). The scale established a means to describe the stages of development for boys and girls based on physiological changes as well as changes in the physical appearance during puberty (Marshall & Tanner, 1970; Marshall & Tanner, 1969). Using the scale criteria, three medical professionals with experience in pediatric medicine and nursing analyzed the images of 30 youth models and rated them as pre-pubertal (Stage 1 or 2) or post-pubertal (Stage 3, 4, or 5). For the purpose of the study, eight youth models were included in the survey instrument. All three raters identified seven of the eight models in the same stage of development, while one model was coded in the same stage by two of the three raters. The discrepancy in the rating of the one model was resolved by using the stage selected by the two raters in agreement.

37

The eight youth models represented two racial and two gender groups in each stage of development (1, female, B/AA pre-pubertal; 1, female, White, pre-pubertal; 1, male, B/AA pre-pubertal; 1, male, White, pre-pubertal; 1, female, B/AA post-pubertal; 1, female, White, post-pubertal; 1, male, B/AA post-pubertal; 1, male, White, post-pubertal). These models will be referred to as low development (pre-pubertal) and high development (post-pubertal) going forward. Each model wore three clothing options ranging from compliant to violation according to the school's policy. A sample of the photos used in the survey instrument can be found in Figure 2. Table 5 provides an example of the questions and response options regarding each photo.

Figure 2. *Survey Instrument Sample Photos*

High development B/AA female

Low development W female

High development W female

Low development B/AA female

High development B/AA male

Low development W male

High development W male

Low development B/AA male

Table 5

Model Assessment Questions and Response Options

Question	Response options						
Q1. To what extent do you feel this outfit is appropriate for a high school student to wear?	Very Inappropriate	Inappropriate	Somewhat Inappropriate	Undecided	Somewhat Appropriate	Appropriate	Very Appropriate
	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
Q2. To what extent do you think this outfit violates the dress code policy for your high school?	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Undecided	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

Q3. Do you think this outfit…

Is too tight?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Is too loose?
Is too short	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Is too long?
Hangs to low?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Hangs just right?
Is too revealing?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Has too much coverage?
Shows too much skin?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Shows appropriate level of skin?
Looks sloppy?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Looks neat?
Is too small?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Is too big?
Should have the top tucked in?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Should not have the top tucked in?
Is too traditional for school?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Is too trendy for school?

*Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM).*The Multigroup Ethnic Identity

Measure (MEIM) scale was developed by Phinney as a method of measurement for

adolescents and young adults to indicate their personal identity or sense of membership

to an ethnic group (Phinney, 2015; Phinney, 1992). The scale consists an open-ended

question asking the participant to write (or type) the name of the ethnic group they

associate themselves with, five questions designed to measure ethnic identity search

(EIS) or exploration, seven questions measuring affirmation, belonging, and

commitment (ABC) or commitment to their identified ethnic group, and the last three

questions asks the participant to identify their own, their father's, and their mother's

ethnicity from a pre-determined list of choices (see Appendix B). A factor analysis of the

MEIM was conducted in a large sample size of adolescents early in its use supporting

the EIS and ABC subscale factors (Roberts et al., 1999). The revised version of the

MEIM (MEIM-R) has limited analysis in current literature; therefore the version

described above was used (Brown et al., 2014; Phinney & Ong, 2007). Phinney's MEIM

scale has been used in numerous studies behavioral health studies with adolescents and

although results have varied, the scale's reliability has been substantiated (Smith &

Silva, 2011). For the purpose of this study, results from this measure were used to assess

SDC violation outcomes and participant race.

Functions of Identity Scale (FIS). Serafini and Adams (2002) created the

Functions of Identity Scale (FIS) to assess the five functions of identity as recommended

by Adams and Marshall (1996). The most recent version of the scale is a 15-item

instrument measuring Structure, Goals, Personal Control, Harmony, and Future as

functions of identity (Serafini, Maitland, & Adams, 2006) (see Appendix C). As shown in Table 6, each of the five functions is measured by three items and subscale scores are assessed independently. Previous testing and recommendation by the authors preclude the use of one FIS score (Adams & Marshall, 1996). The functions of the FIS were evaluated based on participant race and SDC policy violation.

Table 6

Identity Construct Measurement Table

Construct	Instrument	Items
Ethnic identity search	MEIM	1, 2, 4, 8, & 10
Affirmation	MEIM	3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, & 12
Belonging	MEIM	3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, & 13
Commitment	MEIM	3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, & 14
Structure	FIS	1, 6, 11
Harmony	FIS	2, 7, 12
Goals	FIS	3, 8, 13
Future	FIS	4, 9, 14
Personal Control	FIS	5, 10, 15

Previous studies found students who identify closely with and are proud of their ethnic identity show a bias toward members of their group (Hethorn & Kaiser, 1999; cite). Questions from this scale allowed for comparisons of connectedness within and between the study participants.

Analysis

Scoring of measures. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22.0 was used to analyze the data. To assess understanding of their school's dress code policy, participants were randomly presented with photos of the youth models

and asked to determine if the models' outfits would be considered a violation. Of the 24 photographed outfits, eight met the criteria to be considered a violation of the school's dress code. Participants were given a 7-point Likert scale question ranging from Very unlikely (score=1) to Very likely (score=7) to violate the policy (see Table 5 "School Dress Code" question). Scores of 5, 6 or 7 were considered correct application of understanding of the SDC. Any scores below five were considered incorrect. A violation score variable was created for each participant by averaging the ratings for the eight violation outfits. A violation score of at least five or higher constituted a correct response or coding for violation. Likewise, a compliance score variable was created for the eight compliance outfits and was coded as correct if the scores were less than five.

The distribution of participants by ethnic group was diverse but unequal. A new variable was created for race using the scores from all non-B/AA participants in order to compare them to B/AA students (B/AA n=27; non-B/AA n=43). An exact McNemar's test for differences was conducted to compare expected correct versus incorrect ratings and actual correct versus incorrect ratings. Repeated measures ANOVA was used to assess participant perception base on multiple factors related to each model, including gender, race, and physical development level. Paired samples t-tests were conducted to compare high development models and low development models. Linear regression analyses were run to predict the relationship between each condition for high versus low development models and the MEIM and FIS scales and factors for black participants compared to non-black. The mean violation score for the two models representing each race and gender was used as the dependent variable in each regression analysis. MEIM

43

and FIS factors were mean centered to standardize the variables and assist with interpretation of regression coefficients. All tests performed were significant at a .05 level.

RESULTS

SDC violation and compliance scores

Contrary to the expected outcome of equal application of violation versus compliance ratings, only 10% of the participants (N=7) rated the SDC violation outfits correctly while over 94% participants (N=65) correctly rated the SDC compliant outfits. When compared by race, none of the B/AA students correctly assessed when an outfit was in violation whereas 16.7% of non-B/AA students identified SDC violation outfits. An exact McNemar's test indicated a statistically significant difference between violation and compliance scores, p=.0005, indicative of incorrect application of the school's policy regarding SDC violations. Table 7 provides an overview of the results from comparisons of violation and compliance outfit assessments.

Table 7

Cross-tabulation of Violation and Compliance Outfit Scores

Count		Compliance Score		Total
		Incorrect	Correct	
Violation Score	Incorrect	4	58	62
	Correct	0	7	7
Total		4	65	69

Perception of policy

Repeated measures ANOVA was performed to assess participants' perception of SDC based on comparison groups between participants (race and gender) and for several conditions for the youth models (gender, race, stage of development, and C, A, and V dress code level). Although a small number of the interactions approached the level of significance (p<.05), no substantial predictions resulted. However, additional factors including level of physical development were probed further.

Paired sampled t-tests were conducted for the two high development female models to test for statistically significant differences between the appropriateness, SDC policy knowledge, and overall perception scores for the ambiguous and violation outfits. Although participants incorrectly assessed the majority of violation outfits, there was a statistically significant difference between the low and high development models wearing the ambiguous outfit in all three conditions. Appropriateness was significantly different for the black high development female model (M=5.51, SD=1.43) and White high development model (M=4.75, SD=1.88); t(68)=4.12, p=.0005. SDC policy violation scores was significantly different for the black high development female model (M=2.70, SD=1.49) and White high development model (M=3.30, SD=1.77); t(68)=-3.03, p=.003. Lastly, the overall perception score was significantly different for the black high development female model (M=24.57, SD=4.16) and White high development model (M=22.00, SD=6.04); t(68)=3.81, p=.0005. Differences between the condition means are not likely due to development level and are probably due to race.

Appropriateness

There was a significant negative correlation between the appropriateness of the high development White female and participants' FIS future scores, r=-.233, n=69, p=.027 (i.e., participants acknowledge their own potential based on the possibilities of their future [Serafini, Maitland, & Adams, 2006]). This correlation suggests that participants with higher FIS future scores are more likely to rate the high development model as inappropriately dressed for school. None of the other models' Pearson's r-values computed a high correlation or significant relationship for appropriateness.

Identity and perception

As the two identity measures (MEIM & FIS) assessed participants' affinity towards and association with a particular group, the intention of the regression model was to predict the rating of SDC violation for each of the eight models based on participant race. Findings from this analysis contradicted expectations that participants would rate models outside their affinity group in violation of SDC more so than models within their affinity group. None of the identity subscales had significant findings when measured independently. When factored as an interaction between each subscale of the MEIM and FIS (MEIM – EIS & ABC and FIS - Structure, Goals, Personal Control, Harmony, and Future) there was only one significant regression equation at the .05 level for B/AA participants compared to non-B/AA. The FIS Future scores had a significant effect on violation scores for B/AA female models, β=1.313, t(56)=2.016, p=.049. There were no significant findings for the interactions between race and the identity measures.

DISCUSSION

Results from this study provide analysis of student perception and application of understanding of SDC policy. Overall, when participants evaluated outfits violating the SDC, they perceived high development females to be least appropriately dressed. However, the area of greater concern is the actual application of understanding what constitutes a violation of the SDC. An overwhelming number of participants incorrectly assessed the violation outfits worn by the models rating them as acceptable according to their application of their school's policy. Although there were no major differences between female and male violation assessments as expected, results supported the hypothesis indicating a significant difference when comparing B/AA and non-B/AA students' scores, with B/AA females more likely be rated in violation than White females.

Additional comparisons of pubertal development indicated that all participants as well as compared groups (i.e., participant gender, participant race) rated both B/AA and White high developed female models as likely to be in violation of SDC policy in the same outfit worn by the low development females. Combined with the perception of appropriateness, it is evident this sample of students does not feel that highly developed students can wear the same outfits as their less developed counterparts and avoid a dress code violation.

While there were some statistically significant differences in the rating of the models based on development, there were limitations to the use of the Tanner scale in this study. The images shown to the raters were of the models in a form-fitted top and

47

shorts. Although there was only one discrepancy between raters' placement of the models, the models' clothing may have caused visual obstructions affecting one or more of the models' stage placement. Future studies might benefit from having the models rated in a doctor's office using the traditional rating methods (i.e., unclothed) or selecting a different body composition scale approved for use in research.

One additional finding also offers insight into the role constructs of self and racial/ethnic identity play in student perception of their low and high physically developed peers. The significant outcome of the FIS Future identity subscale predicts violation scores for B/AA female models. When students with a personal sense of purpose for their future are looking at B/AA girls they are more likely to find them in violation of the SDC.

While the MEIM and FIS scales' reliability and validity have been established as described earlier, the outcomes from this study's assessment of the MEIM and FIS subscales did not yield similar confidence of the measures' utility, and therefore should be shared with caution. The scales may provide guidance for personal beliefs and associations, but may not be the ideal measurement tool for peer ratings. As such, there was only one significant finding from the seven identity subscales and four dependent variables (i.e., two gender and two race dependent variables) assessed independently and as interactions between the subscales. Additionally, analyses were limited by sample size and distribution of scores. As such, future iterations of this study should include a larger sample size.

This preliminary examination of SDC policy identifies gaps between intent and understanding. Regulations and policies ineffectively put into practice can negatively impact the school environment and the learning experience for students. Schools are more than places where mandated curricula are implemented. Schools are also a place where a young person is developing his or her own personal and social identity through dress and learning the process of practicing good citizenship (French, Robins, Homer, & Tapsell, 2009). The school day consists of structured and implied lessons in the value of taking care of the body just as much as the mind.

Although results reveal areas school systems should direct attention to improvement, this study had several limitations. First, only one school site was used to collect data. While its composition shares similarities with other high school campuses across the U.S., every school has its own climate and the results are not generalizable. Also, this study was not able to assess racial or ethnic bias from members of all ethnic groups represented in the study sample as there not models from each. Hence, only comparisons of B/AA versus non-B/AA students were possible. The limitation provides an opportunity for future studies to include a more diverse sample.

The stage of adolescence during the high school years is also a critical point in the development of personal and social identity. Capitalizing on this time, researchers, school system decision makers, and parents can provide examples for youth regarding the value of being an active participant in social action issues; especially those making an impact on the many components of making healthy lifestyle. Expanding upon this, interventions designed to assess student perception of SDC compliance issues as well as

how the school, community, and interpersonal environment impacts opinions would expand the current study. Findings from this data highlight the need for an inclusive approach towards development, enactment, and enforcement of policies and guidelines.

Middle and high school students are expected to navigate through school with an understanding and adherence to policies regulating what is appropriate dress for the learning environment. They are held accountable for their choices in clothes in the form of disciplinary action if they do not abide the rules. However, it is clear that more efforts are needed to insure students fully comprehend the SDC policy for their school and that students with more developed bodies are not disproportionately sanctioned due to subjective opinions of appropriateness. If the consequences for SDC violations are clearly established, then guidelines must be clearly defined and fully comprehended by every person involved in the school day; particularly students.

CHAPTER IV

I AM NOT MY CLOTHES: AN EXPLORATION OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES

OF NINTH GRADE BLACK GIRLS AND SCHOOL DRESS CODES

> "Therefore, a phenomenological researcher is interested in describing a person's experience in the way he or she experiences it, and not from some theoretical standpoint."
>
> (Bevan, 2014)

INTRODUCTION

Although multiple studies have found disproportionate number of school policy infractions against certain groups of students (primarily racial and ethnic minorities), there is limited research from the perspective and experience of people within the groups (Balfanz, Byrnes, & Fox, 2013; Losen & Martinez, 2013; Skiba, Horne, & Chung, 2011). Of particular interest is the lack of literature concentrating on the lived experiences of young Black/African American (B/AA) girls in schools. As a B/AA female researcher, my interest level is personally motivated. Removing my shared history with this group, studies of the comprehensive health and success of B/AA girls in secondary schools in America occurs primarily from an adult viewpoint.

In keep with common practice of qualitative research, I disclose certain biases that I have in regards to the topic. Being a Black female who is a product of and former teacher in public schools, I have first-hand and observational history of issues surrounding attire. My personal recollection of dress code and what that meant to me was that of limitation. I spent most of my evenings weekends in a dance studio so I was

always conscious of what my body looked like and how I moved. This translated into me

dressing extremely conservative ("preppy" as I was called then) at school to detract from

any attention paid to my highly defined muscles and shapely physique. So, while I never

had disciplinary concerns or incidents during my school years, my body played a role in

how I dressed and carried myself. After becoming a teacher, my experiences with dress

code became a standard part of my work day. As the dance teacher, I was constantly

monitoring my students to make sure they left my studio dressed according to school

rules even if it was after school. I recall repeatedly reminding my students to dress in a

way that showed respect for themselves and the rules that were expected to follow.

While I had a highly developed body as a student and a great rapport with my students as

their teacher, I am still limited in my understanding of what it means for a ninth grade

Black/African American girl today. This limitation was the impetus for using a

phenomenological approach. Rather than applying a theoretical assumption to my

research during this phase of my study, the young ladies were given the space to

communicate the essence of their experience in their own way.

Background

Existing research limits the lens of assessing issues with compliance to dress

code by focusing on interpretations made by school boards, administration, and other

personnel. This phase of my dissertation study will expand the assessment through the

eyes of a highly criticized group. Through the use of phenomenological methods as

designed by Moustakas (1994), the underlying meanings behind the experiences youth

encounter during pubertal development can be explored. As they navigate through stages

of development, teens are faced with the task of acquiring and understanding a sense and awareness of self while learning to conform to guidelines and rules set by both school policies and social norms. To comprehend what the experience means in this context, we must look for the "essential or invariant structure (or essence)" of the phenomenon of perceived body image as well as the impact SDC has on youth experiencing this phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

Purpose of study

This study seeks to explore and share the perspective of young B/AA ninth-grade girls regarding the purpose of school dress code and how it personally affects them and their style of dress. Through the exploration and description of the universal nature in which these young girls' are experiencing physiological (i.e., puberty) and educational (i.e., middle school to high school) transitions, emerging themes will be shared. A desired outcome is to provide school communities with relevant information and a point of reference for future research regarding how students factor SDC policies into their school experience as well as personal development.

METHODS

A qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews was used to inquire about participant's feelings as they come to an understanding of their school's SDC policy. Interviews were conducted with seven participants who were recruited under the same IRB application and research site described in Chapter III. However, different classes were selected for this phase of the study. Considering the group of interest was B/AA, female, ninth graders, students in the ninth grade dance classes (100% female)

were given a presentation and information about the study. Although there is limited research in in this area of study, literature supports the selection of this group due to the rate of reported SDC violation issues among minority girls (Balfanz, Byrnes, & Fox, 2013; Blake, Butler, & Lewis, 2011; Skiba, Horne, & Chung, 2011). In addition, ninth graders are new to the campus and have had to make adjustments to new policy more recently than their peers in the upper grades. Their fresh (freshman) perspective supports selection of this group as it relates to impact of the SDC policy on daily interactions at school.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the seven participants. All interviews included the same central questions about SDC and their personal expressions of identity through clothing for consistency yet the girls were able to freely speak about their feelings and opinions. The list of guiding interview questions is included as Appendix D. A detailed explanation of the reason for the study as well as how interviews would be conducted was given during the consent and assent phases of study. All students were made aware that although the interviews would be recorded, their identity would be protected. As such, the names listed throughout the article are pseudonyms selected by each participant prior to the start of each interview.

The interviews were designed to capture the participants' understanding and personal feelings about the SDC policy and related issues. Additionally, the participants were asked about how the SDC policy impacts their experience during school. The protocol did not specifically ask students to discuss pubertal development as seen in the previous chapter's study design. However, there were several instances where

participants made reference to SDC differences based on body type. All interviews were conducted by the same researcher were taped and transcribed verbatim.

As a Black female, I must mention the possibility that my racial, ethnic, and gender similarities to the participants may have had an impact on their responses. It is possible, and my opinion, that the young ladies felt comfortable sharing their feelings about the subject matter with someone from a similar, or even familiar, background. Drawbacks to this include an apparent familiarity participants may have assumed existed and therefore hindered elaboration of their responses. The richness of the responses may have been hindered follow-up questions because the young lady felt as though someone she identifies with knows the meaning of what was being described. On the other hand, participants may have viewed the situation as one where they needed to please or speak favorably to someone they view as an authority figure. In this case, responses may not have given an accurate overview of participants' opinions.

Commonalities within the participant group were found through the use of Themeing the Data for content analysis (Saldaña, 2013). This method of analysis was used to organize phrases established by participants and assess like-patterns or emerging commonalities and relationships of themes arising from the group experiencing the phenomenon (Gibson & Brown, 2009). The outcome from organization of theme resulted in an interpretation of the themes through the extraction of "meaning units" from Giorgi's (1985) methods of phenomenological analysis for health sciences. Similar to like Creswell's "clusters of meaning" (2013), these significant statements assist with the development of major themes for the group of participants experiencing the

phenomenon of interest. This comprehensive view of the data provided a unifying method of reporting common statements shared by participants. Themeing the data was supplemented by narrative analysis to enhance the examination of each participant's story (Reissman, 1993).

RESULTS

The analysis process resulted in three latent themes which are supported by meaning unit statements and three major themes to describe the essence of the participants' experience. Table 8 provides an overview of the outcomes of grouping the emergent themes and meaning units or sub-themes. The interpretation of each theme is supported by narrative quotes from selected participants. Corresponding questions asked by the interviewer are presented in square brackets when necessary.

Table 8

Analytical Outcomes

Themes	Meaning units (selected)	Major theme, Essence
Appropriateness	Not too flashy Look like a young lady Clothes we can and can't wear in school Not too provocative You come to learn, not find a relationship	Appropriateness of dress
Respect	Follow the way they tell you What they say we can and can't wear Restriction on what we can wear	Sets boundaries for students
Contradiction	Some people don't get in trouble Some walk by teachers and don't get caught Some teachers are okay…some don't accept it Short girls get away with more Girls have their dress restricted because of male students	Inconsistent application of policy

Emergent themes of SDC policy

   Appropriateness. When asked to describe the meaning of SDC policy the

majority of the participants shared the idea that SDCs tell students what is appropriate

for school. Some of the meaning units emerging from the responses reference "looking

like a young lady" and being in school to learn and not look for a relationship. All

descriptions of appropriateness were also geared towards gender indicative of a personal

and affective response to the question. Each of them took the position that the policy

gave them a guideline to follow not just as a rule, but in consideration of others.

Examples of the references from Dionne, Helen, Kayliana, and Lexi are included:

> What administrators and teachers tell us we can and can't
> wear. [And so when I say that, what does it mean when they
> tell you what you can and can't wear? What does that mean
> to you? How do you receive that?] They're trying to filter out
> things that may not be school-appropriate, or things that they
> don't see as school-appropriate or not professional; trying to
> make sure no one goes outside of that.
>   -Dionne

> Having appropriate wear for students when they're in
> school. [Appropriate wear to school. So when you think
> about appropriate -- what does that mean when you say
> appropriate?] Not too flashy and not too much to wear, you
> have too much skin revealing and people looking at you in
> different ways.
>   -Helen

> Basically allowing you to dress how you want but not to the
> extent of you showing too much. Dressing appropriately for

school, not doing too much, not showing a lot, not being too provocative.

-Kayliana

When you say dress code policy for school, the first thing is, the clothes that we're able and not able to wear during school hours, shorts that's not too short and skirts that are not too short and shirts that are not too revealing. [Okay. When you say revealing, what do you mean?] You're able to see…for boys, I know since they get muscles now, their muscles tend to show more and that gives a distraction, and then girls, we're developing, so you see our upper body and stuff.

-Lexi

Respect. Another prominent theme observed throughout the interviews.

Participants indicated respect had implications on their individual conduct, but also to

respect the rules as described in their school's SDC policy. The idea of respect was not

always consistent between the participants. Helen and Whitney expressed different ideas

about the meaning of respect when considering the SDC. Helen's and Paige's responses

expand upon the Respect meaning unit "follow the way they tell you":

I feel like it'll teach me to be a better woman when I grow up. I feel like I have more respect for myself and I wouldn't have to think of what other people say because I know that I'm doing the right thing in dressing the right way.

-Helen

School dress code. There's a limit to what you can wear, like…I don't know. You have to follow the way they tell you to dress. You can't just come up here and have what you want.

-Paige

In contrast, Whitney gave a description of the rules she is asked to respect and follow as something that places limits on her identity:

> It's usually a restriction of the things that we can wear, and usually dress code. I feel like…why do we have to change the way that we dress? And the dress code is usually this, just wearing…[So 'this' is your tank top?] Yes. A tank top. This would be considered out of dress code, and I would be suspended for three days. I would miss three days of school for something that I wore. And what they're trying to do is, they're trying to help us learn more, but how are we supposed to learn if we're put out of school for wearing something that would not be considered awful anywhere else? I know that I'm doing the right thing in dressing the right way.
> -Whitney

Although different expressions of respect are articulated, all of the participants included basic tenets of respecting the school environment, themselves, and others.

Contradiction. All of the participants described situations where the SDC was not enforced when they felt it should have been. This theme brought about multiple references to policy enforcement inconsistencies based on body type. Participants mention differences in treatment based on height as well as body shape. Several of their comments about the conflicting use of sanctions for SDC are included. Lani recalls an incident where there was a clear violation and no repercussion (according to the SDC policy at the school):

Yes, this girl. She wore a spaghetti strap shirt with no jacket and she just walked around all day with it and she didn't get in trouble at all. [Okay, so what did you think about that? How did that make you feel, then?] I did not really care but it's just like she walks around a dozen teachers and she never got caught.

-Lani

Lexi's account brought out an issue of different body types and SDC consistency

concerns:

Short girls get away with everything. It seems big on them, but it's actually small when you actually go up to them. Like this one girl, she was wearing a crop top, which shows your belly button, and she was wearing it all throughout school. And so I was like, "They let you get away with that?" And she's like, "Yes." I was like, "Short girls." I wish I was short sometimes. You just get away with everything (laughs).

-Lexi

Whitney gave an example similar to Lexi concerning SDC enforcement based on body

type:

I feel like it's more of a different type of person thing. If it's someone who is short or more petite, and they had on a skirt that was above mid-thigh…(coughs) But if it was someone who was taller or more curvy, and they have one that was even lower than that, they would still get in trouble. I feel like it's more of a body shape thing and how they interpret that as how you wear it. ['They' in like administrators and teachers, or other students?] As in administrators and teachers. Other students, no one has a problem with the way others dress. None of the students really care, it's just teachers and administrators.

61

Dionne's mentioned a personal example similar to Whitney's description of

contradiction:

> Where we live it's hot, so during later in the year, the middle of the year, it's a struggle to find things to wear because it's hot and we're not allowed to wear things that are a certain length, which is not fun. And then with skirts and things, with the length of bottoms, because tops aren't really an issue, but with the length of bottoms, I have long legs so a lot of things look a lot shorter on me than they do on people who don't have long legs or aren't as tall. I have a lot of friends that struggle with that too, so it's frustrating when you get pulled aside and you know that it's the right length.
>
> -Dionne

Additional results supported by the participants' responses focus on the portion

of the research question related to personal identity. Each participant was asked

influences on her personal style of dress as she transitioned to high school and what she

likes most when she gets dressed. Five of the participants reference social media and

popular culture as a major influence on their style. The remaining two gave a friend and

a grand-parent credit for style influence. Dionne's response is included and speaks to the

references made by the other four about style influence and searching various media

outlets for women and girls who look like them:

> I think comfortable, but also as cute as I can get, because I like high-waisted things and contrasting things. I like -- I

don't want to say dress up sometimes, but halfway dress up sort of, and then sometimes very comfortable, like today, I'm basically wearing a sack. [Who introduced, or how did you get this look? Where did it come from?] Seeing a lot…on Tumblr, I didn't have a Tumblr before a few years ago, and a lot of things on Tumblr…I remember Blackout started, and all these people were posting pictures of themselves. And personally because I'm mixed, so it's hard for me to identify with one thing or the other, so sometimes when I would see things, it would either be a White person with straight hair or a black person with very, very curly hair; coarse hair, and I'm in the middle. But on Blackout and Tumblr, all these other things, I see…[Dionne, sorry. What is Blackout?] Blackout is a hashtag, and it's for people who are African-American, just black, and they post pictures of themselves, and it's basically to embrace your blackness. So I like it…it's fun. But seeing all of that, it was like I was seeing people, girls with short hair, girls with very curly hair, girls with hair like mine, and dying my hair and doing all these things, and I was just like, "I want to do something!" …And I felt a lot better after I did it.

-Dionne

SDC influence on style

The participants had varying experiences related to their personal style of dress. Most of the participants neither made mention of nor expressed any influence SDC has on preferred items of clothing they wore to school. However, one participant (Paige) shared her feeling the need to change the way she dressed when she became a high school student because she "didn't like the way teachers would look at" her and she "didn't like the attention" she was getting. Paige once felt comfortable dressing up in skirts and sandals to go to school, but started to "just wear regular clothes" because she started feeling like her clothing choices were inappropriate.

Another participant, Kayliana, made a general comment about the inflexibility of the SDC to account for the hot weather in Texas:

63

Dress codes, I think it should be a little more leeway, just a little, like with shirts and stuff. Because people, like when it starts to get hot, spring time, summer time, we like to wear spaghetti straps and that's not allowed. But I feel like if we're allowed to wear that then it would be like we wouldn't be more like angry. Because people wear spaghetti straps and they get in trouble or forced to wear another shirt that the school provides, and I don't think a lot of people like that. [Okay. I guess with the heat, in your opinion, the spaghetti strap…] Actually, the rule is the three-finger rule and it's like if your strap is less than three inches or three fingers, then it's out of dress code. And some tank tops are like that where they're smaller than three fingers, like a few inches and you still get in trouble for that. So I just feel like it should be a little less strict with the shirts.

-Kayliana

Although Kayliana's mention of SDC rules for shirts was given in general terms rather than solely a personal account (i.e., "we like to wear spaghetti straps and that's not allowed"), her statement references the impact of SDC. In her opinion, the type of attire preferred by her and her peers is restricted by the SDC policy.

DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this study was to explore the experiences of B/AA ninth grade girls related SDC. Overall themes of appropriateness, respect, and contradiction immerged from this set of students. The consistencies between the majority if not all of the participants speak to what it means for them to experience the phenomenon of policy

adherence and expression of identity in their school environment. Moments shared by the participants focusing on appropriateness and respect are consistent with the perceived intentions of adult decision –makers in schools. From the foundation, SDC policies were established to protect the learning environment (Anderson, 2002). The experiences as described in this study provide some support for this purpose, but the concerns raised because of the theme contradiction bring to light gaps between intention and implementation. Lani, Lexi, Whitney, and Dionne shared their doubts about the integrity of enforcing the SDC. This major issue identifies an area in need of restructuring. Student input provides valuable insight school personnel could utilize to make improvements in policy development, training, and implementation.

These three themes arising from this study (appropriateness, respect, and contradiction) may hold constant in other places, but the school culture unique to other schools and geographic regions may support different emergent themes. It is also likely that there will be students who experience school in stark contrast to the typical culture of their peers. An example of this occurred during this study. One of the participant's (Kayliana) father was a teacher at the school which, from my observation, prompted her to give positive responses about school policies. Kayliana may have more positive experiences at school because she has more opportunities for exposure to various facets of school operations. Additionally, her teachers have likely known her for years because she has attended school events with her father and her adjustment to high school may have been smoother than what is considered typical. Whether one or a combination of

65

these possibilities (or something not observed during the study) strengthened Kayliana's affinity towards her school, she freely shared her criticism of the rigidity of the SDC.

It is evident that the participants express their personalities through clothes and feel good when they have on clothes they like. A potential challenge to wearing what they like arises when what they like is not appropriate for school. As Paige mentioned, although her personal style includes fashionable dresses and skirts, she tends to wear less fashionable items at school because she wants to avoid drawing attention to herself. The debate about over school uniforms as a resolution to issues like these has not had the overwhelming success school officials initially hoped. Yet, conflicts and debates over school dress continue to cause problems, especially for young B/AA girls (Archer-Banks & Behar-Horenstein, 2012; Blake, Butler, & Lewis, 2011; Skiba, Horne, & Chung, 2011).

While one of the primary purposes of this study was to highlight the thoughts and opinions young B/AA girls have about SDC, there were several notable limitations. Although Polkinghorne (1989) recommends interviewing 5 to 25 individuals experiencing a phenomenon, the sample size was limited to seven due to time constraints. Approval from school personnel to conduct interviews was received near the end of the school year, and future efforts should aim to begin earlier in the semester. Another limitation is the unique approach the study utilized; seeking to explore and describe the universal experience of a particular group of students. Without imposing preconceived ideas or theoretical methodologies on the group, no template exists to guide the process. This limitation will remain a part of any phenomenological study

66

utilizing the psychological phenomenology approach where the focus remains to describe the participants' experiences rather than interpret meaning from the researcher's perspective (Moustakas, 1994).

The formal school experience should serve to prepare students to enter the workforce and in turn make a positive contribution to society. That line of thinking is usually reserved for referencing learning style and work ethic established during the formidable years. More relevant to this discussion is the preparation of students to adhere to guidelines for physical appearance in the school setting; what is expected and acceptable. There are differences in thinking and understanding from the perspective a B/AA female establishing herself as a good citizen in school while establishing her identity as an individual. It is critical for members of the school community to engage in dialogue beyond stating expectations and issuing directives. A collective effort to foster a school environment that is structured without stifling personal expression and growth begins with a conversation.

Many years ago, Jonathon Kozol (1992) said, "We have not been listening much to children." It is evident, that the collective "we" still haves work to do; especially in schools. To truly express a representation what school life is like for a teenage B/AA female, it is necessary to talk and listen to them. Particularly when it pertains to the clothes they wear and how that affects their educational experience. The resulting messages, themes and essence of the SDC-related experiences the seven young ladies in this study have expressed offer guidance to model future conversations.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

School dress code compliance issues extend beyond school safety concerns and the choices students make in their attire. There is also an inconsistent distribution of sanctions and interpretation of the policies. Information available on the topic of SDC is usually compounded into generic school discipline reports and is typically reported from the perspective of adult stakeholders in school. This dissertation was designed to assess the level of coverage SDC policy issues in the research community from the student perspective, evaluate high schools students' comprehension level as well as perception of SDC, and explore the experiences of a subgroup of high school students related to SDC. In sum, each phase of this study was student-centered in an effort to address gaps and identify opportunities for improvement during future policy development.

The first manuscript (Chapter II) provided an in-depth review and analysis of publications since 1995 regarding disciplinary actions involving SDC compliance. Though there is no shortage of media coverage on the topic of clothing choices being made in schools across the U.S., the primary outcome objective was to ascertain the depth and breadth of available peer-reviewed literature reporting from the students' viewpoint and report existing gaps in this area of the field. The systematic search criteria aided in located two articles; both published after the new millennium. Although both articles included SDC issues as part of their overall report on discipline, neither offered

detailed accounts of SDC incidents. This lack of depth and breadth in the extant

literature highlights an area of great need for dissemination in the scientific community.

The need for attention to be given to the matter of SDCs in schools was

emphasized even more from the findings in manuscript two (Chapter III). The

participants in this phase of the study do not have a clearly defined understanding of

what constitutes a violation of the SDC. Furthermore, this chapter brought focus to the

issue of how physical development and race factor into judgment by peers. Although

students were highly unsuccessful at identifying what constitutes a violation, there were

significant discrepancies in judging B/AA female students. All models wore identical

outfits and based on gender, but the B/AA female students were seen as most likely to be

in violation of the SDC. Additionally, the high development female students of both

races were seen as more inappropriately dressed as compared to their low development

counterparts.

The less than positive opinion and disproportionate sanctions, as previously

noted, in the judging and punishment of females, especially B/AA females, for SDC-

related matters was a driving force for inclusion of the third component of the study

described in the last manuscript (Chapter IV). The rate of SDC incidents and sanctions

continue to isolate B/AA females and input from these young ladies is certainly absent

and in need of attention. The overarching findings from the exploratory study of the

experience of the group of ninth grade B/AA girls I interview focus appropriateness and

inconsistency. The participants expressed an understanding of the intention of SDCs to

give guidance and method of accountability. However, they are experiencing a lack of

69

consistent application of the policy in their school environment. The mixed-messages have left the young ladies in a state of limbo and confusion. They collectively expressed the pride they take in and how their dress represents their personal identity. What they are also experiencing as a group is uncertainty in how to make choices about their school attire while remaining true to who they are and not offending those in authority at their school.

The school day is hindered by countless obstacles, but attention must be paid to the success of the students being served. A component of that success includes more than the creation of standards of achievement and rules of order. It is vital to the health of the school environment for a concentrated and collective effort to be made in maintaining high standards that are understood and respected by all. Additional research is needed in the area of SDC compliance that capitalizes on the potential for high impact contributions students can have in schools if given the opportunity.

REFERENCES

ACSD, & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014). Whole School, Whole

Community, Whole Child. Retrieved from

http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/publications/wholechild/wscc-a-

collaborative-approach.pdf

Adams, G. R. & Marshall, S. (1996). A developmental social psychology of identity:

Understanding the person in context. *Journal of Adolescence, 19*, 1-14.

Anderson W. (2002). School Dress Codes and Uniform Policies. Policy report.

Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Archer-Banks, D. A. M, & Behar-Horenstein, L. S. (2012). Ogbu revisited: Unpacking

high-achieving African American girls' high school experiences. *Urban*

Education, 47(1), 198-223 doi: 10.1177/0042085911427739

Arcia, E. (2007). A comparison of Elementary/K-8 and middle schools' suspension

rates. *Urban Education, 42*(5), 456-469.

Arcia, E. (2007). Variability in schools' suspension rates of black students. *Journal of*

Negro Education, 76(4), 597-608.

Balfanz, R., Byrnes, V., & Fox, J. (2013). Sent home and put off-track: The antecedents,

disproportionalities, and consequences of being suspended in ninth grade. *Paper*

presented at Closing the School Discipline Gap. Washington, D.C.

Bandura, A. (1993) Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning.

Educational Psychologist, 28(2), 117-148.

Bevan, M. (2014). A method of phenomenological interviewing. *Qualitative Health Research, 24(1)*, 136–144.

Blake, J. J., Butler, B. A., Lewis, C. L., & Darensbourg, A. (2011). Unmasking the inequitable discipline experiences of urban Black girls: Implications for urban stakeholders. *Urban Review, 43*, 90-106.

Booker, K., & Mitchell, A. (2011). Patterns in recidivism and discretionary placement in disciplinary alternative education: The impact of gender, ethnicity, age, and special education status. *Education and Treatment of Children, 34*(2), 193-208.

Brown, R. (2000). Social Identity Theory: Past achievements, current problems and future challenges. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 30,* 748-778.

Burke, P. J., & Stets, J. E. (2009). *Identity theory*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Carpenter, II, D. M., & Ramirez, A. (2007). More than one gap: Dropout rate gaps between and among black, Hispanic, and white students. *Journal of Advanced Academics, 19*(1), 32-64.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015). Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/wscc/index.htm

Chavous, T. M., Rivas-Drake, D., Glover, C. S., Griffin, T., & Cogburn, C. D. (2008). Gender matters, too: The influences of school racial discrimination and racial identity on academic engagement outcomes among African American adolescents. *Developmental Psychology, 44*(3), 637-54.

Clark, K. B., & Clark, M. P. (1939). The development of consciousness of self and the emergence of racial identification in Negro preschool children. *Journal of Social Psychology, 10,* 591–599.

Cooper, S., Brown, C., Metzger, I., Clinton, Y., & Guthrie, B. (2013). Racial discrimination and African American adolescents' adjustment: Gender variation in family and community social support, promotive and protective factors. *Journal of Child & Family Studies, 22*(1), 15-29. doi:10.1007/s10826-012-9608-y

Couillard, D., Garnett, J., Hutchins, A., Fawcett, M. L., & Maycock, G. (2006). Student risk factors identified by school counselors and student achievement. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research,52*(4), 277-288.

Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. J. W. Creswell (Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Delissaint, D., & McKyer, E. L .J. (2008). Analysis of theory utilization among prenatal HIV-testing research. *American Journal of Health Behavior, 32*(6), 764-770.

Erikson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and society.* New York, NY: Norton.

Erikson, E. (1968). *Identity, youth, and crisis.* New York: Norton.

Farmer, T. W., Goforth, J. B., Clemmer, J. T., & Thompson, J. H. (2004). School discipline problems in rural African American early adolescents: Characteristics of students with major, minor, and no offenses. *Behavioral Disorders, 29*(4), 317-336.

Fletcher, A. (2005). Meaningful Student Involvement: Guide to Students as Partners in

    School Change, created for SoundOut. org in partnership with HumanLinks

    Foundation.

Foote, N. N. (1951). Identification as the basis for a theory of motivation. *American*

    Sociological Review, 26, 14-21.

French, M. T., Robins, P. K., Homer, J. F., & Tapsell, L. M. (2009). Effects of physical

    attractiveness, personality, and grooming on academic performance in high

    school. *Labour Economics, 16*, 373–382.

Garrard, J. (2004). *Health sciences literature review made easy: The matrix method.*

    Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Gentile, E., & Imberman, S. A. (2012). Dressed for success? The effect of school

    uniforms on student achievement and behavior. *Journal of Urban*

    Economics, 71(1), 1-17.

Gibson, W. J., & Brown, A. (2009). *Working with qualitative data*. London, England,

    pp. 128-129: Sage.

Giorgi, A. (1997). The theory, practice, and evaluation of the phenomenological method

    as a qualitative research procedure. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology,*

    28(2), 235-261.

Giorgi, A. (1985). Sketch of a psychological phenomenological method. In

    Phenomenology and Psychological Research (Giorgi, A., ed.), Pittsburgh, PA:

    Duquesne.

Gregory, A., & Mosely, P. M. (2004). The discipline gap: Teachers' views on the over-representation of African American students in the discipline system. *Equity and Excellence in Education, 37*(1), 18-30.

Han, S., & Akiba, M. (2011). School safety, severe disciplinary actions, and school characteristics: A secondary analysis of the school survey on crime and safety. *Journal of School Leadership,21*(2), 262-292.

Herbon, B., & Workman, J.E. (2000). Dress and appearance codes in public secondary school handbooks. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences, 92*(5), 68-76.

Hethorn, J., & Kaiser, S. (1999) Youth style: Articulating cultural anxiety, *Visual Sociology, 14*(1), 109-125. doi: 10.1080/14725869908583805

Hughes, D., Witherspoon, D., Rivas-Drake, D., & West-Bey, N. (2009). Received ethnic–racial socialization messages and youths' academic and behavioral outcomes: Examining the mediating role of ethnic identity and self-esteem. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 15*(2), 112-124.

Husserl, E. (1960). *Cartesian meditations: An introduction to phenomenology* (D. Cairns, Trans.). The Hague, Holland: Martinus Nijhoff.

Husserl, E. (1967). *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology* (W. R. Boyce Gibson, Trans.). London, England: George Allen & Unwin.

Husserl, E. (1970). *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology: An introduction to phenomenological philosophy* (D. Carr, Trans.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Kaufman, J. S., Jaser, S. S., Vaughan, E. L., Reynolds, J. S., Di Donato, J., Bernard, S.
N., & Hernandez-Brereton, M. (2010). Patterns in office referral data by grade,
race/ethnicity, and gender. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 12*(1), 44-54.

Kim, C. Y. (2009). Procedures for public law remediation in school-to-prison pipeline
litigation: Lessons learned from Antoine v. Winner School District. *New York Law
School Law Review, 54*(3), 955-974.

Kozol, J. (1992). *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools*. New York, NY:
Crown Publishing, 5.

Kroger, J., & Marcia, J. (2011). The identity statuses: Origins, meanings, and
interpretations. In: Schwartz S, Luyckx K, Vignoles V, eds. *Handbook of identity
theory and research*. New York, NY: Springer.

Kupchik, A., & Ellis, N. (2008). School discipline and security: Fair for all
students? *Youth & Society, 39*(4), 549-574.

LaPoint, V., Alleyne, S. I., & Mitchell, H. W. (2003). Attitudes of youth of color on
student dress and uniforms: A case of commercialism in schools. *Journal of Negro
Education, 72*(4), 406-417. doi:10.2307/3211192

Losen, D.J., & Martinez, T.E. (2013). Out of school & off track: The overuse of
suspensions in American middle and high schools. *The Civil Rights Project*.
Retrieved from: http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-
civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/federal-reports/out-of-school-and-
off-track-the-overuse-of-suspensions-in-american-middle-and-high-schools.

Lu, W., McKyer, E.L.J., Lee, C., Goodson, P., Ory, M.G., & Wang, S. (2014). Perceived barriers to children's active commuting to school: A systematic review of empirical, methodological, and theoretical evidence. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity, 11*, 140.

Lunde, C., & Frisén, A. (2011). On being victimized by peers in the advent of adolescence: Prospective relationships to objectified body consciousness. *Body Image, 8,* 309-314. doi:10.1016/j.bodyim.2011.04.010+

Luyckx, K., Schwartz, S., Goossens, L., Beyers, W., & Missotten, L. (2011). Processes of personal identity formation and evaluation. In: Schwartz S, Luyckx K, Vignoles V, eds. *Handbook of identity theory and research* (pp. 77-98). New York, NY: Springer.

Ma, X., & Willms, J. D. (2004). School disciplinary climate: Characteristics and effects on eighth grade achievement. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 50*(2), 169-188.

Marcia, J.E. (1966). Development and validation of ego-identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 3,* 551-558.

Marks, H. M. (2000). Student engagement in instructional activity: Patterns in the elementary, middle, and high school years. *American Educational Research Journal, 37*(1), 153-184.

Marshall, W. A., & Tanner, J. M. (1970). Variations in the pattern of pubertal changes in boys. *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, *45*(239), 13-23.

Marshall, W.A., & Tanner, J.M. (1969). Variations in pattern of pubertal changes in girls. *Archives of Disease in Childhood, 44*(235), 291-303.

McCall, G. L., & Simmons, J. L. (1978). *Identities and interactions*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Mendez, L. M. R., & Knoff, H. M. (2003). Who gets suspended from school and why: A demographic analysis of schools and disciplinary infractions in a large school district. *Education and Treatment of Children, 26*(1), 30-51.

Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., & Altman, D.G. (2009). The PRISMA Group Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology, 62*(10), 1006–1012. doi:10.1016/j.jclinepi.2009.06.005

Morris, E.W. (2005). Tuck in that shirt!: Race, class, gender, and discipline in an urban school. *Sociological Perspectives, 48*(1), 25-48.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Murphy, A. S., Acosta, M. A., & Kennedy-Lewis, B. (2013). "I'm not running around with my pants sagging, so how am I not acting like a lady?": Intersections of race and gender in the experiences of female middle school troublemakers. *Urban Review, 45*(5), 586-610. doi:10.1007/s11256-013-0236-7

National Science Foundation (2000). The internet: Changing the way we communicate – An end and a beginning. Retrieved from http://www.nsf.gov/about/history/nsf0050/internet/anend.htm

Nichols, J. D., Ludwin, W. G., & Iadicola, P. (1999). A darker shade of gray: A year-end analysis of discipline and suspension data. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 32*(1), 43-54.

Phinney, J.S. (2015). Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) In C. S. Clauss-Ehlers (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of cross-cultural school psychology* (pp. 642-643). Springer Sciences & Business Media.

Phinney, J.S. (1992). The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure: A new scale for use with diverse groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 7*, 156–176.

Phinney, J. S., & Ong, A. D. (2007). Conceptualization and measurement of ethnic identity: Current status and future directions. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 54*, 271–281. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.54.3.271

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1989). Phenomenological research methods. In R. S. Valle & S. Halling (Eds.), *Existential-phenomenological perspectives in psychology* (pp. 41–60). New York: Plenum.

Preacher, K. J., Curran, P. J., & Bauer, D. J. (2006). Computational tools for probing interaction effects in multiple linear regression, multilevel modeling, and latent curve analysis. *Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics*, *31*, 437-448.

Ramirez, M., Ferrer, R. R., Cheng, G., Cavanaugh, J. E., & Peek-Asa, C. (2011). Violation of school behavioral policies and its relationship with overall crime. *Annals of Epidemiology, 21*(3), 214-220.

Reissman, C.K. (1993). *Narrative analysis: Qualitative research methods.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Roberts, R., Phinney, J., Masse, L., Chen, Y., Roberts, C., & Romero, A. (1999). The

    structure of ethnic identity in young adolescents from diverse ethnocultural

    groups. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 19*, 301–322.

Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA:

    Sage Publications.

Serafini, T. E. & Adams, G. R. (2002). Functions of identity: Scale construction and

    validation. *Identity, 2*(4), 361-389.

Serafini, T. E., Maitland, S. B, & Adams, G. R. (2006, March). *The Functions of*

    Identity Scale: Revisions, validation and model testing. Poster presented at the

    Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence, San Francisco,

    California.

Sheets, R. H. (1996). Urban classroom conflict: Student-teacher perception: Ethnic

    integrity, solidarity, and resistance. *Urban Review, 28*(2), 165-83.

Skiba, R. J., Horner, R. H., Chung, C. G., Karega Rausch, M., May, S. L., & Tobin, T.

    (2011). Race is not neutral: A national investigation of African American and

    Latino disproportionality in school discipline. *School Psychology Review*, *40*(1),

    85.

Smith, T. B., & Silva, L. (2011). Ethnic identity and personal well-being of people of

    color: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 58*, 42– 60.

    doi:10.1037/a0021528

Soumah, M. A., & Hoover, J. H. (2013). A conversation on inequality with students of

    color. *Reclaiming Children and Youth, 22*(1), 18-23.

Stearns, E., & Glennie, E. J. (2006). When and why dropouts leave high school. *Youth & Society, 38*(1), 29-57.

Steinberg, L. (2005). Cognitive and affective development in adolescence. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 9(2)*; 69-74.

Sullivan, A. L., Klingbeil, D. A., & Van Norman, E. R. (2013). Beyond behavior: Multilevel analysis of the influence of sociodemographics and school characteristics on students' risk of suspension. *School Psychology Review, 42*(1), 99-114.

Tanner, J.M. (1962). *Growth at adolescence; with a general consideration of the effects of hereditary and environmental factors upon growth and maturation from birth to maturity*. Oxford, England: Blackwell Scientific Publications.

Taylor, K. R. (2009). What Not to Wear. *Principal Leadership: High School Edition*, *9*(6), 62-64.

Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District. (1969). 393 U.S. 503.

US Department of Education. (1989). National education longitudinal study: User's manual. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Vopat, M. C. (2010). Mandatory school uniforms and freedom of expression. *Ethics and Education, 5*(3), 203-215. doi:10.1080/17449642.2010.519139

Wallace, Jr., J. M., Goodkind, S., Wallace, C. M., & Bachman, J. G. (2008). Racial, ethnic, and gender differences in school discipline among U.S. high school students: 1991-2005. *Negro Educational Review, 59*(1), 47-62.

Workman, J. E., & Studak, C.M. (2008). Use of the means/ends test to evaluate public school dress-code policies. *Educational Policy,22*, 295-326.

APPENDIX A

THE MULTIGROUP ETHNIC IDENTITY MEASURE (MEIM)

In this country, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many different words to describe the different back¬grounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian American, Chinese, Filipino, American Indian, Mexican American, Caucasian or White, Italian American, and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be _____

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

(4) Strongly agree   (3) Agree   (2) Disagree   (1) Strongly disagree

1- I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as
     its history, traditions, and customs.
2- I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members
     of my own ethnic group.
3- I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.
4- I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.
5- I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.
6- I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
7- I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.
8- In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked
     to other people about my ethnic group.
9- I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.
10- I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food,
     music, or customs.
11- I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.
12- I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.
13- My ethnicity is
     (1) Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
     (2) Black or African American
     (3) Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others (4) White, Caucasian,
     Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
     (5) American Indian/Native American
     (6) Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
     (7) Other (write in): _____
14- My father's ethnicity is (use numbers above)
15- My mother's ethnicity is (use numbers above)
_____

APPENDIX B

FUNCTIONS OF IDENTITY SCALE (FIS)

INSTRUCTIONS: Using the following scale, please circle the numbered response that best represents how well each of the following statements describes you.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always

1. I am certain that I know myself.

2. My values and beliefs reflect who I am.

3. I have constructed my own personal goals for myself.

4. I have a good idea of what my future holds for me.

5. When what I'm doing isn't working, I am able to find different approaches to meeting my goal(s).

6. I feel a sense of peace with my self and my identity.

7. My values and beliefs are consistent with the commitments that I make in my life at this time.

8. I tend to set goals and then work towards making them happen.

9. I am clear about who I will be in the future.

10. The decisions I make about how to behave and act are based on my personal choices.

11. I feel I have a consistent sense of self from one day to the next.

12. My values and beliefs fit with the person I am.

13. I am a goal-directed person.

14. Thinking about my future gives me a sense of direction.

15. I am self-directed when I set my goals.

APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. When I say school dress code policy what does that mean to you?

2. Describe to me some of the ways your school dress code policy affects you?

3. Can you describe for me a time when you saw the school dress code enforced and how this made you feel?

4. Do you have any memories about a time where the SDC was not enforced?

5. What kind of changes did you make in the clothes you wore when you first started high school?

6. Why did you make those changes?

7. Can you describe your personal style?

8. Who introduced you to that look?

9. What do you like best about you when you get dressed every day?