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Elementary Charter School Teachers' Perceptions of Student Discipline on Academic Achievement

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Elementary Charter School Teachers' Perceptions of Student Discipline on Academic
Achievement

by
Simone Shelton

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Simone Shelton under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

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Statement of Original Work

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Simone Shelton

January 31, 2018

Abstract

Elementary Charter School Teachers' Perceptions of Student Discipline on Academic Achievement. Simone Shelton, 2018: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education. Keywords: charter schools, disciplinary problems, academic achievement, elementary

Many teachers leave the field altogether after a few years of teaching. Research showed that teachers consistently rate the behavior problems of their students as one of the primary reasons for them to quit teaching. Among teachers who have left the field over the past 10 years, some 80% stated that discipline problems caused by students was one of the primary reasons for their departure. Student discipline has been reported as a factor associated with high rates of teachers leaving the teaching profession. Two studies of teacher attrition rates found that problems with students' discipline issues and classroom management issues were the main reasons that many teachers leave the teaching profession after three years of teaching.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore charter school elementary teachers' perception of disciplinary problems on academic achievement in a charter school in the southern part of Louisiana. The research site was a medium size charter school. The school serves about 300 students from grades K through six grades. The majority of students at the school come from low-income families with incomes below 25,000 for a family of four. The school racial makeup consisted of a majority of African American students. The number of teachers at the targeted school consisted of 25 with one principal, one assistant principal, and one school counselor. The study utilized a qualitative approach with open-ended interview questions. The researcher sampled 10 of the 25 teachers at the school of focus in Louisiana.

The findings revealed that many teachers at the charter school faced discipline problems such as students talking out of turn, disrupting others learning in the classroom, talking back to the teacher, using profanity, and out of seat behaviors. Strategies teachers noted to be effective were the Champ Program, PBIS, and Non-violent Crisis Intervention.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Disciplinary issues and the lack of discipline for many students has been a pervasive problem in many schools in the United States (Goodman, 2013; Krause, 2014; Nash, Schliesser, & Scarr, 2016). Several researchers have identified the lack of discipline as the most serious problem facing the nation's education system in many school districts (Goodman, 2013; Krause, 2014). Local school districts, state government, and the United States Department of Education have spent a considerable amount of money, time, and effort, on discipline programs to reduce the number of students facing discipline problems, but the result of this problem still remains high in many areas both on a local and national scale (Noltemeyer, Word, & McLoughlin, 2015). Many teachers have left the field, and students' academic achievement has declined because of teacher burnout and fears attributed to the disruption of learning in schools (Noltemeyer et al., 2015).

Throughout the 21st century, there have been various strategies introduced to reduce discipline problems in schools. However, most of these methods have been ineffective with certain groups such as at-risk students (Morris & Perry, 2016). For example, in many schools each month students physically attack almost 3% of teachers and students in some inner city schools, and 1 to 2% in rural schools (Morris et al., 2016). Nearly 18,000 students per month experience serious injuries that require medical attention (Morris et al., 2016). Further, five out of 10 students indicated that they feel unsafe at school (Losen, 2016). Despite steps taken to deal with disruptive behaviors, many discipline problems tend to persist from grade to grade (Losen, 2016). Misbehavior in schools seemed to be ingrained in several school cultures (Krause, 2014).

Schools have attempted to modify their approach to student behavior, misbehaviors, reactions, and preventions based on the idea of systematically isolating some groups of students

due to the increase of behavior problems in the classroom (Nash et al., 2016). Discipline programs such as the Positive Behavioral Intervention Support program have used positive reward systems, incentives, students' promotion, and the teaching of social skills to influence students' behaviors and have shown some promise in curbing discipline problems. Some students' behavior problems persist in many schools throughout school systems (Hill & Flores, 2012). Several researchers (Hill et al, 2014; Ryoo & Hong, 2016) are concerned with the disparity between minority and majority racial percentages for out-of-school suspensions and the ratio of suspension rates between general education and students with disabilities remain disproportionate (Ryoo et al., 2016).

Wright (2013) reported that as a result of the zero-tolerance policy for behavior incidences in some schools in southern states like North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia some school districts reported a 27% increase in long term suspensions for students with disabilities; a 29% increase in short term suspensions, and a 54% increase in expulsion rates for some students. The zero-tolerance policy is a school system policy that mandates consequences or punishments for offenses that are intended to be applied regardless of the behavior situational context or the seriousness of the behavior in school or the classroom (Russell, & Losen, 2016).

There have been many methods used to educate students in a safe environment. Schools vary in type, targeted student population, focus, and method of teaching styles (Noltemeyer, et al., 2015). Educational systems include public school districts, private schools, home schools, and charter schools. Charter schools have begun to establish themselves, as an alternative way to educate today's public school students and to achieve positive outcomes (U.S. Charter Schools, 2013). Yet definitive data still are not available to show that charter schools are effective in promoting true innovative change in economically deprived areas in the south of the United

States (Center for Research and Educational Outcomes, 2009). Many charter schools claim that they provide a safe environment, free from many distractions, and have few disciplinary problems with many at-risk students with multiple discipline and behavior problems. The literature is scant on studies related to charter schools' ability to provide the type of education needed for all students to foster their academic achievement and decrease disciplinary problems at the elementary school level (Denice, Gross, & Rausch, 2015).

Burke (2015) reported on suspensions, expulsions, and academic achievement of English Language Learner (ELL) students in six Oregon school districts. The ELL students were suspended or expelled at a similar rate as English speaking students in elementary schools, but at a higher rate at the middle school level. The research showed that across all elementary grades, aggression and disruption were the most common reasons why both English speaking learners and ELL students were suspended or expelled. The average ELL student who were suspended lost about 1.9 school days in elementary school. The English-speaking students who were suspended lost about 2-3 days. The ELL students who were expelled or suspended had lower academic achievement on statewide achievement assessment tests in reading and math than ELL students who were not suspended or expelled.

Miller (2016) conducted a study on school-wide positive behavioral intervention systems (SW-PBIS) on students' achievement and office discipline referrals for 450 fifth grade students in a rural school in the United States. The purpose of the study was to allow students to take ownership of their behavior and learning within the school building. The author used qualitative data analysis to compare the data of office discipline referrals (ODR) between 2013 and 2015 on the number of expulsions, referrals, and suspensions to determine if the implementation of PBIS decreased disciplinary infractions of some students during those years. The results indicated that

the implementation of the SW-PBIS did not have a significant impact on the number of office referrals and did not decrease the number of suspensions and expulsions for fifth grade students in this rural school.

Phenomenon of Interest

The quality of student learning and achievement has been a matter of public discussion and policy. According to Gay, Lewis, and Ralph (2013) of the National Center for Educational Statistics, school accountability focuses on student achievement because of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The purpose of school for all students is to ensure every student has the opportunity to improve their learning abilities. The charter school movement was recognized in national education policy as a movement with a premise of deregulation and increased educational achievement for those students most poorly served by the traditional public and private schools (Gay et al., 2013).

Research on charter schools indicated that the focus is to serve underachieving and at-risk students, which is a major challenge for most charter school teachers (Losen, 2015). In many southern states, a large population of students who opt for charter schools are minority and low income students (Gay et al., 2013). Charter schools increase learning opportunities for many disadvantaged students (Losen, 2015). Some researchers have different perspectives of charter schools with minorities and low-income students (Gleason et al., 2010; Losen, 2015).

Recent research by Losen (2015) noted that the population of charter schools is comprised of some 61% minority and low-income students, as compared to 47% in regular and traditional schools. Charter schools in the south are becoming popular as a result of fewer government regulations and an opportunity to offer students a very diverse curriculum to meet the educational needs through non-traditional innovation and flexibility within their school

(Morris & Perry, 2013). It has been reported that many charter schools could improve student achievement despite many academic challenges and challenges with problem behavior of their students (Morris et al., 2016). The success or failure of charter schools' center on their students' ability to learn and to perform within the school (Losen, 2016).

Goodman (2013) noted that teachers complain of the lack of or an inadequate response from parents when contacted about their child's poor performance and misbehavior in school. Further, teachers often complained of the lack of effort or change in the behavior of students even after parents have been informed of their child's inappropriate behavior. Many teachers question whether these parents and sometime administration gave serious regard to the information teachers relayed to them regarding the misbehaviors of many students.

Alsubaie (2015) reported on educational leadership and common discipline issues of elementary school students and how to deal with discipline issues in the classroom. The author noted that discipline issues are obstacles towards students learning in an elementary school setting. Discipline issues are factors that can have a negative effect on student behavior in the classroom. Teachers should provide effective techniques and foster relationships to build and maintain a trustful environment in the classroom for all students. The leadership of the teacher and the administration can have a positive or negative effect on the behavior of students. Therefore, teachers should use good methods of communication between students and teachers to help all in creating a positive learning environment and reduce the behavioral issues established by students that can slow down the pace of academic learning in the classroom (Alsubaie, 2015; Goodman, 2013).

Background and Justification

The study took place in a charter school in the southern part of Louisiana. The school serves about 300 students from grades K through 6th grade. The majority of students at the school come from low-income families with incomes below \$25,000 for a family of four (Louisiana State Department of Education, 2017). The school's racial makeup consisted of a majority of African American students. The number of teachers at the targeted school consisted of 25 with one principal, one assistant principal, and one school counselor. Through personal communication (2017) with the principal of the target school, a high range of student disciplinary challenges at the charter school were identified. The principal noted that there was an increase in disrespect for teachers, verbal abuse of teachers, and a widespread increase of behavior problems in many classrooms, and misbehavior and disrespect to teachers from some students.

The charter school data from the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) showed that many teachers noted that there is a decrease in student achievement for many of the grades (OCR, 2013). This data showed 25% of the charter teachers reported significant lower grade point averages of their students and 21% noted the increase in classroom discipline problems among students in the classroom. Due to these issues, there is an increase in problem behavior and a decrease in achievement among many students in charter schools.

There is a need to study why teachers are facing these problems among students at the targeted charter school. The United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) data collection from 2009-2010 school year indicated that charter school suspension and expulsion rates were slightly higher than many of the traditional public schools. Further, many of

these charter school students scored lower grade point averages than students in public elementary schools.

The research literature identified that school violence has declined to an all-time low since the 1990's (Roberts, Kemp, & Truman, 2013) but the underlying cause of the problems with students' misbehavior remain, in the form of minor misbehavior that distract from the daily instructional time. Many researchers noted the low-level day-to-day misbehavior of students is a key factor in students not being able to learn to the extent possible in many elementary schools (Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Goodman, 2013; Losen, 2015). These authors noted that there is an increase in teacher and student harassment, bullying, and abuse including many gang activities that have started to involve many elementary students (Goodman, 2013). This information needs to be carefully reviewed and explained to ensure that students and teachers in elementary schools are able to feel safe in an environment where students learn to their maximum potential (Roberts et al., 2013).

Garin (2014) noted that from preschool to elementary school antisocial behavior by students' changes in form and increases in intensity as children age. During the preschool years, children display behaviors such as frequent whining and noncompliance. Later, during the elementary years, many of these behaviors take the form of less frequent but higher in intensity acts of hitting, bullying, and lying (Garin, 2014). Some researchers viewed the concept of innovation in charter schools as the invention of new approaches to reducing behavioral problems and enhancing learning outcomes of students (Garin, 2014; Losen, 2015). Nance (2013) identified how there should be a relationship between charter school teachers and innovative education for all students. The author noted that if teachers can reduce many of the misbehaviors among students in the classroom, more learning could take place to increase

academic outcomes. To reduce some discipline issues in the classrooms, teachers who have students with disciplinary problems need detailed, clear, concise information, and strategies to assist them with reducing minor offences in the process of successfully helping students in the learning process (Garin, 2014; Nance, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Each year, violent acts and criminal behaviors such as robberies, assaults, and possessing of weapons remain a pervasive problem in many public and charter schools. Nearly 40% of the crimes that are committed by youth occur in schools in the United States (Noltemeyer et al., 2015). However, violent crimes are but a small part of the misbehavior that plagues the education system today (Denice, 2015). Infractions that violate the school code of conduct occur each day in schools. These minor misbehaviors include such things as rudeness, disrespect, and talking out of turn in the classroom. Disregard of others' property or rights, clowning around, pulling, striking other students, talking out of turn, calling other students names, etc. are additional problems. Many of these behaviors take a toll on the education of students, including students in charter schools (Denice et al., 2015).

In many schools today, many teachers are being harassed and threatened and some are made to feel unappreciated, inadequate, and ineffective (Kowalerinz & Coffe, 2014). However, for teachers, discipline problems are not a minor irritation. They have consequences. Research by Conly, Marchant, and Caldarells (2014) noted that 97% of teachers say good student discipline is a prerequisite for a school to function successfully. Some 8 in 10 teachers noted that they could teach more effectively if they did not have to spend so much time in the classroom dealing with disruptive behavior of students. Some 4 out of 10 teachers say that they spend more time keeping order in the classroom than they do teaching students (Conly et al., 2014).

Many teachers leave the field altogether after a few years of teaching. Research showed that teachers consistently rate the behavior problems of their students as one of the primary reasons for them to quit teaching. Among teachers who have left the field over the past 10 years, some 80% stated that discipline problems caused by students was one of the primary reasons for their departure (Kowalerinz et al., 2014). Student discipline has been reported as a factor associated with high rates of teachers leaving the teaching profession (NCES, 2012). Two studies of teacher attrition rates found that problems with students' discipline issues and classroom management issues were the main reasons that many teachers leave the teaching profession after three years of teaching (NCES, 2012; Whitener, 2011).

Hehir (2010) suggested that the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 might be to blame for some of the misbehavior in schools today. The greater preponderance of time spent on reading and mathematics skills reduced the time and emphasis for other subjects such as character education and social skills training. In addition, students with behavioral disabilities are often placed in general education classrooms with minimum supports from the special education teachers or the behavioral specialists. This disruption may cause other students in the classroom to act out due to many classroom disruptions from other students (Hehir, 2010).

There are inconsistencies in the reports of disciplinary practices and student performances on the operations of many charter schools. Data on disciplinary and academic practices in charter schools are very limited. The limited evidence suggests that charter schools design disciplinary systems in support of their mission to provide a safe environment for all students and to provide the quality education for all students, so they will be able to foster and grow academically (Carpenter II & Peak, 2013; Hayes, 2011). The problem is that, although charter schools are growing rapidly in the United States, there is a need to provide the perceptions

of teachers who are experiencing increased problems and a decline in student achievement for many students. (Goodman, 2013; National Association of Charter School Authorizers, 2015).

The problem researched in this study was that teachers in the charter school, which is the focus of this study, reported many students displaying behavior problems that interfere with their learning. During the past school year, the principal reported that there was a range of student disciplinary challenges at the charter school. The teachers and principal noted that there was an increase in disrespect for teachers, verbal abuse of teachers, widespread incidences of behavior disorders in many classrooms, and misbehavior and disrespect to teachers from some students. In addition, in informal conversations, several teachers noted that there was a decrease in academic achievement for many students during the first part of the current school year.

Deficiencies in the evidence. There are few qualitative research studies, which specifically focused on charter school teachers' perceptions about how disciplinary problems affects academic achievement at the elementary school level. Therefore, this qualitative case study was designed to increase the knowledge base about the perspectives of teachers about the impact of disciplinary problems on academic achievement in charter schools at the elementary school level.

Previous research on disciplinary practices focused on zero tolerance of students and exclusionary practices of students in charter and public schools (Goodman, 2013; Krause, 2014; Nash, Schliosser, & Scarr, 2016). There is limited research that connects the teachers' perspectives on their view of disciplinary practice and academic achievement at the elementary school level in the charter school setting. The need further exists to study and better understand whether the use of certain discipline practices affects instructional practices that can increase achievement of students and decrease problem behavior in the classroom.

Audience. Many charter schools across the United States are attempting to address the problem of increasing academic achievement and to limit the number of discipline problems within schools. This study was designed to add to the body of literature on charter schools, which focuses on preparing teachers and school districts to work with students in the early grades to decrease problem behaviors in the lower grades. Administrators at the charter schools can use the results of this study and determine how they can allocate budget funds to increase teacher training in the area of classroom management.

Definition of Terms

At-risk. At risk refers to youth who are at-risk for academic failure, having academic problems, have drug or alcohol problems, have encountered the justice system, are one year behind the expected grade level, or have high absenteeism rate at the school (Louisiana Education Department, 2016).

Charter school. A charter school is a private or public school that operates relatively free of state regulations. The charter is granted by either a local district or state agency and describes the school's mission, educational programs, and accountability requirements (Walsh, Kemeer, & Maniotis, 2005).

Disciplinary action. Disciplinary action is a suspension, placement in an alternative education program or other limitation in enrollment eligibility of a student by a district or school (Louisiana Education Department, 2016).

Elementary schools. Elementary schools are public education schools, which serve students in grades kindergarten through fifth grades; these are also referred to as primary schools (Reeder & Batheha, 2016).

Student performance. The percentage of all tests passed on a school campus. The tests include mathematics, English, language arts, social studies, and science for elementary school students (Blake, 2013).

Traditional schools. Traditional schools are campuses and schools governed by an independent school district that is not aligned to any agency. Traditional schools are those that are regulated under state and federal regulations and monitoring (Foster, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore charter school elementary teachers' perceptions of disciplinary problems on academic achievement in a charter school in the southern part of Louisiana. The research site is a medium size charter school. The school served about 300 students from grades K through six grades. The majority of students at the school came from low-income families with incomes below \$25,000 for a family of four. The school racial makeup consisted of a majority of African American students. The number of teachers at the target school consisted of 25 with one principal, one assistant principal, and one school counselor. The study utilized a qualitative approach with open-ended interview questions. The researcher sampled 10 of the 25 teachers at the school of focus in Louisiana.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review provides a synthesis of the research literature related to this study. The first section will discuss the theoretical framework, which will underpin the study. The second section provides a brief overview of the move toward charter schools in the United States. The third section focuses on exclusionary discipline in the charter school sector. The fourth section focuses on out of school suspensions and expulsions of students in charter schools. The final section provides the literature review on effective classroom management approaches.

Theoretical Framework

Teacher efficacy theory. The theoretical framework that underpinned this research study was Bandura's concept of self-efficacy through the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977). The concept was expanded on through the social learning and personality development theories, along with adding the principles of observational learning and vicarious reinforcement. Bandura (1977) realized the missing element to his theory as self-beliefs in the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). In researching children with observed modeling being rewarded for aggressive behavior, it was found that the subjects were more likely to imitate the aggressive behavior than those who witnessed models being punished for such behavior (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963). Punishments were found when people witnessed others being rewarded or punished for behaviors. This causes self-encouragement or discouragement for the viewed behaviors to be imitated (Fox & Bailenson, 2009). Vicarious reinforcement has been used in many media campaigns to promote a healthy lifestyle through showing the person the negative consequences of bad behaviors such as smoking, substance abuse, and unhealthy eating (Fox et al., 2009).

Another part of the social cognitive theory is identification (Fox et al., 2009). Identification is defined as the extent to which people identify with models that they may view as

similar to themselves. For example, one can recognize that a target audience for a new children's toy will likely use children as actors in the commercial. When children view such a commercial on television, they are more likely to identify with the child actor who is enjoying playing with the toy and perceive that they too will enjoy playing with such a toy and desire to have the toy for themselves (Fox, 2009). Bandura (1986) noted that people's interpretation of their own behavior changed their own environment and their own future behaviors.

Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory noted that personal factors of affective, cognitive, and biological events coupled with behavioral and environmental factors operate independently in determining human agency. To be the agent is to intentionally make things happen by one's own action (Bandura, 1986). Bandura noted that the core features of agency enable people to play a part in their self-development, adaptation, and self-renewal with the changing times. Agentic is a social cognition perspective in which people are producers as well as products of social systems (Bandura, 1986).

Self-efficacy is defined as the power to produce an effect (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is a component of social cognitive theory which is viewed as the foundation of human motivation and accomplishment. Unless people believe that they can produce the desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act or persevere in the face of difficulties (Bandura, 1986). Bandura believed that a person's attitudes, abilities, and cognitive skills comprise what is known as the self-system. This system plays an important role in how people perceive situations and how they behave in response to different situations (Bandura, 1986).

Perceived self-efficacy is based on personal and self-referent thought of how well one can assume a course of action to deal positively with a situation (Bandura, 1986). These

judgements of self-efficacy also determine how much effort one will expend and how long one will persist in the face of difficult situations a person will be facing. A person with confidence of a successful personal outcome will persevere and those who do not have the confidence that the outcome will be successful will have personal effort wane (Bandura, 1977). Further, a person's judgement of their capabilities will influence their thought patterns and emotional reactions during exposure to environmental factors. Those who believe themselves to be inefficacious in coping with the stresses of their daily lives will dwell on their personal deficiencies and imagine potential difficulties as more formidable than they seem (Bandura, 1977).

Self-efficacy as a component of social cognitive theory has been tested in a wide variety of settings and has received support from many research studies (Pajares, 1996). Self-efficacy beliefs have been found to be related to problems such as addictions, social skills, assertiveness, stress, behavior problems, and health problems (Pajares, 1996).

Charter Schools in the United States

A charter school is an independent school system established to increase learning and academic achievement opportunities for all students in the educational system (U.S. Charter Schools, 2013). Charter schools have begun to establish themselves as an alternative way to educate today's public school students and to achieve positive outcomes for many students (U.S. Charter Schools, 2013). One expectation or mission of charter schools is to provide quality education through innovation and creativity for its students (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2016).

Charter schools are "publicly funded, independently operated schools that are allowed to operate with more autonomy than traditional public schools in exchange for increased

accountability” (Gowilk, 2016, p. 30). Charter schools use instructional methodologies and rubrics differing from those used in public school settings. They provide many unconventional environments to develop tools and innovative teaching methods and construct new and innovative means to accomplish academic excellence for many students (Gowilk, 2016, 2015; National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2016). Many charter schools focus on assisting students who struggle in traditional school settings or low-income schools, which states have noted as low performing schools (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2016). The spirit behind the charter school law suggested that a subtle form of discrimination toward students who face academic challenges exists in traditional school environments (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2016). Historically, school procedures have alienated many minority students from receiving an equitable education. Since taxpayer dollars fund the charter school system, the system is exploited with funding from the public to set up and run many charter schools in the United States (Gowilk, 2016; National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2016).

Charter school movements present themselves as an extension of public school systems. Furthermore, the movement contends that they have innovative teaching techniques that many state schools are not willing to provide its students in the public school such as using current technology in the classroom and the advancement in research-based strategies (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2016).

Some proponents of charter schools claim that increasing school choice will create schools that are better suited for students’ individual needs and parents’ school choice (Saultz, 2017). However, the literature has not reached a consensus on these claims, and there is no definitive agreement on the possible influences affecting parental choice in the charter school system (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2016).

Exclusionary Discipline in Schools

Students who are not in school are missing valuable opportunities for learning.

Exclusionary practices deny many students access to the school curriculum and to teaching and learning by advancing academically through their grades (Gross, DeArmond, Denice, 2015).

Research on exclusionary practices makes it clear that there is a strong positive correlation between the relationship between the number of days that students spend in the classroom and their academic achievement and outcomes (Noltemeyer, Ward, & McLouglin, 2015).

The application of exclusionary practices across student groups has raised many civil rights concerns over the years (Noltemeyer et al., 2015). Many African American students with disabilities, students from low-income and diverse backgrounds, and students from non-traditional groups receive a disproportionate number of out of school suspensions and expulsions, even when they commit the same discipline problems as their white peers. White students do not receive exclusionary discipline for their actions (Garen, 2014; Golann, 2015).

Many school districts provide lesser punishment for many white students (Garen, 2015).

Exclusionary practices can have a long-lasting effect on the lives of many students. Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to suffer academic harm or drop out of school and may come into contact with the criminal justice system during their teen years (Garen, 2014). There is limited research that has investigated how suspension and expulsion effects students' engagement academically in school and the outcomes for this population (Garen, 2014; Gross, 2015).

Disciplinary practices in charter schools have raised some major concerns among policymakers, researchers, and many parents (Denice, Gross, & Rausch, 2015). The first concerns are whether charter schools suspend or expel students at a higher rate than many public

school districts. The critics of the charter movement charge that these schools with a no excuse approach to student discipline rely too much on exclusionary discipline by returning many of the students with challenging behavior back to the public school system (Denice et al, 2015). The second concern is whether charter schools are open to accepting and serving students who have discipline problems at its schools (Garen, 2014; Golann, 2015). Many charter schools do not have the same obligation to serve expelled students as districts and district run schools due to federal regulations that exempt them because of their charter school mission and status (Golann, 2015). If a student is expelled from a charter school, there is no requirement that the student be accepted into any other charter school or into another school in the same charter school network (Garen, 2014; Golann, 2015).

Golann (2015) noted that much attention is being paid to discipline practices at charter schools and identified the need for the systematic collection of more reliable data among researchers about the methods they employ to better understand the dynamics of issues related to discipline practices at charter schools. There is also a need for further study on the way charter schools handle exclusionary discipline practices and zero tolerance issues (Golann, 2015). In addition, there are issues about the quality and availability of discipline practices data in charter schools (Golann, 2015). There is a need for researchers to provide rigorous methods of data collection and analysis on issues relating to discipline practices in charter schools in the United States. Also, there is a need to provide quality in providing reliable data since charter schools are not required to report discipline data to the state and federal government (Zebath, 2016)

The Impact of out of School Suspension and Expulsion Practices on Students

Out-of-school suspensions are used in many school education programs and in zero tolerance environments. Both out-of-school suspension and zero tolerance involve the removal of

a student for violations that range in frequency and severity in the schools' issues (Cornell & Lovegrove, 2012). The use of suspensions, no matter how small is a concern among stakeholders and educators who noted that suspended students are at greater risk of experiencing psychosocial problems and academic problems throughout their lives (Cornell et al., 2012). This may include academic failure and student dropout, disengagement from school and from employment, negative relationships among peers, adults and authority figures, crime, delinquency and engagement in risky behaviors (Anyon et al., 2014; Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009). Stearns and Glennie (2006) noted that many school administrators often resort to suspension because they want to appease frustrated students, parents, faculty and other staff members who believe that there are no other alternatives that would bring about a change in the learning environment of the student and in the classroom (Stearns et al., 2006).

According to Anyon et al. (2014), there is a significant disparity in the types of students who face suspensions the most in a school. The authors' research revealed that students with disabilities, low-income students and students of color, especially Black and Latino boys, were twice as likely as their white peers to be suspended and expelled. It was also revealed that these students are more harshly disciplined than others are, often receiving twice the amount of time for suspension, and often more readily expelled as the first act of discipline in many school districts (Anyon et al., 2014). Suspensions are thought to be one of the primary factors in student disconnection from school (Balfanz, Byrnes & Fox, 2012).

The practice of expulsion is more final and long lasting than that of suspension and often requires that the student be removed from the learning environment indefinitely and placed in another school or alternative setting (Cornell & Lovegrove, 2012). In some cases, in states where there is no mandate to do so, students are expelled without any provision of alternatives for

continuing education invariably causing the student to become totally disconnected (Bitner, 2015). Expulsions appear to be most commonly used among students of color and in communities where there are high instances of crime and a high rate of poverty (McCray, Beachum & Yawn, 2015).

Morton (2014) stated that while zero tolerance policies are most credited with the number of expulsions among students, many school administrators believe that expulsions are warranted and non-negotiable for other types of offenses, which include drug possession, violence, bullying, and other types of consistent, anti-social behaviors, which directly affect the safety of other students in the school community. As with suspension, researchers have found that the practice of expulsion has several negative long-term effects on the academic, social and emotional development and well-being of students (Cornell & Lovegrove, 2012). Opponents of the practice have cited that school expulsions are not only ineffective at deterring misbehavior, but are linked to academic failure, negative attitudes towards school's and increased dropout rates among students (McCray, Beachum & Yawn, 2015). Additionally, the appearance of an expulsion on a student's academic record is perceived to cause a stigma and the classification of a student as a problem child (Wilson, 2009).

Academic Achievement and Funding in Public and Charter Schools

DeLua and Hinshaw (2010) conducted a study comparing academic achievement in charter school and public school. The purpose of the study was to determine if there is a relationship between student achievement and student expenditures comparing charter schools to traditional public schools. Data were collected for all charter schools and public school districts in the state of Ohio. The variables were data on achievement for each charter school and each grade level school in the district. The expenditures per pupil data were collected in both charter

and public schools. The sample used in the study was 129 individual Ohio charter schools and 30 associate Ohio school districts. The results of the study indicated that a student's achievement as measured by performance scores and expenditure per pupil are important in distinguishing between charter schools and their associate public schools in Ohio. Expenditure per pupil was not a significant variable in either the elementary or the middle school models. The only significant correlation coefficient suggested an inverse relationship between the two variables. The results in this study do not support the premise that the reason charter schools in Ohio are not succeeding academically is because of low level of funding.

Max (2016) reported on the pro and con issues in the state of Massachusetts related to lifting the cap on charter schools funding and reporting on student achievement in charter schools. The state voted on lifting the cap on allowing up to 12 new schools to launch each year with preference given to charters opening in low performing school districts. Under the Charter school law of Massachusetts, funding follows students from traditional public school districts to public charter schools. Student enrollment in charter schools also effectively increases pupil funding at the school district schools. The author noted that in 2016, charter school enrollment had the effect of increasing student spending in district schools by 85 million dollars statewide. There was evidence that charter schools increased the performance of students in them. In addition, Max noted that in Boston, students in charter schools significantly increased their reading and math proficiency scores. Boston charter schools also improved their long-term outcomes by increasing students' SAT scores, increased Advance Placement courses taken by students, and increased students enrolling in two and four year postsecondary institutions. The author concluded that there was little evidence that charter schools were lowering the performance of the traditional local public schools. Finally, the percentage of students scoring

advanced or proficient in English on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System Test increased by 15% in ten districts.

Student Achievement in Public vs Charter Schools

Betts and Tang (2014) reported on the effect of charter schools on students' achievement. The authors conducted a meta-analysis of the literature reviews on charter schools and students' achievement. The authors focused on literature that used experimental or student level growth methods. This analysis inferred the causal impact of attending a charter school on students' performance and student outcomes. The meta-analysis focused on student scores in reading and math. The authors noted that the findings showed compelling evidence that charter schools underperformed traditional schools in some locations, grades, and subjects, and outperformed traditional public schools in other locations in, grades, and subjects. The exceptions were elementary school reading and middle school math and reading. The evidence suggested no negative effects of charter schools and in some cases the evidence of positive effects of attending charters schools.

Silvernail and Johnson (2015) conducted a review comparing students in public charter schools and students in traditional public school on academic achievement. The purpose of the study was to review the empirical evidence on achievement in public charter schools and traditional public schools. The authors used a series of five common claims made by proponents and opponents of public charter schools as an organizer for the study. The results revealed that students' achievement in charter schools is mixed. In some cases, the study found a positive correlation in student achievement in reading while other evidence showed a negative effect for student achievement in math. The presence of charter schools has resulted in many positive changes in some traditional schools, while some appear to have a very limited impact on the

academic achievement of students in reading and math. The authors concluded that public charter schools vary in quality like many traditional schools. The success of the schools depended upon factors such as teacher quality, funding, and teacher commitment to teaching students basic concepts to increase academic achievement.

Winter (2016) noted that though charter schools are moving into place across the U.S. in many urban areas, critics of the charter school movement often assert that charter schools post higher test scores than traditional public schools because they usually remove their most difficult students. To prove their claims some charter school critics noted that there are smaller percentages of special education students and students classified as English Language Learners than in traditional public schools. Many of the findings are reported by former parents of children from the charter school. Winter (2016) conducted a study to seek some answers to many of the former school critics. The key findings from the study indicated that students with disabilities are more likely to remain in their school if it is a charter school than if it was a traditional public school. For example, in the city of Denver, from four years after entering kindergarten, 65% of students with disabilities remained in their charter school as compared to 37% of the students in the traditional public school. Students learning English are more likely to remain in their charter school as compared to students in traditional public school. For example, in New York, among students classified as ELL, 82% remained in their charter schools as compared to 70% of ELL students in traditional school. Finally, students with low test scores are more likely to remain in their charter school than students with low test scores at traditional public school (Winter, 2016).

Teachers and Teaching in Charter Schools

According to Goldring, Gray, Bitterman, and Broughman (2013) there were approximately 3,385,200 public school teachers in the United States in the school year of 2011-2012. Of those teachers, 115,600 taught in charter schools meaning that about 3.4% of all public school teachers are teaching in charter schools. The laws pertaining to teaching in charter schools vary from state to state. The Education Commission of the States (ECS) (2014) noted that charter school teachers vary greatly from state to state in terms of certified teachers. There were 14 states in the United States that do not require charter school teachers to be certified where some states require only a baccalaureate degree and some states required specific conditions with a waiver in 26 states for certification for charter school teachers. The U.S. Department of Education's Schools and Staffing Survey stated that charter school teachers on the average differ from public school teachers in the following ways which include: (a) younger than public school teachers, (b) less educated, (c) less experienced, (d) newer to their schools, (e) paid less, (f) more racially diverse, (g) equally likely to get professional development, and (h) focused on different types of professional development (NCES, 2013).

The teacher turnover rate at charter schools is higher than the teacher turnover rate at traditional public schools (Goldring et al., 2013). The results from the 2012-2013 Teacher Follow-Up Survey found that the turnover in charter schools was 18.4% including teachers who moved to other schools as well as those who left the teaching profession entirely. The turnover rate at traditional school was 12% during the same period of time (Goldring, Taie, Riddles, & Owens, 2014). The data from the 2012-2013 Teacher Survey did not provide the reasons why teachers left their position or whether their reasons differ significantly from why traditional public school teachers left. However, data from the Schools and Staffing Survey from 2004-2005

Teacher Follow-Up Survey found that charter school teachers were more than twice as likely as traditional public school teachers to leave their positions involuntarily (Goldring et al., 2014). This could be because they were fired or because their charter school closed. Charter schools do have higher rates of closure than traditional public schools (Goldring et al., 2014).

The Teacher Follow-up Survey from 2004-2005 also found that charter school teachers were more likely than traditional public school teachers to cite dissatisfaction with their pay, teaching assignments, and conditions in the workplace as reasons for leaving their schools or the teaching profession. The study found that the low unionization rates of charter schools was the most important factor in explaining higher turnover rates based on the survey (Goldring et al., 2014). Research has shown that many charter schools have moved to become unionized in many parts of the United States (Goldring et al., 2013)

There is a lack of comprehensive current data on charter school teachers' job satisfaction (U. S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, 2008). The most recent available data show that satisfaction levels for charter and traditional public school teachers are similar (NCES, 2008). Data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (2008) asked charter school teachers their level of satisfaction with their teaching positions. Many charter school teachers expressed slightly less satisfaction than traditional public school teachers did. These include: 60% of traditional public school teachers strongly agreed and 33% somewhat agreed that they were generally satisfied with being a teacher at their school while 54% of charter school teachers strongly agreed and 36% somewhat agreed that they were generally satisfied with being a teacher at their school (NCES, 2008). This means that 92% of traditional public school teachers and 90% of the charter school teachers were generally satisfied with being a teacher at their school. This was a narrow gap in the teachers' view on job satisfaction (Goldring et al., 2014); (NCES, 2008).

Charter School Families

Research on charter schools noted that many parents who choose to enroll their children in charter school cited that there is an advantage for them in the educational and academic outcomes as their principle reason for choosing the charter schools over traditional schools (Stein, Goldring, & Cravens, 2010). Many parents often said that charter schools demonstrated high academic performance as their top reason for choosing a charter school over traditional schools (Stein et al., 2010). A research study conducted by the Hudson Institute (Stein, 2010) asked parents at 30 charter schools in 9 states to report the reasons why they chose their charter school over traditional schools. The parents cited that they chose charter schools over traditional schools due to academic performances, smaller size of the charter school, higher standards in the charter school, better teachers, a greater opportunity for parent involvement, and a program that closely fits their philosophy on education (Bell, 2009). These findings noted that 63% of the parents surveyed in the study reported that academic quality and the charter schools' academic focus was the most important reason they chose a charter school over a traditional school. The study also found that parents who rated the academic quality of their child's previous school as average or below average were significantly more likely to report academic quality as a top priority in their school choice in allowing their child to attend a charter school (Bell, 2010). Although much of the research has found that parents most often cited academics as their reasons for choosing charter schools, it is important to note that these findings provide only a generalized picture of the entire landscape for their reasons for choosing to send their child to a charter school. Many of the charter school parents' priorities vary between different families and different school districts on their reasons for choosing to send their child to a charter school (Bell, 2010; Stein, 2009).

Researchers have emphasized that both the initial choice and the actual choice of school requires parents to invest time, effort, and energy into making the appropriate choice for their family (Bell, 2009; Teske & Schneider, 2001). Parents have varying resources and access to information that affects their capacity and their likelihood to choose the appropriate school for their child. Factors such as socioeconomic status, level of education, and race all have been found to influence whether parents choose the option for charter schools (Bell, 2009). Many researchers noted that disadvantaged parents that have fewer resources choose charter schools as their option due to access to transportation, language skills, and having to take less time away from their employment (Bell, 2009). Parents' social capital and their social networks also influence the likelihood that they will exercise choice and influence the types of choice they make on schooling for their children (Bell, 2009).

Bell (2009) reported on a study that was conducted by the University of Houston with 1,006 parents in Texas and ranking their top three reasons for choosing their school. These were: test scores, discipline, school racial or ethnic characteristics, location, the teaching of moral values, or safety. The researchers wanted to know whether parent preferences differed across racial groups. They found that parents across the entire sample chose discipline and teaching of moral values as two of their top three reasons for sending their child to charter schools. White parents were the only group that rated test scores most often as their most important reasons. African American parents rated test scores second to the teaching of moral values as most important and Hispanic parents did not rank test scores in the top three at all and rated discipline as the most important reasons for sending their children to charter schools. In another study conducted by the Educational Testing Service (2009) across nine months with a group of 48 parents in Detroit, parents were asked about their choices in selecting a middle school or high

school for their child. The researchers found that the majority of parents who chose a school other than their traditional school district public school, cited not only academic reasons (58%) for choosing a school but also holistic reasons (69%), or reasons that focused on their child's overall well-being (Bell, 2009).

Harris and Larsen (2015) reported on a study that assessed New Orleans parents' school preferences following the reorganization of the New Orleans Parish School District into an all-choice district after Hurricane Katrina. In New Orleans parents apply to all schools using one application on which they rank which schools they would prefer, and admission is then determined by a lottery. The study found that parents' ranked preferences depended on many factors in addition to school's academic performance, and the parents' preferences revealed that they sometimes prioritized other factors more highly than school academic performance (Harris et al., 2015). Researchers with the Education Research Alliance for New Orleans (2013) analyzed data on parents' school preferences for their applications for the 2012-2013 school year and found that geographic distance and extracurricular activities often appeared to take precedence over academic performance. The researchers found that parents were more likely to select a school that was around the corner with a "C" grade in terms of academic performance than they were to select a "B" grade school that was more than three quarters of a mile away from their home. The study also revealed significant socioeconomic differences in parents' choices. Low income parents in New Orleans were more likely to give preference to convenient location, extracurricular activities such as football and band for high school preferences, or extended school days for elementary preferences over academic performance than were higher income parents (Harris & Larsen, 2015)

Parent Involvement and Student Achievement

Bower and Griffin (2011) noted that parental involvement is reflected in current educational policies and practices. There are many means that educational institutions provide for parent involvement. Parent involvement includes a varying range of behaviors but specifically refers to the manner in which parents or family members use the invested resources in their children's school (Bower et al., 2011). Research on parental involvement indicates a consistent, positive relationship between parents' engagement in their child's learning and educational outcomes in the school (Bower et al., 2011). Parental involvement can have an effect on whether a student drops out of school and lowers the truancy rates for many students (Bower et al., 2011).

Researchers have investigated how parents participate in their children's education and the roles school and the teachers can play in more parent involvement to increase student achievement in the school (Borup, Graham, & Doves, 2013). Borup et al., (2013) noted that there are three dimensions of parental involvement based on how the parent-child interactions affect students' schooling and motivation. These include: a) behavioral involvement, (b) personal involvement, and (c) cognitive/intellectual involvement. Behavioral involvement is the public action taken by parents that represents their interest in their child's learning and educational outcomes such as attending school open houses and volunteering their time at school. Personal involvement refers to the focus on the parent- child interactions. It involves positive communication and attitudes about the child's school, and can help the child to identify the importance of education and learning, and helps to make learning a positive experience (Borup et al., 2013). Cognitive intellectual involvement refers to those behaviors that cultivate the development and intellectual skills of the child (McGein & Ben-Portath, 2014). McGein et al.,

(2014) noted that when parents are more involved in their child's education this behavior affects student motivation, which in turn can affect student achievement in the classroom. When parents show positive involvement, the child feels more equipped, competent, and empowered to deal with their success in school (McGein, et al., 2014).

Parental involvement is vital to learning of students in the classroom. The more parents are involved in their child's education, the more informed they are about their child's performance. They are then in a better place to help their child when they might be having problems in the classroom (Bower, 2011). Having parents involved in their child's education can bridge the gap between the school, community, teachers, and administrators. As the parents increase their involvement in the school with their child, this can open the lines of communication between the parent and the school, which can increase the connection between the parent and the school. This in turn can have a positive effect on the child and increase academic achievement (Bower, 2011, McGein, 2014).

Apodaca, Genting, Steinhaw, and Roseberg (2015) conducted a study on parental involvement as a mediator of academic achievement among special education students in a charter school. The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement with special education students. The author used a questionnaire to sample 82 parents representing all students in the charter school's special education program on their view of their child's schoolwork and academic performance. The results of the study indicated that there was a complex relationship between parental involvement and academic performance among the parents and the special education students. The authors suggested that parental involvement with other groups, and students with disabilities may be associated differently with other aspects of parental involvement and these issues may merit

further study from the researcher (Wohlsetter, Smith, & Farrell, 2016). Many researchers have noted the difficulty of comparing parental involvement in charter versus traditional public schools (Wohlsetter et al., 2016). This might be due to the need for more systematic research on parent involvement in charter schools. Researchers noted the potential for a self-reflection bias among charter school parents, meaning that parents who make the effort to choose a charter school might have certain unobservable characteristics that also make them more inclined to be involved in their child's school. These researchers argued that this bias also could have an effect on comparisons between charter school parents and traditional school parents (Wohlester et al., 2016).

While parental involvement is an important force in students attending charter schools, it has not been the case with parental involvement for students attending traditional schools (Borup et al., 2013). Charter schools are often quick to adopt new and innovative developments as part of their school program and mission. Traditional schools on the other hand, are slower to take action on new and improved techniques in the educational area due to many local and state school district regulations (Borup et al., 2013). Many traditional schools are not quick to implement these ideas as part of their standard operating procedures to educate students with new and improved developments (Borup et al., 2013; Bower, 2011). Some traditional schools struggle to implement new and improved parental involvement strategies that charter schools are implementing and this makes parental involvement more difficult for traditional schools to implement (McGein, 2014). Traditional schools have state mandated parental involvement as part of their operating system like many charter schools that require parents to become involved in their child's education while attending the charter school (McGein, 2014). In many states, in order for students to attend a charter school, the parents must sign and return a parental

involvement contract between the parents and the charter for a child to attend the school. In traditional schools, the parents do not need to sign such a document for their child to attend the school (Bower, 2011). Having such a contract helps the parents or guardians to have a clear guide identifying the policies and procedures of the school and the requirements for their child (Borup et al., 2013). As parents continue to enroll their children in charter schools, there is a need for more research-based practices on parental involvement and how it affects student achievement and learning outcomes for all students in the educational system (Bower, 2011).

Student Achievement in Charter Schools

Nationally, there is little evidence that charter schools and traditional public schools differ in their average impact on students' standardized test performance (CREDO, 2010). The most recent research on test performance, done by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO, 2010) reported on 27 states and found that charter schools on the average had a small positive impact on students' reading achievement but no differential impact on students' math achievement. The CREDO (2010) conducted a meta-analysis on the literature on charter school effects, on school organization associated with the Center on Reinventing Public Education that focuses on innovative schools of choice and that works to develop, test, and support evidence-based solutions to create new possibilities for parents, educators, and public officials who strive to improve American schools. The study reported no significant impact on reading scores and a small positive impact on math scores for students in charter school (CREDO, 2010).

Mathematica's evaluation of charter middle schools in 15 states examined data through 2007-2008 and found that both students' background and the location of the school mattered for achievement outcomes (CREDO, 2013). The study reported small positive impacts for low-

income students and larger negative impacts for higher income students in reading and math in charter schools. The study also found that regardless of the income, urban charter schools were more likely to have positive impacts on students' math achievement than non-urban charter schools, which tend to have negative impacts. The authors noted that urban charter schools relative edge could be due to their urban comparison schools constituting lower quality alternatives than the study's suburban and rural comparison schools, especially for low-income students (CREDO, 2013).

One charter school's impact can differ greatly from another in the same region. Some charter school characteristics have been found to relate to the charter school impact. Several charter school evaluation studies have reported great variation among individual charter schools' impact and among different types of charter schools impact. For example, the CREDO (2013) data found that the majority of schools in their study (56%) had no greater or lesser impact on their students' reading gains than did traditional schools, but 25% of the schools in their study improved students' reading over and above traditional public schools' impact, while 19% diminished students' reading gains compared with traditional public schools. The same study also found more positive impacts for charter schools that were elementary or middle schools, but no impacts for charter high schools (CREDO, 2013).

There is little rigorous research comparing charter schools with traditional public schools on measuring of academic outcomes than standardized test scores such as indicators of academic engagement and motivation, high school completion, college matriculation, and graduation rates (CREDO, 2013). These tend to be long-term outcomes that cannot be measured until several years after students entered a charter school. Moreover, much of this information is not collected in the same comprehensive ways as standardized test scores. However, a growing number of

studies have looked at measures of academic engagement and success. The results mirrored what other studies reported on charter schools impacts on standardized test scores (Gleason, Clark, Tuttle, & Dwoyer, 2010). For example, a Mathematica researcher's study on 15 charter school fifth through seventh graders examined data through 2007-2008 and reported no differential impacts for charters overall. The reports stated that there was no evidence that charter school students had better school attendance or grade promotion than their peers did in traditional public schools (Gleason et al, 2010).

Teacher Perceptions of Classroom Discipline

Wormer and Walker (2012) reported on the perceptions of teachers with respect to classroom discipline and the challenges they face with implementing classroom rules in the class. The authors noted that for generations it has been accepted that adults have complete power, authority, and control over students, but this trend has lessened over the past decade. The traditional views of raising children are challenging in this fast-paced society (Wormer & Walker., 2012). The concepts of power, authority, and control as the way to maintain classroom discipline have changed for teachers in many school districts across the United States. In traditional school settings, the absence of punishment when conflicts arise means that students have not been held accountable in many schools for their behavior (Betts & Tang, 2016).

A challenge of implementing research based practices and training in schools about classroom management is resistance to a discussion about more proactive approaches to student discipline (Tanner, 2017). In many schools, teachers and administrators are entrenched in the authoritarian practices which do not work in the best interests of many children facing discipline issues in school systems (Tanner, 2017). The implementation of proactive discipline practices in schools requires adults to shift away from the old and outdated approach to student discipline

(Tanner, 2017). This shift in consciousness requires teachers not to be dismissive of students' thoughts or feelings but to consider these when students are facing discipline problems in the classroom (Banks, 2014; Tanner, 2017). Traditional views of student discipline where teachers as disciplinarians rely too much on their own authority of child rearing, without concern for the view of the students and their feelings and views on discipline (Betts, 2016). Teachers often respond in ways that express an underlying fear of giving up authority, power, and control of a situation when contending with school discipline issues, which consequently prevents them from using such experiences as teachable moments for many students (Banks, 2014).

Many teachers have certain beliefs about what is right and wrong for their students. Marion (2011) noted that every educator operates under a set of assumptions about human nature. The assumptions color everything that happens in the classroom, from the contexts that are assigned to the texture of the casual interactions with students. Some teachers operate under their own class and cultural assumptions about what they perceive to be right or wrong for students in their classroom, and these assumptions impact the way students are being related to in the classroom and educated in the school (Balli, 2011). Miron (2011) provided the following ideas based on teachers' assumptions that have been used to justify authoritarian practices of discipline in the classroom. These include: (a) if a teacher is not in control of their classroom, it will result in chaos in the classroom, (b) students need to be told what the adult expects of them, as well as what will happen if they do not do what they are told, (c) teachers need to give positive reinforcement to a student who does something nice if you want him or her to keep acting that way, and (d) the heart of moral education is the need to help students control their impulses. Tanner (2017) stated that perceptions of what is fair and just in schools is directly

connected to a variety of social factors including changes in cultural norms for the students and the teacher.

Banks (2014) stated that many sociologists have examined how normative perspectives can influence obedience to laws. The normative perspective is when people obey laws because of their personal morals within their minds and hearts. Although it has not been applied to schools in relation to disciplinary practices, the author noted that this research could offer insight into the changing aspects of authority and responses to authority that manifest between teachers and students when issues of authority are noted. The author noted that when people base their compliance on personal morality, they obey the law because they reason within themselves that the law is just for them. In contrast, when people base the compliance on external factors and controls, they obey the law because the enforcing authority has the responsibility and right to regulate behavior in such a manner (Banks, 2014). Perceptions of fairness thus play a role in both elements of compliance and legitimacy (Banks, 2014).

Teachers' perceptions of discipline and how they exercise authority have a direct impact on how students are disciplined in many school districts. Chingo and West (2015) noted that the most important task for a school is the socialization of the students in the school. Schools should not only teach socially appropriate behaviors but should inculcate general respect toward social rules in the school. Teacher discipline can only exhibit moral value if the moral value and the authority of the teacher is respected and accepted by students in the classroom and the school (Chingo et al., 2015). When respect for authority is absent, teachers tend to perceive the problem behavior as residing in the immorality of the student.

Teachers' expectations are related to the mainstream ideology of controlling discipline in the classroom (Chingo et al). Teacher expectations involve a number of essential factors such as

the social context, which incorporates the prevailing social attitudes associated with race, class structure, political, social, and the economic ideology (Chingo et al., 2015). Teachers' expectations are influenced by specific pedagogical concepts and conceptual frameworks as well as educational structures and practices instilled by teacher education programs (Gregory et al., 2014). Teachers' expectations and assumptions made about students are directly connected to both their individual beliefs of classroom discipline and the dominant cultural beliefs upon which they rely to define the worth and morality of students (Gregory et al., 2014). Research has shown that teacher perceptions of student discipline are driven by underlying beliefs such as "students will act generously only when reinforced for doing a certain behavior" or "the student is motivated exclusively by self-interest and students need to be kept under control" (Gregory et al., 2014 p. 36). Many of the teacher's perceptions of discipline stem from commonsensical authoritarian ideology, and directly impact how a teacher sets disciplinary expectations in the classroom and the particular consequences meted out and to which students (Miron, 2011). In addition, a teacher's perception about classroom control may be influenced by the pedagogical philosophies associated with these practices (Chingo et al., 2015).

The dynamics of power in the classroom are related to discipline and directly linked to what adults expect students to be or do to show compliance to classroom rules and teacher expectations (Chingo et al., 2015). Banks (2014) noted that many classroom discipline books and materials teach educators classroom management techniques to ensure that students behave appropriately in alignment with adult beliefs and behavioral expectations. The perceptions of a classroom teacher often highlights a teacher's biases in the discipline of students by shifting, punishing, and eliminating classroom behavior considered inappropriate, noisy, overly active,

and self-determining behavior (Banks, 2012). The concept of the quiet classroom is also reinforced by school district administrators who often frown on noisy classrooms (Banks, 2012).

When teachers are dealing with discipline issues in the classroom, they need to analyze the classroom environment and the larger external factors that directly have an impact on the severity and repetition of certain types of students' behaviors (Banks, 2012). Researchers suggest that when behavior problem arise in the classroom, one of the first factors that should be examined is instructional procedures and appropriateness of classroom materials. These issues can have a direct reflection on when the classroom teacher is in control of the classroom (Banks, 2014).

Researchers noted that culturally relevant practices in the classroom are important to ensuring that the educational and behavioral needs of students in the classroom are met with respect in practices of student discipline (Losen, 2015). The curriculum decisions made in the school and the classroom have important implications for behavior in relation to teachers' relationships to students and whether students are engaged in the classroom (Losen, 2011). When students do not feel engaged with respect to the lessons being taught by the teacher, they may have a higher probability of engaging in inappropriate behaviors such as not paying attention to instruction, sleeping in class, and being disruptive to other students (Losen, 2011). Critical reflections by teachers on the cause of the misbehavior by students may allow the teacher to step outside of his or her perceptions and expectations of students and analyze how the environment of the classroom and the unmet needs of the students might be influencing disruptive behavior in the classroom (Losen, 2011).

Charter School Teachers Perceptions of Discipline

Data from a report on charter schools by Losen, Keith II, Hodson, and Martinez (2016) indicated that teachers from charter schools reported a high level of serious threats to students, teachers, and school property. At least 20% of charter school teachers reported that vandalism, theft, robbery, physical conflicts, and bullying occur once a month or more at their school. The point that needs to be made concerning these problems is that safety concerns frequently revolve around very serious issues for charter schools. These are not simply problems of horseplay among students, but may involve fights, physical abuse of teachers, and possession of weapons and drugs. These issues, at least in terms of teachers' reports and perceptions, affect all schools and are most serious in both traditional public and charter schools. Many teachers reported a far higher incidence of these challenges than do principals in charter schools (Losen, 2016).

Losen (2015) reported that in 2011-2012, charter schools suspended 7.8% of all students enrolled, which is a slightly higher rate than for non-charter schools, which was at 6.7%. These numbers were based on a comparison of 4,752 charter schools that the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil rights (OCR) identified as part of the juvenile justice system, and most virtual and online schools with more than 90,000 non-charter schools. This report noted that charter school suspension rates for K-12 were about 1.1 percentage points higher for all students and about 1.8 percentage points higher for students with disabilities. Charter schools were also higher at suspending students with disabilities. There were also wide variations of discipline policies and practices among charter schools. This data suggested that many charter school suspension rates have declined in many schools and districts since the 2011 to 2012 school year. This decline seems to coincide with the expansions of the use of non-punitive alternatives to disciplinary exclusion for many charter schools, but researchers noted that this is

still a hot button issue with schools and school districts (Morris & Perry, 2016; Noltemeyer, Word, & McLoughlin, 2015).

Morris and Perry (2016) noted that racial differences in suspension rates account for as much as 20% of the racial achievement gap for many students. The well-documented harm to students associated with suspensions translated into wasted tax dollars, as there are numerous non-punitive and less costly approaches to improving learning environments that do not rely on excluding students from school (Morris & Perry, 2016). The concerns raised by the data are especially relevant in light of The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA 2015), the federal law that replaced the No Child Left Behind law. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) has added provisions that address school discipline, including a requirement that every state review its schools and districts for the overuse of suspensions of students in their schools (Morris & Perry, 2016; Noltemeyer et al., 2015). The ESSA makes it clear that unless a state law explicitly exempts charter schools, they are required by law to abide by the new requirements. By the fall of 2016, every state was to have submitted an approval plan in order to receive federal funding and must have provided assurances that it would meet this obligation.

Classroom Management

Classroom management has been shown to be the most common concern among public and private school teachers in this 21st century (Gordon, Edwards, & Cushman, 2015; Postholm, 2013). Effective classroom management requires that teachers use a variety of knowledge, strategies, and skills that will allow teachers to structure their classroom environment, establish rules and procedures, develop relationships with students and to maintain attention and engagement in academic activities for all students in the classroom (Gordon et al., 2015). If a teacher does not have effective classroom management skills they cannot survive the teaching

profession for long (Gordon et al., 2015). A lack of management skills has been cited as one of the major reasons many teachers leave the teaching profession within the first three years of teaching (Postholm, 2013).

Classroom management is a management system that includes instructional strategies focused on (a) discipline strategies for reducing problem behavior in the classroom, (b) making students independent and resourceful in their strategies for learning, (c) motivational strategies that help students become more conscientious and accountable, (d) setting limits, and (e) training students to be responsible and cooperative with other students in the classroom (Turabik & Gum, 2016). Further, teachers should not leave the teacher-student relations to chance if they want to create quality student teacher relationships in the classroom (Turabik et al., 2016).

Effective classroom management skills can increase student achievement in the classroom. Teachers who have effective classroom management skills spend more time providing effective instruction than addressing discipline problems and routine tasks (Gordon et al., 2015). If there is an increase in disruptive behavior in the classroom, this can limit the amount of learning in the classroom to increase academic achievement (Turabik et al., 2016). Problems with classroom management can have a lasting negative effect on the student and the teacher. This can have consequences on student learning and behavior in the classroom as disruptive student behaviors negatively affect the classroom environment and the learning of other students (Turabik et al., 2016). The classroom climate is often affected by the following cycle of behaviors: (a) student misbehavior, (b) teacher attempting to control the misbehavior, (c) student persistence in continued misbehavior, (d) teacher retreating in frustration because of the misbehavior, and (e) an increase in student misbehavior. These types of misbehaviors by the

student can result in a negative impact on student achievement for all students in the classroom (Turabik et al., 2016).

Bear (2014) noted that classroom management skills could be improved by school districts providing meaningful professional development opportunities for teachers. Teachers learn more about how to manage their classroom when they engage in active learning as compared to information based learning. Banks (2014) suggested ways to improve a teacher's classroom management skills such as the need to provide professional development that addresses management, culture, socioeconomic issues, and other aspects of diversity needs to be provided for new teachers. Schools need to provide a mentoring program for new and experienced teachers that provide them with a strong system for dealing with the needs of a diversity of learners in the classroom.

Effective classroom management strategies that are culturally responsive are important in today's diverse school districts (Banks, 2014). Bear (2014) suggested that culturally responsive classroom should be designed to create a physical setting that supports academic and social goals. The teacher should establish clear expectations for behavior in the classroom. There should be good communication with students in culturally consistent ways. The teacher should develop a caring classroom environment and work with families on decreasing problem behavior by their child. Finally, teachers need the ability and willingness to use culturally appropriate management strategies for all students in the classroom (Balli, 2011).

Culturally responsive classroom management strategies start with understanding the students' culture and background information (Balli, 2011). Teachers should organize and manage their classroom around the students' background and needs of the individual student. This will lead the student and teacher to understand and respect each other, thus allowing most

classroom time to be spent on instruction and the learning needs of the students rather than having to deal with student misbehavior, which can take up much of the instructional time (Balli, 2014).

Research Questions

The following is the central research question that guided the study:

What were the perceptions of charter school teachers about the impact of disciplinary problems on the academic achievement of students?

The following sub-questions were addressed:

1. What were charter school teachers' perceptions of disciplinary problems elementary teachers face in their classroom?
2. What were charter school teachers' perceptions of the practice of out-of-school suspension to remediate short-term behavior problems of students?
3. What were charter school teachers' perceptions of the impact disciplinary problems have on students' academic achievement?
4. What were some strategies that charter school teachers implemented to reduce discipline problems in the classroom and to increase academic achievement?

Chapter 3: Methodology

The aim of this qualitative case study was to explore charter school teachers' perceptions of disciplinary problems on academic achievement at the elementary school level at a charter school in the southern part of Louisiana. A qualitative case study design was used to obtain perspectives of charter school elementary teachers on their view of disciplinary practices in their classrooms and the impact on the academic achievement of students in their classroom.

Qualitative Research Approach

A qualitative case study research design was used to investigate the problem and to answer the research questions. A case study design was used to analyze a single or small number of units or participants (Yin, 2013). A qualitative case study research design was selected for this study because it may allow the researcher to understand the perceptions and experiences of participants about problem behavior in the classroom, and whether the behavior has an effect on academic achievement in the classroom. A case study design was used to provide detailed perceptions and views of the participants of disciplinary problems on academic achievement at the targeted charter elementary school (Yin, 2009).

A qualitative case study design can provide in-depth views and experiences through the eyes of the participants who were charter school teachers (Yin, 2009). The qualitative case study research design provided appropriate perspectives of the charter school teachers and allowed the researcher to describe, explain, and explore phenomena of the everyday context in which it occurred (Yin, 2009). The researcher sought the perceptions and experiences of 10 charter school teachers at the elementary school level through first-person accounts from in-depth interviews (Yin, 2009). The researcher used qualitative case research to develop common patterns and themes for the perceptions of the participants through interview data (Creswell, 2014).

Participants

Participants in this study were elementary school teachers at a charter school in the southern part of Louisiana. The study school served about 300 students from grades K through fifth grades. The majority of students at the school came from low-income families with incomes below \$25,000 for a family of four. The school racial makeup consisted of a majority of African American students.

There were 25 teachers with one principal, one assistant principal, and one school counselor at the school. Participants included teachers who were experiencing behavior problems in their classroom and saw the need to increase academic achievement of all students in their classroom. The criteria for inclusion in the study was that the charter school teachers must have taught at the charter school for at least one year.

The researcher used a purposeful sampling method to select the participants for this study (Creswell, 2014). Purposeful sampling was based on the assumptions that the investigator wanted to ascertain participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to a particular research study (Creswell, 2014). Purposeful sampling means that the participants selected can purposefully form an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon of the study (Creswell, 2014). The researcher selected 10 participants for this study. The researcher collected information from each participant through open-ended interviews to identify patterns and common themes for the open-ended interviews. The purposeful sampling using Visual Basic software to select individual participants due to a large number of participants who might want to participant in the study (Creswell, 2014).

A sample size of 10 participants was thought to be sufficient to provide valid qualitative data as it can acquire data saturation (Merriam, 2009). The sample size of the qualitative study was derived from research on the adequacy of the sample size within qualitative data (Yin, 2009). The author suggested large sample sizes within qualitative studies leads to repetitiveness and is preventable following the concept of saturation. Saturation is a tool used in qualitative research to ensure that accuracy and quality is in the data collection to support the study. (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009).

The criteria for the participants were that they must have taught in the targeted charter school for one year. All teachers must hold a teaching certificate through the Louisiana Charter Association. The charter school teachers also had to be responsible for teaching students in a classroom setting. Participants selected were selected based on their response to a letter asking for volunteers for the study. All participants were asked to participate in the open-ended interview to explore charter school teachers' perceptions of disciplinary problems on academic achievement at the elementary school level.

Instruments

The researcher used open-ended interview questions to answer the research questions. Open-ended questions allowed the participants to include more information such as their attitudes, feelings, and understanding of the subject being discussed (Creswell, 2012). The researcher used a sequence of 10 open-ended questions to collect in-depth data from the charter school teachers on their experiences and perceptions of discipline practices in their classroom.

The interview questions were developed from the literature review section and the overarching research questions. The interview questions were field tested by a panel of experts in

the field of classroom discipline to review the interview protocol. This committee consisted of a behavior coach and a supervisor of education at the charter school. The selection of the committee was based on their experiences of dealing with discipline issues for students and providing training to charter school teachers on dealing with misbehavior in the classroom. The committee reviewed the interview questions and determined the appropriateness of the interview questions for the participants.

The researcher field-tested the interview questions by asking three teachers at the charter school to review the questions and provide feedback on the questions for the researcher. The three participants who participated in the field-testing did not participate in the research study. The questions allowed the participants to critically respond and relate several perspectives of their experiences in providing discipline to students in the classroom. The committee felt that the line of questions elicited the lived experiences of the charter school teachers and offered small suggested changes to the interview questions.

Procedures

The researcher first obtained permission to conduct the study from Nova Southeastern University IRB Committee. Next, contact was made with the target charter school principal to seek approval to interview the teachers. Contact was made with the participants through the charter school email system. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and asked for volunteers to participate. Elementary charter school teachers who showed interest in participating were asked to complete and sign the consent form. Interested participants were emailed or given consent forms to complete. The researcher contacted the selected participants to setup times and places to schedule each interview with the participants (Yin, 2009).

The individual interview location and time was set up with each participant to accommodate each of them. The researcher conducted the interviews after school hours in order to accommodate the teachers due to instruction time allowed at the charter school. The interviews contained open-ended questions for each of the participants and lasted from 30 to 45 minutes in length. The interviews began with the collecting of basic demographics such as gender, race, and years of teaching experience, grade level, and education level. The participants were then asked 10 open-ended interview questions (see Appendix B). The interviews with the participants were audio recorded and then transcribed for data interpretation. Field notes were taken during the interviews, in case of equipment failure and to record participants' non-verbal reactions to the interview questions. Participants were later asked to review their transcribed interviews and make changes or additional statements to their interview questions. The researcher assured and provided maximum anonymity for the participants by providing a number to identify them. Participants were afforded the option to choose not to participate during any questions and could terminate the interview at any time. Field notes were taken by the researcher. Open-ended interviews allowed the researcher to observe body language, voice intonation and facial expressions that were important to seeking thick and rich responses to the research questions by the participants (Merriam, 2005).

The researcher conducted member checking with each of the participants. Member checking in qualitative data collection is a technique used to help improve the credibility, accuracy, and transferability of the data collected in a study (Creswell, 2012). The researcher conducted member checking by transcribing the data collected from the participants and emailing it for the participants to check the accuracy of the interview. The participants had the opportunity to review their interview data and make corrections to ensure data accuracy.

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected through open-ended interview questions with each of the participants. The researcher used 10 open-ended interview questions to collect in-depth data from the teachers at the targeted charter elementary school about their perceptions and experiences of discipline problems and the effect it may have on academic achievement at the elementary school level. (see Appendix B). The 10 open-ended questions were used to gather information of charter school teachers at one school in Louisiana. The interviews were recorded and then analyzed from the transcribed transcripts.

Data Analysis

The researcher took all of the responses collected from the study and categorized, and coded the information. The next step was to put all interview responses into the qualitative software program to analyze the data. This was done to find common patterns and themes from the participants' open-ended interviews. Creswell (2014) noted that data analysis should go through a six-step process. These include: (a) preparing the data for analysis by organizing documents from the data collected and transcribing the text, (b) immersing into the data by reading and viewing it to gain the information needed from the interview transcription notes and other data, (c) coding the data into sections of meaningful chunks based on inferred key concepts, (d) using the coding of the data to infer patterns and themes from the data, (e) representing the themes through visual figures, and/or tables, and (f) interpreting the qualitative data for meaning from the participants (Creswell, 2014, p. 200).

The skill set of the researcher was critical to the successful completion of the case study. A good researcher should be able to interpret questions asked, be adaptable, flexible, and

unbiased (Yin, 2013). To ensure the quality of the current qualitative case study, measures were employed to protect the validity of the study (Yin, 2009). In this sense, credibility and truthfulness were obtained through the varied evidence sources, pattern matching, and reviews of case study data through data collection and analysis (Yin, 2009). The charter elementary school teachers' experiences and perceptions were categorized based on their interactions with respect to their views of problem behavior in the classroom and academic achievement for all students in the classroom.

Comprehensive and in-depth information was collected, reread, and documented from each individual participant as raw data (Patton, 2002). Common patterns, themes and answers in line with the problem and purpose of the study were identified. The researcher identified common patterns and themes through coding within the scope of the study. Each teacher was a separate case. The researcher analyzed the interview responses provided individually, in order to get a picture of that specific case. The analysis was used to answer the research questions. The researcher looked for commonalities between and among the teachers and drew conclusions in order to answer the research questions.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to the start of this research study and the data collection process, the researcher obtained the approval to conduct this study from Nova Southeastern University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This process helped to ensure that the researcher observed all of the ethical procedures and guidelines. The procedures for inclusion/exclusion and the invitation to participate in the study were not sent to the participants until IRB approval was secured. Included within the IRB application process was the approval for the intended interview protocol to ensure that the responses of the participants were relevant to the phenomena examined. The

researcher also obtained approval to conduct the study at the charter school site. In considering the researcher's proposal, the IRB used the protocols outlined in the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research 1979). This document provided standards to ensure the rights and safety of human subjects in a research study. In conducting the study, the researcher observed the three principles of respect for persons, beneficence and justice.

The principle of respect for persons required that participants be treated as autonomous agents (Creswell, 2012). The researcher worked to ensure that value was placed on each participant's actions and opinions. Participants also were given as much information as possible to help them make an informed decision as to whether they wanted to participate in the study. Participants were afforded opportunities to ask questions about the study and the researcher provided clarity and understanding as much as possible to the participants. Participants also were assured that they had the right to decline or withdraw from participation without fear of any negative repercussions, which is referred to as informed consent (Creswell, 2012). The principle of beneficence is the act of ensuring that harm is minimized and benefits are maximized (Creswell, 2012). The researcher made it clear that the work would not harm or injure anyone, and the participants were assured that adequate provision was made to protect their privacy (Yin, 2009). The principle of justice, or fairness, required that there was equity with regard to risks, burdens, and benefits of participation in the study (Yin, 2009). The researcher worked to ensure that there was no invasion of privacy and that the research protocols used safeguarded participant identity, particularly if the data collected related in any way to children (Rogers & Meek Lange, 2013).

Participants selected for this study were asked to sign an informed consent form which verified their agreement to participate in the study, and which outlined all of the protocols that were involved. Participants received a copy of the forms they signed. To ensure protection of identity, participants' names were replaced with a number. All of the information that was obtained was securely kept and accessible only by the researcher. Any documents kept on the computer have been password protected and only the researcher can access those files. All of the data collected during the interviews will be kept for three years after the study and will then be destroyed.

Trustworthiness

This research study employed multiple verification procedures to establish trustworthiness (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2005). Creswell (2012) noted that trustworthiness is a demonstration that the evidence for the results in a study is sound and make a strong argument in the result (p. 56). This was done by following the guidelines as outlined in the research on qualitative case study design (Creswell, 2012). First, the researcher established the use of an audit checking process. The audit checking described the data collection and analysis processes from the beginning of data collection to reporting the findings in the study. The researcher kept a journal to make sure all steps in the data collection and the analysis process were followed. The researcher used member checking with the participants by sending the interview back to them to check the data in order to make sure of the accuracy of the data collected from the participants. This process enhanced the credibility and accuracy of the research study results (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2005). The researcher provided each participant with copies of the transcribed interviews via email and asked that they review the materials for misconceptions or any edits they wanted to include in the document.

Potential Research Bias

At the time of the study, the researcher was a Behavior Strategist in the public school district in Louisiana. The researcher's responsibilities included providing behavior support to special education teachers, assisting teachers with developing behavior plans for students identified with a disability if that student is exhibiting behavior concerns. The researcher worked closely with school administration to provide alternatives to suspension when possible. The researcher was responsible for making sure that PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Support) was being implemented at the school. At the time of the study, the researcher served as the PBIS district monitor for six schools in the public school system. The researcher also provided counseling services to several students within the district. The researcher served as one of the district trainers on handling students that present challenging behaviors. The researcher was not employed with the charter school system, but worked for a public school system, having been employed with the school system for 18 years.

To reduce potential research bias, the researcher maintained a personal journal to acknowledge potential biases throughout all phases of the research study. The researcher included information on the impact of the study on the participants and the researcher, as well as possible biases and ethical issues that may arise at any phase on the research study (Creswell, 2012). Yin (2009) noted that reflective notes should be used to record the researcher's biases, personal thoughts, and impressions throughout the research study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore charter school elementary teachers' perceptions of disciplinary problems on academic achievement in a charter school in the southern part of Louisiana. The research site was a medium size charter school. The school serves about 300 students from grades K through six grades. The majority of the students at the school come from low-income families with incomes below \$25,000 for a family of four. The school racial makeup consisted of a majority of African American students. The number of teachers at the targeted school consisted of 25 with one principal, one assistant principal, and one school counselor. The study utilized a qualitative approach with open-ended interview questions. The researcher sampled 10 teachers at the school of focus.

The central research questions that guided the study was: What are the perceptions of charter school teachers about the impact of disciplinary problems on the academic achievement of students?

The following are sub-questions were addressed:

1. What are charter school teachers' perceptions of disciplinary problems elementary teachers face in their classroom?
2. What are charter school teachers' perceptions of the practice of out-of-school suspension to remediate short-term behavior problems of students?
3. What are charter school teachers' perceptions of the impact disciplinary problems have on students' academic achievement?

4. What are some strategies that charter school teachers are implementing to reduce discipline problems in the classroom and to increase academic achievement?

Participants Demographics

Participants in this study were elementary school teachers at a charter school in the southern part of Louisiana. The study school serves about 300 students from grades K through fifth grades. The majority of students at the school come from low-income families with incomes below \$25,000 for a family of four. The school racial makeup consisted of a majority of African American students. There are 25 teachers with one principal, one assistant principal, and one school counselor at the school. Participants included teachers who were experiencing behavior problems in their classroom and saw the need to increase academic achievement of all students in their classroom. The criteria for inclusion in the study was that the charter school teachers must have taught at the charter school for at least one year.

Table 1

Demographic Profiles of Participants (N=10)

Participant Code	Position	Gender	# of Years Teaching at Charter School
Participant #01	Teacher	Female	3
Participant #02	Teacher	Female	4
Participant #03	Teacher	Female	2
Participant #04	Teacher	Female	2
Participant #05	Teacher	Female	2
Participant #06	Teacher	Female	3
Participant #07	Teacher	Female	4
Participant #08	Teacher	Female	3
Participant #09	Teacher	Male	4
Participant #10	Teacher	Male	3

Themes Within the Study

The researcher used Atlas.ti 7 (Scientific Software Development, 2017), which allowed the researcher to electronically scan texts for recurring terms which are assigned codes in order to search for patterns and themes. The themes were then re-organized to form the identified thematic labels for the data analysis for the study. The coded data identified using the Atlas.ti 7 program were reviewed to ensure accurate representation and understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The categories of themes were used to establish the patterns and themes of the study. Finally, vague thematic descriptions were condensed and presented in more descriptive terms.

The data analysis process generated themes critical to the research questions, namely: (1) discipline problems teachers face, (2) handling discipline problems in the classroom, (3) difference in male and female teachers on discipline, (4) discipline practices of older teachers, (5) out-of-school suspensions to address discipline problems, (6) impact of discipline on academic achievement, (7) strategies to reduce discipline problems to increase academic achievement, (8) discipline strategies to aid parents, (9) professional development training for teachers, and (10) classroom management strategies. The themes that emerged from the thematic categories were then compared to elicit understanding concerning the perceptions of charter school elementary teachers' perceptions of disciplinary problems on academic achievement in a charter school in the southern part of Louisiana.

Research question one. What are charter school teachers' perceptions of disciplinary problems elementary teachers face in their classroom?

Four themes emerged that were prevalent to charter school teachers' perceptions of disciplinary problems that they faced in their classrooms. The themes that were highlighted for this research question were: (1) discipline problems teachers face, (2) handling discipline problems in the classroom, (3) difference in male and female teachers on discipline, and (4) discipline practices of older teachers.

Theme 1: Discipline problems teachers face. The researcher asked the charter school elementary teachers to share their thoughts and views on discipline problems they face in the classroom at their school. This theme was determined from the transcripts of the participants from this research study. For the purposes of this study, only the sub-themes supported by five or more participants have been discussed (Yin, 2009) (See Table 2).

Table 1

Theme 1: Discipline Problems Teachers Face

Sub-themes	Number of Participants
Talking out of term	6
Disrupts others learning	6
Talking back to the teacher	5
Out of seat behavior	4
Use of profanity	2
Teachers discipline more than teaching	2
Low academic academics	2
Cannot obtain records	1
Run the school	1

Nine sub-themes were found consistent with the transcripts of the charter school teachers for this research question. The sub-themes noted the teachers' views on discipline problems they face from day to day in their classrooms. The top three recommendations were: (5) talking out without permission, (6) disrupts others learning, and (7) talking back to the teacher. Participant #1: "The problems that I typically see in my classroom is that a lot of children are talking, and not focused. A lot of them do not want to follow directions. They aren't prepared, they don't have the things that they need. For instance, they sometimes come to class without a pencil."

Participant #4: "The problems teachers face is children acting out which is usually related to their low academic levels and not understanding the instructional material. The charter school

teacher indicated that she doesn't have access to the child's previous school records. "The students are like a bundle of apples, they all look the same but you don't know what you are getting without having access to their previous school records". The teacher usually finds out the child is struggling after the child has acted out and disrupted the learning environment.

Participant #2: "The problem I see mostly is students talking back to authority."

Participant #9: "The problems I face are students talking without permission, getting out of their seat without permission, hitting other students, and inappropriate talking to teacher and peers which includes using profanity."

Participant #6: "The teacher is correcting more than she is teaching. The students are off task and not focused. The students are academically low."

Theme 2: Handling discipline problems in the classroom. Next, the researcher asked the charter school teachers to describe ways they were able to handle discipline problem in their classroom. The discussion focuses on the sub-themes supported by five or more participants related to their views of handling discipline problems in their classrooms. (See Table 3).

Table 3

Theme 2: Handling Discipline Problems in the Classroom

Sub-themes	Number of Participants
New teachers are not able to discipline students	7
New teachers need discipline training	7
Teachers need to say what they mean	5
Need more discipline training	4
Seek outside resources on discipline	1

Theme 2 highlighted the thoughts and views of the charter school teachers on how they handle discipline problems in their classroom. There were five sub-themes identified by the charter school teachers related to this theme, and the top recommendations were: (a) new teachers are not able to discipline students, (b) new teachers need discipline training, and (c) teachers need to say what they mean. Participant #7: “New teachers are not able to handle discipline problems. They need to learn more techniques though. They need training on how to handle certain discipline problems. The key is learning their students, so they can give each student what that student needs.”

Participant #5: “New teachers need more training with properly handling discipline problems. Some of the new teachers fear disciplining children because they don’t know what lines they can cross. New teachers need more support. Some teachers withhold treats, write them up, and call parents for no reason.”

Participant #2: “New teachers have to figure out which discipline strategies work best for them. This is something you learn through trial and error. New teachers are taught how to teach academics in school but not really taught how to handle discipline problems in school. You get your training on the job when you get that child that has behavior problems.”

Participant #10: “New teachers can handle discipline problems and they have received enough training to be able to handle discipline problems. The teacher needs to say what they mean and mean what they say. New teachers need to be firm but fair and they will be fine.”

Participant #9: “I feel that new teachers have difficulty with handling discipline problems. The new teachers have not been exposed to students that exhibit behavior problems. The new teacher has not been taught this information in school. The new teacher is at a disadvantage because they have to learn by on the job training. A lot of the teachers here come from different professions such as business, etc. they have gotten these alternative certifications and have not been taught how to deal with discipline problems.”

Theme 3: Differences in male and female teachers on discipline. Next, the researcher asked the charter school teachers their views on the differences in male and female teachers’ approach to discipline in their classroom. The sub-themes supported by five or more of participants form the basis for the discussion on this theme. (See Table 4).

Table 4

Theme 3: Differences in Male and Female Teachers on Discipline

Sub-themes	Number of Participants
Students respect male teachers	6
Male teachers are more stern	5
Female teachers give more warnings	5
I do not think there is a difference	4
Female teachers voice is lighter than male teachers	3

Theme 3 highlighted the charter school teachers' views on the differences in male and female teachers on discipline. There were five sub-themes identified by the charter school teachers related to this theme, and the top responses were: (1) students respect male teachers, (2) male teachers are sterner, and (3) female teachers give more warnings. Participant #6: "Some Male teachers don't know how to deal with behavior issues. They don't know how to discipline. Females can manage behavior if they have good classroom management skills."

Participants #7: "I don't think there is a difference. People seem to think that the students respect the male teachers more. I don't think there is a difference. I think male and female teachers are both capable of handling behavior issues. I find that female teachers fuss and scream more and male teachers just can give a stern look and the students usually will self- correct."

Participant #4: "I am a tough female. I am strict but I'm fair. The students give the male teachers automatic respect just because they are male. I find that female teachers don't get automatic respect they have to earn it."

Participant#1: “I believe that a lot of them behave better for male teachers because they’re sterner, and they offer a father figure within the classroom. The female teachers typically give more warnings and opportunities for the child to behave.”

Participant #8: “I think that male teachers tend to be more assertive, and typically thrive off of their masculinity. Males seem to be respected more, I think that it is the tone that they say things. Female teachers talk light in voice, and give more chances. We keep giving warnings.”

Theme 4: Discipline practices of older teachers. Next, the researcher asked the charter school teachers their views on discipline practices of older teachers. The sub-themes supported by five or more participants are discussed below. (See Table 5).

Table 5

Theme 4: Discipline Practices of Older Teachers

Sub-themes	Number of Participants
Older teachers can handle discipline problems	8
Experienced dealing with discipline problems	5
Handle problems inside the classroom	5
Older teachers establish classroom rules	2
Older teachers are very strict	2

Theme 4 highlighted the charter school teachers’ views of discipline practices of older teachers in the classroom. There were six sub-themes identified by the charter school teachers related to this theme, and the top responses were: (1) older teachers can handle discipline

problems, (2) handle problems inside the classroom, and (3) experienced in dealing with discipline problems. Participant #10: “The older teachers do a great job at handling discipline problems. Their behavior usually precedes them. They keep the children in their class. They are firm but fair with the children. Older teachers are strict and hold the children accountable for their behavior.”

Participant #3: “It was different back in the day the older teachers handled the behavior problems in their class they didn’t send the children to the office. Punishment needs to come back to the classroom and parents need to be held accountable as well.”

Participant #9: “I think that 90% of the older teachers handle discipline problems very well. I am an older seasoned teacher and I use a firm voice and I apply rules to all the students. We were taught to handle discipline problems in our class and not send the child to the office.”

Participant #4: “They are experienced with dealing with academics and discipline problems. They use that old school approach. They demand parental involvement and hold the parents and child responsible for their behavior.”

Participant #5: “Older teachers are more seasoned. They are used to discipline the students. They usually handle the problems inside of their classroom instead of sending the student to the office. They issue rewards and consequences inside of their classroom. They have established rules, routines and procedures which helps with alleviating discipline problems.”

Research question two. What are charter school teachers’ perceptions of the practice of out-of-school suspension to remediate short-term behavior problems of students?

One theme was prevalent to charter school teachers’ perceptions of the practice of out-of-school suspension to remediate short-term behavior problems of students. The theme that was

highlighted to answer this question was: (5) out-of- school suspensions to address discipline problems.

Theme 5: Out of school suspensions to address discipline problems. The researcher asked the charter school teachers their views on the use of-out-school suspension to address discipline problems in their classroom. The sub-themes supported by five or more of participants are discussed below. (See Table 6).

Table 6

Theme 5: Out of School Suspensions to Address Discipline Problems

Sub-themes	Number of Participants
Out of school suspension does not solve the discipline problem	6
It does not work	5
Most students return to school with the same problem	5
It works sometimes	2
It gives teachers a break with problem behavior	2

Theme 5 highlighted charter school teachers' views on out-of-school suspensions to address discipline problems. There were five sub-themes identified by the charter school teachers related to this theme, and the top responses were: (1) our-of-school suspension does not solve discipline problems, (2) it does not work, and (3) most students return with the same problems. Participant #2: "I think out of school suspension is necessary because it inconveniences the parent. As a result of the parent being inconvenienced they tend to discipline their child and take their child's behavior more seriously. It does not remediate or reduce short term behavior

problems. Most times the child returns doing the same behaviors. It does give the teacher a short break from having to deal with the child though.”

Participant #6: “Out of school suspension doesn’t help the student. It doesn’t remediate short term behavior problems. Maybe they can have in school suspension instead. OSS is like a babysitting job. The students don’t do the work when at the discipline center.”

Participant #7: “Out of school suspension is good for the teacher and the classroom but not good for the student. Out of school suspension gives the teacher a break from having to deal with that student for a short period of time. It gives the students in the classroom a break from having to miss out on instruction while the teacher deals with behavior problems. Out of school suspension does not remediate nor reduce behavior problems. In most cases the student doesn’t go to the discipline center and out of school suspension becomes a break for the student. The student usually returns to school and still continues the problematic behavior.”

Participant #9: “I feel that out of school suspension does not work. If the parent allows the child to stay home and play games all day out of school suspension is not effective. I prefer in school suspension because students will have to attend school and have to complete all of their school work. Out of school suspension makes the child fall behind academically and does not remediate their behavior. The child usually comes back to school doing the same wrong behavior. The child needs to be taught how to behave appropriately instead of sent away from school.”

Participant #8: “Sometimes out of school suspension is necessary, it depends on the behavior. If a child is fighting, hitting the teacher, or displaying aggressive behavior, then the

child deserves out of school suspension. If the parent backs up the school, then out of school suspension can be effective.”

Research question three. What are charter school teachers’ perceptions of the impact disciplinary problems have on students’ academic achievement?

Two themes were prevalent related to charter school teachers’ perceptions of the impact disciplinary problems have on students’ academic achievement. The themes highlighted in this research question were: (6) impact of discipline on academic achievement, and (7) strategies to reduce discipline problems to increase academic achievement.

Theme 6: Impact of discipline on academic achievement. The researcher asked the charter school teachers their views on the impact of discipline on academic achievement at their charter school. The sub-themes supported by five or more of participants are discussed below (See Table 7).

Table 7

Theme 6: Impact of Discipline on Academic Achievement

Sub-themes	Number of Participants
Interfere with academic achievement in the classroom	5
Impacts academic achievement a great deal	5
Miss out on classroom instruction	3
Stops students from learning	2
Stops teachers from teaching students	1

Theme 6 highlighted the charter school teachers' views on the impact of discipline on academic achievement at their charter school. There were five sub-themes identified by the teachers related to this theme, and the top responses were: (1) interfere with academic achievement in the classroom, and (2) impacts academic achievement a great deal. Participant #1: "Discipline problems affect learning taking place in the classroom. It stops the teacher from teaching, and other students from being able to learn."

Participant # 3: "Discipline problems impact student academic achievement. If the children can't behave they should be suspended and not allowed to make up their work. They should not be able to stay at school and stop other students from being able to learn."

Participant#4: "Yes Disciplinary problems have an impact on student achievement. Stopping instruction to deal with behavior problems stops student achievement. It stops students from learning and getting what they need. I try not to stop my instruction. I am trying to make my class more student centered. The students begin to monitor each other because they don't want to miss out on instruction."

Participant #5: "Disciplinary problems interfere with academic achievement. When the teacher has to stop teaching to focus on behavior by calling parents, writing student up, etc. it stops the learning from taking place. When the teacher can teach without the distraction of behavior problems she is able to keep the students engaged and impart more knowledge into the students."

Participant #10: "Discipline impacts student achievement a great deal and in a major way. When the teacher has to stop teaching to address discipline problems the students miss out on

classroom instruction. Dealing with behavior problems interferes with instruction it takes away from instructional time.”

Theme 7: Strategies to reduce discipline problems to increase achievement. Next, the researcher asked the charter school teachers to provide their views on strategies to reduce discipline problems in the classroom to increase academic achievement at their charter school. The sub-themes supported by five or more of participants are discussed below (See Table 8).

Theme 7 highlighted the charter school teachers’ strategies to reduce discipline problems to increase academic achievement. There were five sub-themes identified by the counselors related to this theme.

Table 8

Theme 7: Strategies to Reduce Discipline Problems to Increase Achievement

Sub-themes	Number of Participants
We use positive behavior and instruction supports (PBIS)	7
Behavior interventionist	5
Provide incentives for good behavior	3
Provide small group instruction	2
We received training on behavior	1

The top responses were: (1) we use positive behavior and instruction supports (PBIS), and (2) we have a behavior interventionist. Participant #9: “We are taught strategies to keep students on task. We use clap, clap to make sure we have everyone’s attention. We teach walking around so we can be in close proximity to the students to keep them on task. We received a

training titled Teach like a Champion. I feel that if the strategies we were taught in “Teach Like a Champion” are used with fidelity the strategies do work. We have received training and we use small group instruction and the use of 2 adults in the classroom to help with discipline and academic achievement.”

Participant #3: “We use free dress passes, sock hops and incentives for good behavior. We use the PBIS program to motivate the children to behave better.”

Participant #6: “The strategies we use in our class are positive motivation. We remind our students they are scholars and are college bound. We give them classroom helper jobs to reinforce responsible behavior. We provide rewards and incentives through the use of PBIS. We provide centers and small group instruction to reinforce academic deficits. We also use the support of our behavior interventionist as needed for behavior problems, so instruction can continue.”

Participant #8: “They are using PBIS. They have both a teacher and a teacher aid in the classroom, which helps with close monitoring. They provide small group instruction, and use the TOR moderator as needed. We provide positive reinforcement such as “shark fins”, sock hops, etc.”

Research question four. What are some strategies that charter school teachers are implementing to reduce discipline problems in the classroom and to increase academic achievement?

Three themes were prevalent to charter school teachers’ perceptions on strategies that teachers are implementing to reduce discipline problems in the classroom and to increase academic achievement. The themes highlighted in this research question: (8) discipline

strategies to aid parents, (9) professional develop training for teachers, and (10) classroom management strategies.

Theme 8: Discipline strategies to aid parents. The researcher asked the charter school teachers to provide information on some discipline strategies they provide to aid parents to teacher their children. The sub-themes supported by four or more participants are discussed below (See Table 9).

Table 9

Theme 8: Discipline Strategies to Aid Parents

Sub-themes	Number of Participants
Need to communicate discipline problems to parents	5
School should provide workshops for parents	4
Parents need to support the teachers on discipline	2
Parents should use the same discipline strategies at home	2
Parents should take away extra-curricular activities	1

Theme 8 highlighted the charter school teachers' views on strategies for parents on discipline strategies they can provide their children. There were five sub-themes identified by the charter school teachers related to this theme. The top responses were: (1) need to communicate discipline problems to parents, and (2) school should provide workshops for parents. Participant #7: "Parents should use the strategy of timeout to reflect and think about your actions. The

parents should use the same strategies that the school is using on the student at home. Home and school should be doing the same strategies to address discipline.”

Participant #2: “The school can provide parent workshops to teach the parents different strategies they can use on their children. The problem is that when the school offers parent workshops the parents don’t attend. Parents should take away extra-curricular activities and their games or T.V. when the child gets in trouble at school.”

Participant #4: “Immediately calling the parent is a strategy that works. Home school communication is a strategy the school can provide to parents.”

Participant #9: “We need to provide workshops on following directions and strategies used in the school.”

Participant #10: “Parents need to be firm with their children and teach them to listen to the teacher even if they don’t always agree with the teacher. The children tell the teacher you aren’t my mama and you aren’t my daddy. The parent needs to support the teacher and make their child respect and listen to the teacher.”

Theme 9: Professional development training for teachers. Next, the researcher asked the charter school teachers about areas of professional development and training on discipline for the classroom with students to increase academic achievement. The sub-themes supported by four or more of participants are discussed below. (See Table 10).

Table 10

Theme 9: Professional Development Training for Teachers

Sub-themes	Number of Participants
Non-violence crisis intervention training	5
Champ training	4
One the job training	2
School did not provide training	1
We need more professional development on discipline	1

Theme 9 highlighted the charter school teachers views of professional development training needed for teachers on discipline strategies for the classroom. There were four sub-themes identified by the charter school teachers related to this theme, and the top responses were: (a) non-violence crisis intervention training, and (b) Champ training professional development on classroom management. Participant #1: “I did not receive any training.”

Participant #3: “Non- violent crisis intervention training. It taught me to diffuse behavior problems early instead of waiting until it has gotten out of hand.” Whereas, Participant #5: “I have received Non- Violent Crisis Intervention training which focuses on managing student disruptive behavior.”

Participant #7: “I received a training called teach like a champion. I also received a training titled Champs.”

Finally, Participant #6: I learned from on the job training. School didn't teach me how to deal with problem behavior.”

Theme 10: Classroom management strategies. Next, the researcher asked the charter school teachers to provide their views on some classroom management strategies they use in their classroom to reduce discipline problems and to increase academic achievement. The sub-themes supported by five or more of participants are discussed below (See Table 11).

Table 11

Theme 10: Classroom Management Strategies

Sub-themes	Number of Participants
I use Champ Program in my classroom	5
Positive Behavior and Instructional Support (PBIS)	5
Attended non-violent crisis intervention training	1
Classroom management training is needed	1
I read a book on classroom management	1

Theme 10 highlighted the charter school teachers' views on classroom management strategies needed for their classroom to reduce discipline problems and to increase academic achievement. There were four sub-themes identified by the teachers related to this theme, and the top responses were: (1) Champ Program in my classroom, and (2) Positive Behavior and Instructional Support (PBIS). Participant #5: “I read a book by Harry Wong titled First Days of

School. It was very helpful with respect to classroom management, procedures, routines, transitions, etc. All these things help keep classroom management and behavior issues under control.” Whereas, Participants #6: “I received training called Teach Like a Champion.”

Participants #7: “I received a training called teach like a champion. I always received a training titled Champs.”

Participants #2: “I attended PBIS training which taught me how to reward positive behaviors and put interventions in place for students who have behavior issues.”

Participants #3: “I attended Non-violent crisis intervention training. It is a good program.”

Finally, Participant #10: “I learned how to deal with behavior problems by attending different in-services on behavior. I also learned how to deal with behavior from class courses I took while I was working on my degree. I attended training on PBIS also.”

Summary of Findings

Several themes emerged from this qualitative study to explore charter school teachers’ perceptions of disciplinary problems on academic achievement at the elementary school level at a charter school in the southern part of Louisiana. A qualitative case study design was used to obtain perspectives of charter school elementary teachers on their view of disciplinary practices in their classrooms and the impact on the academic achievement of students in their classroom.

The data analysis process generated themes critical to the research questions, namely: (1) discipline problems teachers face, (2) handling discipline problems in the classroom, (3) difference in male and female teachers on discipline, (4) discipline practices of older teachers,

(5) out-of-school suspensions to address discipline problems, (6) impact of discipline on academic achievement, (7) strategies to reduce discipline problems to increase academic achievement, (8) discipline strategies to aid parents, (9) professional development training for teachers, and (10) classroom management strategies. The themes that emerged from the thematic categories were then compared to elicit understanding concerning the perceptions of charter school elementary teachers' perceptions of disciplinary problems on academic achievement in a charter school in the southern part of Louisiana. Chapter five will provide the reader with a discussion of the findings from this research study.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview of the Applied Dissertation

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore charter school teachers' perceptions of disciplinary problems on academic achievement at the elementary school level at a charter school in the southern part of Louisiana. A qualitative case study design was used to obtain perspectives of charter school elementary teachers on their view of disciplinary practices in their classrooms and the impact on the academic achievement of students in their classroom.

The qualitative case study data analysis began during data collection. Consistent themes of the data were achieved through analysis of individual interviews and the literature review. Recurring perspectives and themes across multiple sources increased the validity of the study until saturation of information was obtained (Yin, 2009).

Summary and Interpretation of the Findings

Theme 1: Discipline problems teachers face. The findings regarding some discipline problems that teachers face revealed many teachers identified students talking out of turn, disrupting others' learning in the classroom, talking back to the teacher, the use of profanity, and out of seat behaviors. Researchers noted that schools have attempted to modify their approaches to student behaviors, misbehaviors, reactions, and preventions based on the idea of systematically isolating some groups of students due to the increase of behavior problems in the classroom (Nash et al., 2016). Discipline programs such as the Positive Behavior Intervention Support program have used positive reward systems, incentives, students' promotion, and the teaching of social skills to influence students' behaviors and have shown some promise in

curbing discipline problems. Some students' behavior problems persist in many schools throughout the school systems (Hill & Flores, 2012).

Disciplinary issues and the lack of discipline for many students has been a pervasive problem in many schools in the United States (Goodman, 2013; Krause, 2014; Nash, Schliesser, & Scarr, 2016). Several researchers have identified the lack of discipline as the most serious problem facing the nation's education system in many school districts (Goodman, 2015; Krause, 2013). Local school districts, state government, and the United States Department of Education have spent a considerable amount of money, time, and effort, on discipline programs to reduce the number of students facing discipline problems but the result of this problem still remains high in many areas both on a local and national scale (Noltemeyer, Word, & McLoughlin, 2015).

Wright (2013) reported that as a result of the zero-tolerance policy for behavior incidences in some schools in southern states like North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia reported a 27% increase in long term suspensions for students with disabilities; a 29% increase in short term suspensions, and a 54% increase in expulsion rates for some students. The zero-tolerance policy is a school systems policy that mandates consequences or punishments for offenses that are intended to be applied regardless of the behavior situational context or the seriousness of the behavior in school or the classroom (Russell, & Losen, 2016).

Theme 2: Handling discipline problems in the classroom. The overall findings on charter school teachers being able to handle discipline problems in the classroom revealed that new teachers are not able to handle many discipline problems in their classroom. New teachers at the school need more discipline training on strategies and techniques on solving problem behavior in their classroom. In addition, many charter school teachers need to say what they mean and mean what they say to students when students exhibit problem behavior in their

classroom. Grainue, McGilloway, and Hyand (2017) noted that classroom management is one of the most important, yet challenging aspects of teachers. Appropriate and effective management of the classroom environment has been shown to be crucial to students' well-being and adjustment. The absence of effective classroom management can be detrimental to the development of students displaying higher levels of aggressive and disruptive behavior in the classroom. Thus, in-service training on behavior and classroom management strategies are needed to help enhance teachers' classroom management skills and promote student well-being in the classroom. The present study revealed that new teachers can benefit from in-service training techniques to help them deal with solving behavior problems in their classrooms.

Theme 3: Differences in male and female teachers on discipline. The overall finding on the differences in male and female teachers on discipline revealed that many students in the charter school respect male teachers' more than female teachers. Many teachers found that male teachers are sterner with the students and that many female teachers give more warnings before disciplining students in their classrooms. Finally, some of the teachers felt that there are no differences in the way male and female teachers provide discipline to students at the charter school. Research by Oplatka and Atias (2007) reported that there is a difference between men and women in regard to managing the classroom and views on disciplining students. The aim for both genders was to use effective discipline for all students. The researchers noted that these differences can be attributed to socialization patterns and the life experiences of the individual. Females seem to be more verbal in their discipline views while men seem to be more direct in their approach to discipline.

Theme 4: Discipline practices of older teachers. The overall findings on discipline practices of older teachers revealed that older teachers are able to handle most discipline

problems in the school. They have more experience dealing with discipline problems. In addition, older teachers tend to handle their discipline problem inside the classroom instead of sending the student to the office. Further, older teachers have more established classroom rules that students must follow. Palumbo and Sanacove (2007) noted that classroom experiences need to be the most successful they can be for all students in the classroom, especially for those who are disadvantaged. To achieve this goal, classroom management is important in the classroom for discipline and effective learning. It is the open door that good teaching must walk through to establish effective discipline and good teaching. New teachers need to learn these concepts to be effective in the classroom. While older teachers have obtained most of these concepts, there is a need for school districts to provide more training for new and older teachers to provide effective classroom management to all students in their classroom.

Theme 5: Out-of- school suspensions to address discipline problems. The overall findings on out-of-school suspensions to address discipline problems revealed that many teachers felt that out-of-school suspension does not solve the discipline problems in the school. Most students return to school with the same discipline problem they had before being suspended. Some of the teachers felt that out-of-school suspension gives teachers a break with the problem behavior.

Out-of-school suspensions are used in many school education programs and in zero tolerance environments. Both out-of-school suspension and zero tolerance involve the removal of a student for violations that range in frequency and severity (Cornell & Lovegrove, 2012). The use of suspensions, no matter how small is a concern among stakeholders and educators who noted that suspended students are at greater risk of experiencing psychosocial problems and academic problems throughout their lives (Cornell et al., 2012). This may include academic

failure and student dropout, disengagement from school and from employment, negative relationships among peers, adults and authority figures, crime, delinquency and engagement in risky behaviors (Anyon et al., 2014; Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009). Stearns and Glennie (2006) noted that many school administrators often resort to suspension because they want to appease frustrated students, parents, faculty and other staff members who believe that there are no other alternatives that would bring about a change in the learning environment of the student and in the classroom (Stearns et al., 2006).

Several researchers (Hill et al, 2014; Ryoo & Hong, 2016) are concerned with the disparity between minority and majority racial percentages for out-of-school suspensions and the ratio of suspension rates between general education and students with disabilities remain disproportionate (Ryoo et al., 2016). According to Anyon et al. (2014), there is a significant disparity in the types of students who face suspensions the most in a school. The authors' research revealed that students with disabilities, low-income students and students of color, especially Black and Latino boys, were twice as likely as their white peers to be suspended and expelled. It was also revealed that these students are more harshly disciplined than others are, often receiving twice the amount of time for suspension, and often more readily expelled as the first act of discipline in many school districts (Anyon et al., 2014). Suspensions are thought to be one of the primary factors in student disconnection from school (Balfanz, Byrnes & Fox, 2012).

Theme 6: Impact of discipline on academic achievement. The overall findings from the theme on the impact of discipline on academic achievement at the charter school revealed that some teachers felt that discipline problems interfered with academic achievement in the

classroom. Many students at the school missed out on classroom instruction and discipline problems in the classroom stop some students from learning the classroom materials.

Alsubaie (2015) reported on educational leadership and common discipline issues of elementary school students and how to deal with discipline issues in the classroom. The author noted that discipline issues are obstacles towards students learning in an elementary school setting. Discipline issues are factors that can have a negative effect on students' behavior in the classroom. Teachers should provide effective techniques and foster relationships to build and maintain a trustful environment in the classroom for all students. The leadership of the teacher and the administration can have positive or negative effect on the behavior of students. Therefore, teachers should use good methods of communication between students and teachers to help all in creating a positive learning environment and reduce the behavioral issues established by students that can slow down the pace of academic learning in the classroom (Alsubaie, 2015; Goodman, 2013).

Theme 7: Strategies to reduce discipline problems to increase academic achievement. The overall finding from the theme on strategies to reduce discipline problems in the classroom to increase academic achievement revealed that the school uses the program Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) as a strategy for all teachers to implement in the school to reduce problem behavior and to increase academic achievement in the classroom. In addition, the school uses a behavior interventionist to work with some students in the school who have severe behavior problems. Many teachers at the charter school provide incentives to students for good behavior. Finally, some teachers provide small group instruction to reduce problem behavior in the classroom in order to increase academic achievement.

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) has been used to reduce problem behavior in the classroom and to increase academic achievement. Several school districts across the United States have adopted the positive behavior support model (PBS). This model was adapted because many discipline programs have been ineffective in reducing misbehavior in the classroom, high rates of suspensions for many students, and the expulsions rates (Sugai & Anderson, 2010). PBS has been used in over 14,000 schools across the United States (Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010). This model involved student expectations coupled with student training of exactly what the positive expectation behavior will look like at the student level (Sugai & Anderson, 2010).

Research indicated that many schools that employed PBS for problem behavior have prevented or reduced many office discipline referrals by 25% to 50% and have increase the academic achievement of it students (Farrell et al., 2016). Along with student expectations come the positive reactions to those properly performed and the negative responses that will incur with student infractions (Farrell, 2016). When a student meets the targeted expectations, the teacher or school staff member will note the student's success with a positive reinforcement (Farrell et al 2016).

Theme 8: Discipline strategies to aid parents. The overall findings for the theme on discipline strategies to aid parents revealed that there is a need for communication with parents on the status of their child from the charter school. The charter school should provide some workshops on discipline strategies to aid parents with discipline issues with their children. More parents need to support the teachers when their child is facing discipline issues at school and in the classroom. Finally, parents should use the same discipline strategies at home that the teachers use at the charter school.

Goodman (2013) noted that teachers complain of the lack of or an inadequate response from parents when contacted about their child's poor performance and misbehavior in school. Further, teachers often complained of the lack of effort or change in the behavior of students even after parents have been informed of their child's inappropriate behavior. Many teachers question whether these parents and sometimes administration gave serious regard to the information teachers relay to them regarding the misbehaviors of many students.

Bell (2009) reported on a study that was conducted by the University of Houston with 1,006 parents in Texas and ranking their top reasons for choosing their school. These were: test scores, discipline, school racial or ethnic characteristics, and location, the teaching of moral values or safety. The researchers wanted to know whether parent preferences differed across racial groups. They found that parents across the entire sample chose discipline and teaching of moral values as two of their top three reasons for sending their child to charter schools. White parents were the only group that rated test scores most often as their most important reasons. African American parents rated test scores second to the teaching of moral values as most important and Hispanic parents did not rank test scores in the top three at all and rated discipline as the most important reasons for sending their children to charter schools.

Theme 9: Professional development training for teachers. The overall findings from the theme on professional development training for teachers revealed that teachers at the charter school felt the need for more professional development training on discipline strategies for use in the classroom. Some programs that many teachers listed were non-violence crisis intervention, and Champ training. Although the teachers felt the need for more training about classroom management, some expressed that the school did not provide enough training overall, for all teachers at the charter school.

A challenge of implementing research based practices and training in schools about classroom management is resistance to a discussion about more proactive approaches to student discipline (Tanner, 2017). In many schools, teachers and administrators are entrenched in the authoritarian practices, which do not work in the best interests of many children facing discipline issues in school systems (Tanner, 2017). The implementation of proactive discipline practices in schools requires adults to shift away from the old and out dated approach to student discipline (Tanner, 2017). This shift in consciousness requires teachers not to be dismissive of students' thoughts or feelings but to consider these when students are facing discipline problems in the classroom (Banks, 2014; Tanner, 2017).

Theme 10: Classroom management strategies. The overall findings from the theme on classroom management strategies reveal that the teachers used various classroom management strategies to manage their classroom. Some of these include the Champ Program, PBIS, and Non-violent Crisis Intervention. One teacher noted that they read a book on classroom management and the book helped them with discipline issues in their classroom. Researchers noted that classroom management has been shown to be the most common concern among public and private school teachers in this 21th century (Gordon, Edwards, & Cushman, 2015; Postholm, 2013). Effective classroom management requires that teachers use a variety of knowledge, strategies, and skills that will allow teachers to structure their classroom environment, establish rules and procedures, develop relationships with students, and to maintain attention and engagement in academic activities for all students in the classroom (Gordon et al., 2015). If a teacher does not have effective classroom management skills, they cannot survive the teaching profession for long (Gordon et al., 2015). A lack of management skills has been cited

as one of the major reasons many teachers leave the teaching profession within the first three years of teaching (Postholm, 2013).

Bear (2014) noted that classroom management skills could be improved by school districts providing meaningful professional development opportunities for teachers. Teachers learn more about how to manage their classroom when they engage in active learning as compared to information based learning. Banks (2014) suggested ways to improve a teacher's classroom management skills such as the need to provide professional development that addresses management, culture, socioeconomic issues, and other aspects of diversity needs to be provided for new teachers. Schools need to provide a mentoring program for new and experienced teachers that will provide them with a strong system for dealing with the needs of diverse learners in the classroom.

Limitations

There are limitations in conducting this type of qualitative case study. One limitation is that this study only examined the perceptions of teachers in one charter elementary school in a southern U.S. state and did not include the perceptions, or views of other charter school teachers at the elementary school level and elementary school teachers in the public school sector. This means that the data collected cannot be generalized to other populations beyond this small setting due to the small sample size (Yin, 2009). Another limitation is that the findings of this study and the answers from the participants may or may not be entirely truthful. The criteria established to select teachers for the study increased the possibility that those who fit the criteria provided information that addressed the interview questions.

Recommendations for Future Practice

Teachers' perceptions of discipline and how they exercise authority have a direct impact on how students are disciplined in many school districts. Chingo and West (2015) noted that the most important task for a school is the socialization of the students in the school. Schools should not only teach socially appropriate behaviors but should inculcate general respect toward social rules in the school. Teacher classroom management can only exhibit moral value if the moral value and the authority of the teacher is respected and accepted by students into the classroom and the school (Chingo et al., 2015). When this respect for authority is absent, teachers tend to perceive the problem behavior as residing in the immorality of the student.

Teachers' expectations are related to the mainstream ideology of controlling discipline in the classroom (Chingo et al.). Teacher expectations involve a number of essential factors such as the social context, which incorporates the prevailing social attitudes associated with race, class structure, and the political, social, and economic ideology (Chingo et al., 2015). Teachers' expectations are influenced by specific pedagogical concepts and conceptual frameworks as well as educational structures and practices instilled by teacher education programs (Gregory et al., 2014). Teachers' expectations and assumptions made about students are directly connected to both their individual beliefs of classroom discipline and the dominant cultural beliefs upon which they rely to define the worth and morality of students (Gregory et al., 2014). Research has shown that teacher perceptions of students' discipline are driven by underlying beliefs such as "students will act generously only when reinforced for doing a certain behavior" or "the student is motivated exclusively by self-interest and students need to be kept under control" (Gregory et al., 2014 p. 36). Many of the teacher's perceptions of discipline stem from commonsensical authoritarian ideology, and directly impact how a teacher sets disciplinary expectations in the

classroom, and the particular consequences meted out and to which students (Miron, 2011). In addition, a teacher's perceptions about classroom control may be influenced by the pedagogical philosophies associated with these practices (Chingo et al., 2015).

Effective classroom management strategies that are culturally responsive are important in today's diverse school districts (Banks, 2014). Bear (2014) suggested that culturally responsive classrooms should be designed to create a physical setting that supports academic and social goals. The teacher should establish clear expectations for behavior in the classroom. There should be good communication with students in culturally consistent ways. The teacher should develop a caring classroom environment and work with families on decreasing problem behavior by their child. Finally, teachers need the ability and willingness to use culturally appropriate management strategies for all students in the classroom (Balli, 2011).

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher would like to recommend three areas for future research on discipline problem and classroom management in charter schools. One area for future research is to examine a larger sample population within the state of Louisiana or across multiple states including both the east and west on reducing disciplinary problems at charter schools to increase academic achievement. By examining a larger population of elementary charter school teachers, future researchers would have a better understanding of the experiences and perceptions that impact charter school teacher's knowledge and experiences as it relates to discipline problems in charter schools to reduce problem behavior and to increase academic achievement at the elementary school level. The results may be used to build a positive and cohesive relationship between and among charter schools related to this issue.

In addition, future research could balance the results of this study with a quantitative analysis to provide statistical evidence of the benefits of proven disciplinary strategies and techniques for students at charter elementary schools. It would be meaningful to gather quantitative responses and compare them to the qualitative responses of the elementary charter school teachers. This could also provide insight into whether the current themes garnered should be changed or expanded with additional sub-themes in the research study.

Finally, there is a need to examine the experiences and perceptions of students at charter schools to get their views of discipline practices as they relate to reducing problem behavior in the classroom and increase academic achievement. Comparing the various responses and themes from the teachers and matching them with student responses may provide insights on the views of teachers and students at other charter school to improve discipline practices and strategies for both teachers and students.

Conclusions

The purpose of this applied dissertation was to explore charter school teachers' perceptions of disciplinary problems on academic achievement at the elementary level at a charter school in the southern part of Louisiana. A qualitative case study design was used to obtain perspectives of charter school elementary teachers on their views of disciplinary practices in their classrooms and the impact on the academic achievement of students in their classroom. Many charter schools across the United States are attempting to address the problem of increasing academic achievement and to limit the number of discipline problems within schools. This study added to the body of literature on charter schools, which focuses on preparing teachers and school districts to work with students in the early grades to decrease problem

behaviors in the lower grades. Administrators at the charter schools can use the results of this study and determine how they can allocate budget funds to increase teacher training in the area of classroom management.

The findings regarding some discipline problems that teachers face revealed many students talking out of turn, disrupting others learning in the classroom, talking back to the teacher, the use of profanity, and out of seat behaviors. Researchers noted that schools have attempted to modify their approaches to student behaviors, misbehaviors, reactions, and preventions based on the idea of systematically isolating some groups of students due to the increase of behavior problems in the classroom

The overall findings indicated that teachers used various classroom management strategies to manage their classroom. Some of these include the Champ Program, PBIS, and non-violent crisis intervention. One teacher noted that they read a book on classroom management and the book helped them with discipline issues in their classroom. Researchers noted that classroom management has been shown to be the most common concern among public and private school teachers in this 21st century. Effective classroom management required that teachers use a variety of knowledge, strategies, and skills that will allow them to structure their classroom environment, establish rules and procedures, develop relationships with students, and to maintain attention, and engagement in academic activities for all students in the classroom.

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Appendix A
Participants Demographic Information

Dear Participants:

Thank you for your interest in participating in my doctoral research study on Elementary Charter School Teachers' Perceptions of Student Discipline on Achievement. I would like to include demographic information on each potential research participation in my dissertation. To protect your privacy, your names will not be used in the research. I will be grateful if you would provide me the following information:

Number of years of experience teaching in a charter school: _____

Highest degree attained _____

Number of years of teaching experience _____

Number of years working with in an elementary setting _____

Male/Female _____

Race _____

I am available to answer any questions you may have concerning the study. I can be reached at XXX or email XXX

Sincerely,

Simone Shelton

Appendix B
Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Topic: Elementary Charter School Teachers' Perceptions of Student Discipline on Academic Achievement

1. Please share your perceptions and knowledge of discipline problems elementary teachers' face every day in their classrooms.
2. What are your thoughts about new teachers being able to handle discipline problems in their classroom?
3. What are your perceptions and thoughts on the differences between how male and female teachers deal with behavior issues?
4. What are your perceptions and views of discipline practices for older teachers in the classroom?
5. What are your thoughts or perceptions on the practice of out-of-school suspension to remediate and or reduce short-term behavior problems of students?
6. Please share your thoughts on the impact disciplinary problems have on student academic achievement at your charter school.
7. What strategies are charter school teachers implementing to reduce discipline problems in the classroom and increase academic achievement?
8. What are some strategies that your school can provide parents on discipline strategies for their child?
9. What are some professional development training you have received to help in discipline strategies for you in the classroom?
10. Please describe any training you have had with respect to classroom management strategies and or working with children with behavior issues.