DOES RACE-MATCHING MATTER? AN EXAMINATION OF THE LINKS BETWEEN

TEACHER- STUDENT RACIAL MATCH AND THE QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS

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Abstract

Racial disproportionality in school discipline and achievement has prompted researchers to investigate the mechanisms that may cause and reinforce these gaps. Racial relationship gaps between teachers and students have been identified as correlates of the discipline and achievement gaps. Consequently, the lack of diversity of the teaching force has become a concern for educators. In fact, resources have been used for initiatives to increase diversity in schools. Such initiatives are predicated on the assumption that a racial match between teachers and students increases the likelihood of their having positive relationships. However, more research is needed to understand that association between (1) teacher-student racial match and the quality of teacher-student relationships, and (2) the utility of a relationship-building intervention for mitigating the risks of teacher-student racial mismatch. This dissertation study examined the association between teacher-student match and student reports of the quality of relationships with their teachers. Pre-collected data from 183 students and 19 teachers in 2 urban US high schools was used to complete the study. Students completed self-report measures indicating their perceptions of teacher trust, teacher fairness, and teachers' use of exclusionary discipline. It was hypothesized that when students did not racially match with their teachers, they would have lower reports of fairness and trust in teachers and they would perceive higher exclusionary discipline use by these teachers relative to students who did racially match with their teachers. The results of the analysis, however, did not support these hypotheses. Analyses from the study demonstrated that teacher-student racial match was not a significant predictor of the quality of teacher-student relationships as measured by student reports of fairness and trust in teachers or reports of exclusionary discipline use by their teachers. Exploratory analyses found that teacher-student gender match was a significant predictor of student perceptions of

exclusionary discipline use by their teachers. This finding suggests that gender match may

contribute to students' experience of relationship with their teachers.

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Introduction

Quality of teacher-student relationships can have a strong influence on student outcomes. High quality teacher-student relationships have been linked to positive academic achievement and behavioral outcomes for students, whereas poor relationship quality has been linked to various adverse effects such as lower school connectedness, lower achievement, and increased discipline problems (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Klem & Connell, 2004; McCormick & O'Connor, 2014). Although the extant literature indicates the influence of teacher-student relationship quality on school success, it also demonstrates disparities in the experience of positive relationships for students of color and their teachers as compared to White students and their teachers (Anyon, Zhang, & Hazel, 2016; Hughes, 2011). These relationship gaps mirror the discipline gaps and achievement gaps that have been the focus of study in the education and psychology literature for decades (e.g., APA Task Force Report, 2012; US DOE, 2017). Various reform efforts have been aimed at narrowing these gaps, including two distinct initiatives designed to improve relationships: (a) increasing the number of teachers of color within the teaching workforce, and (b) implementing new relationship-oriented programming such as Restorative Practices (RP) in classrooms. Research related to the underlying assumptions of these two initiatives is needed. As of yet, it is unknown whether teacher and student racial match *in classrooms* is related to students' positive perceptions of their teachers relative to students in the same classroom who do not share racial group membership with their teacher. Also unknown is the degree to which RP is linked to more positive perceptions of teachers when students' race "mismatches" with their teachers' race.

Racial Discipline Gap

The racial disparities that exist in school discipline and academic achievement in the United States have been widely researched (APA Task Force Report, 2012; Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). These racial gaps result in disparate outcomes for many students of color, with the most research focusing on Black and Latino groups compared to their White peers. In the school discipline literature, it has been found that Black students have a higher likelihood of receiving punitive treatment in their classrooms as compared to White students even after accounting for student characteristics such as gender, low income status, special education eligibility, English language proficiency, or teacher-reported disruptive behavior (Anyon et. al., 2014; Bradshaw et. al., 2010). The racial/ethnic trends are further documented in the data published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) on grade retention, school suspension, and expulsion—all of which are associated with longer term negative outcomes for students, such as increased risk of school dropout and contact with the criminal justice system (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2005; Lee, Cornell, Gregory, & Fan, 2011) In 2013, the NCES reported an estimated racial distribution of the U.S. resident population ages 5 to 17 as follows: 53% White, 24% Hispanic, 14% Black, 5% Asian, 4% Two or more races, 1% American Indian/Alaska Native. An NCES report by Musu-Gillette and colleagues (2016) showed that in 2014, 2.6% of K–12 students were retained in their grade. Over the last two decades (1994-2014), the percentage of Black students retained decreased from 4.5% to 3.0%; however, a gap persists between rates of Black student retention and those of White peers as the percentage of White students retained decreased from 2.5% to 2.0%. For Hispanic students, there was no significant difference in percentage of students retained in 1994 as compared to 2014, however rates were higher than both Black and White peers (3.6%). Suspension rates also showed

differences by race/ethnicity. Examining public school students in 6th – 12th grade in 2012, it was found that overall 19.6% of students had ever been suspended from school. Broken down by race/ethnicity, 38.8% of Black students had ever been suspended, as compared to Hispanic (17.3%), White (15.6%), and Asian/Pacific Islander (9.5%) students. The percentage of Black students who had ever been suspended was more than two times higher than Hispanic, White, and Asian/Pacific Islander peers. In the expulsion data, overall 2.2% of students had ever been expelled from school. Broken down by race/ethnicity, 4.6% of Black students had ever been expelled as compared to their White (1.8%) and Hispanic (1.9%) peers. Likewise, the percentage of Black students who had been expelled was double the percentage of White and Hispanic 6th – 12th grade students (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). These persistent gaps continue to be an area of interest and concern for professionals in the education and psychology professions.

Racial Achievement Gap

The disparities evident in academic achievement and academic outcomes are equally noteworthy. Despite the attention given to reducing the racial disparities in education and achievement over the past 60 years, the gap persists. Approximately 13,200 students took the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics assessment in 2015. In that same year, the performance gaps in average mathematics scores between White and Black, White and Hispanic, and male and female twelfth-grade students were not significantly different than the performance gaps reported in 2005 or 2013 (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). According to 2015 data, the average mathematics score for White twelfth-grade students was 30 points higher than that of Black students and was 22 points higher than the average mathematics scores of Hispanic students. Seven percent of Black students performed at or above Proficient achievement level in mathematics as compared to 32% of White students. Forty-seven percent of

Asian students performed at or above Proficient. Thirty-one percent of students reporting Two or More Races, 12% of Hispanic students, and 10% of American Indian/Alaska Native twelfth-graders performed at or above the Proficient range (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Similar racial/ethnic performance gaps are evident in fourth and eighth grade average mathematics scores. The average mathematics score for White fourth-grade students was 24 points higher than the average score for their Black peers. This gap was smaller than both the 26-point gap in 2013, the previous assessment year, and the 32-point gap in 1990, the first assessment year. The White – Hispanic average score gap was 18-points in 2015, a disparity that was not significantly different from 1990 or 2013. Average mathematics scores for White eighth-grade students was 32 points higher than the average score for Black eighth-grade students and was 22 points higher than the average score for their Hispanic peers. The 32-point White – Black score gap in 2015 was not significantly different from the score gaps in 1990 or 2013. There was no significant change in the 22-point White – Hispanic score gap in 2015 compared to the White – Hispanic score gaps in both 1990 or 2013.

Approximately 18,700 twelfth-grade students took the NAEP reading assessment and the results tell a similar story. There was no significant difference in the performance gaps in 2015 average scores among racial/ethnic groups as compared to 2013 data. However, the White-Black performance gap was significantly greater in 2015 than the gap reported in 1992 (e.g., increased from 24 points to 30 points). In 2015, the average reading score for White twelfth-grade students was 30 points higher than that of Black students and was 20 points higher than the average reading scores of Hispanic students. Forty-nine percent of Asian twelfth-grade students, 46% of White students, 45% of students reporting Two or More Races, 28% of American Indian/Alaska Native, 25% of Hispanic students, and 17% of Black students performed at or above the

Proficient range (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The average reading score for White

fourth-grade students was 26 points higher than the average score for similar Black students.

This score gap was not significantly different than the score gap in 2013, however, it was smaller

than the 32-point score gap in 1992. The 24-point White – Hispanic score gap for average

reading scores of fourth-grade students in 2015 did not differ significantly when compared to the

score gaps in 1992 and 2013. (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The average reading score

for White eighth-grade students was 26 points higher than the average score for similar Black

students. This 26-point gap was not significantly different than the score gaps in 1992 and 2013.

The 21-point White – Hispanic average reading score gap among eighth-graders in 2015 was not

significantly different when compared to 2013, but was smaller than gaps reported in 1992 (U.S.

Department of Education, 2017).

Achievement/Discipline Gaps and Relationship Gaps

Relationships gaps between Black and Latino students and their White peers appear to be

important and significant correlates of the discipline and achievement gaps. In fact, in a study of

29,148 middle and high school students from 107 Denver schools, students were asked to

complete surveys in which they reported on their perceived relationship to adults in their school.

In addition, administrative data was collected from the schools and used to measure the

disparities in exclusionary discipline within the schools. It was found that racial discipline gaps

were greater in schools in which students reported less connection to school adults (Anyon,

Zhang, & Hazel, 2016). In another study of 714 elementary students in Texas who were

identified as academically at-risk, students and their teachers were asked to report on various

indicators of teacher-student relationship quality, such as warmth and conflict. It was found that

teachers reported less warmth in their relationships with Black students as compared with White

students (Hughes, 2011). Other studies have found that Hispanic and Black students were less

likely to report feeling really cared about by an adult in their school and that Black students

reported less care and respect from their teachers as compared to White students (Bottiani et al,

2014; Voight et al., 2015). Results of these studies indicate that in addition to the well-

documented racial gaps in academic achievement and discipline, gaps in the experiences of

teacher-student relationships likely exist between Black and Latino students and their teachers as

compared to White students and their teachers. These findings are important as the extant

literature on the power of relationships, in general, and more specifically, teacher-student

relationships, indicate serious implications for student outcomes.

Power of Teacher-Student Relationships

There is evidence to suggest that the quality of students' school relationships can

influence academic performance and behavior (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Gregory & Weinstein,

2004; Pianta et al., 2012; Wentzel et al., 2010). Teacher-student relationship quality can also

have long-term effects on student trajectories. Wilcken and Roseth (2015) discuss a more

indirect association between teacher-student relationships and outcomes asserting that "sleeper

effects" may occur in which early relationship patterns predict later outcomes. For example, in a

longitudinal study of 179 students, Hamre and Pianta (2001) found that kindergarten students

who had poor relationships with their teachers—as indicated by higher levels of relationship

conflict—also had lower academic achievement in mathematics and language arts through lower

elementary school years. They were also found to have more behavioral and discipline problems

through eighth grade. Findings were especially strong for boys and students with a history of

behavior problems in kindergarten (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). In another study examining teacher-

student relationships, McCormick and O'Connor (2014) found that close relationships between

teachers and students were linked to positive academic reading achievement, while relationships with high levels of conflict were linked to lower achievement.

Teacher-student relationships can play a critical role in students' academic and behavioral trajectories; thus, it is important to understand the defining factors of relationships and the underlying assumptions regarding the "ingredients" for positive relationships. Relationships, in general, have been conceptualized to include qualities such as level of trust, intimacy, sharing, and positive affect and often researchers investigate the levels at which these qualities provide benefits such as emotional well-being, a sense of connectedness, and security (Rubie-Davies, Stephens, & Watson, 2015). Focused on in-school relationships, Hughes (2011) discusses the consistent identification of a "supportive dimension and a conflict dimension" in teacher measures of teacher-student relationship quality whereas student measures are often based upon characteristics of social support—both of which have been linked to outcomes for student academic achievement and behavior. Students' personal experiences of fairness and trust are two qualities that would fall within these dimensions and can serve as indicators of positive relationship.

One study has demonstrated the role of perceived trust in teacher-student relationships. Gregory and Ripski (2008) found that the relationship between teachers' classroom approach and students' behavioral outcomes was mediated by student-reported trust in their teachers. This finding supports the notion that experiences of trust can serve as an indicator of positive teacher-student relationships and demonstrates the benefit of student trust in teachers as a predictor of student behavioral outcomes. In another study examining teacher beliefs regarding teacher-student trust, researchers used semi-structured interviews and focus groups to understand the antecedents to and benefits of trust. Participants reported that when there was an established

level of teacher-student trust, "students were more receptive to teacher attempts at interpersonal

bonding, and both students and teachers were more involved in establishing an intimate, open

connection" (Russell, Wentzel, & Donlan, 2016, p. 15). Teachers also reported several additional

benefits of teacher-student trust, including: a positive affective and social climate in the school,

increased safety, more positive social interactions, increased tolerance and autonomy, and

academic engagement.

Perceived fairness is another important indicator of positive teacher-student relationships.

Although additional empirical support is warranted, there is evidence that student perceptions of

teacher fairness is related to various student outcomes. In a study of 77 at-risk middle school

students, Free (2014) examined the relationship between students' "school bonds" and classroom

behavior. Students' belief regarding fairness of school rules was one of the indicators of school

bonds, in addition to student affiliation with school and school involvement. Results

demonstrated that a fairness belief was the strongest correlate of lower school misconduct.

Although not a direct proxy for student-teacher relationship, this study indicates that perception

of fairness is an important construct that not only supports student trust in their schools and

teachers, but also a sense of connectedness or "bond" to their school and teachers.

A recent study by Yeager, Purdie-Vaughns, Hooper, and Cohen (2017) used both fair

treatment and trust in their analysis of long-term outcomes for students. In the study, 277 middle-

school students were asked to report their beliefs regarding fairness in disciplinary decisions in

their school and their trust in the institution. The students were asked to complete surveys twice a

year over a 3-year period. Differences in beliefs about fair treatment in discipline were apparent

from 6th grade, as Black students reported significantly lower expectations of equal treatment as

compared to their White peers. Black 6th graders who reported greater perceptions of bias in

discipline decisions also reported lower trust in the school. A "recursive process" was apparent for students with and without discipline histories: institutional trust decreased over time as perceptions of bias increased. This decline in trust appeared to have negative short-term and long-term outcomes for Black students—students with higher loss of trust were more likely to have discipline incidents in the following year and were less likely to enroll in a 4-year college. Similar findings held for Latino students, as indicated by a trust gap and decrease in trust over time as compared to White peers.

Reform Efforts to Improve Relationships

Increasing the racial diversity of the teacher workforce. Various reform efforts have been developed and implemented with the goal of improving teacher-student relationship dynamics within the U.S. school system. One major effort has been the recruitment and retention of minority teachers in diverse school districts. One program in the New York City (NYC) Public Schools is worth detailing given it reflects other similar efforts occurring throughout the United States (e.g., Brown University Education Alliance: Recruiting Minority Teachers; CREC Minority Teacher Recruitment; University of Louisville Minority Teacher Recruitment Project). Currently, in NYC public school classrooms male students of color make up approximately 43% of the student demographic; however, only 8.3% of the teacher workforce is made up of Black, Latino and Asian men (NYC Department of Education, 2017). NYC Men Teach is an initiative supported by the NYC Department of Education with a goal of increasing diversity among the teaching staff in urban classrooms. This goal would be met by adding an additional 1000 male teachers of color (e.g., Black, Latino, Asian) to the workforce by 2018. The program provides academic and financial support to participants to incentivize entrance into the field.

There is mounting evidence to support increasing diversity as a means of improving outcomes for racially diverse students. In a study examining student-level administrative data from North Carolina, students were compared against themselves in years when they were assigned to teachers of a different race versus years when assigned to teachers of the same race (Lindsay & Hart, 2017). It was found that exposure to teachers of the same race was linked to lower exclusionary discipline (e.g., detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion) for Black elementary, middle, and high school students. Teacher-student racial match has also been linked to achievement outcomes. Dee (2004) found compelling evidence that racial match with teachers in early grades was associated with higher scores on standardized tests of math and reading achievement for Black and White students. The effect sizes found in this study were commensurate with the effects of small classroom assignment (Dee, 2004). In addition to these short-term effects, long-term impacts of teacher-student race matching have been identified. In a longitudinal study following all students entering third grade in North Carolina between the years 2001 and 2005, Gershenson, Hart, Lindsay, and Papageorge (2017) found that exposure to at least one Black teacher in 3rd – 5th grade decreased the likelihood of low-income Black males dropping out of high school by 39%. Additionally, they found that having at least one racially matched teacher in 3rd – 5th grade significantly increased self-reports of intent to pursue higher education for the most economically disadvantaged Black male and female students. Similar results held in a sample of students who were randomly assigned to classrooms in Tennessee schools as part of Project STAR (Student Teacher Achievement Ratio; See: Krueger, 1999). While this evidence supports the utility of race matching and increased diversity in the teacher force as a means for improving outcomes for diverse students, the mechanisms of change related to these impacts remains unclear.

Various theories have been posited to explain why increasing racial match and diversity in the teaching force can positively influence student outcomes. Studies suggest that ethnic minority teachers may perceive the behavior of ethnic minority students as less problematic than White teachers (Downer, Goble, Myers, & Pianta, 2016) and that when the student body in a school matches with the faculty in terms of diverse racial composition, students are less likely to receive exclusionary discipline (Blake et al., 2016). Consequently, an ethnic minority student's experience of discipline may be perceived as more fair in a school environment with an ethnically diverse teaching staff. It is likely that student perceptions of fairness would also be linked to higher levels of trust in their school teachers. The benefits of a diverse teaching force impact not only students' perceptions and attitudes, but may also lead to attitude changes among teachers. Okonofua, Walton, and Eberhardt (2016) suggest that both teachers and students experience psychological predicaments related to stereotyping and threat that could lead to weak and fractured teacher-student relationships. While minority students may stereotype teachers as biased against students like themselves and worry about receiving unfair treatment from them, teachers may also stereotype students from racially stigmatized groups as "troublemakers" and worry that these students may prevent them from reaching their teaching goals. A series of interactions over time which may be misattributed to the stereotypes and worries of the respective parties can then lead to "confirmation" of the stereotype on either side. This confirmation of negative biases ultimately could lead to mistrusting and broken teacher-student relationships. A diverse teaching force may reduce the worry experienced by minority students in school pertaining to bias and stereotyping by their teacher. This may, in turn, result in more trusting interactions that disrupt teachers' negative perceptions or stereotypes of racial minority

students and provide alternative narratives for understanding student behavior, and ultimately, different responses to students in diverse groups based on more positive experiences.

Blake et al. (2016) posit that Cultural Synchrony theory would suggest teacher-student racial match may help students and teachers to avoid cultural misunderstandings that could lead to negative reactions to behaviors perceived as typical among minority communities. Accordingly, it may be the case that teachers of color have greater cultural competence than their White peers. Gay (2002) defines culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (p. 106). Teaching pedagogy that aligns with this definition would require teachers to first have an awareness of the unique experiences and perspectives of diverse students, and subsequently to use them in practice. In her work on culturally relevant instruction, Ladson-Billings (2009) outlines findings regarding several teaching practices that helped to support academic achievement in a majority African-American student school context. Some of these practices include: integrating students' life experiences into the school curriculum; helping students make connections between their community, national, and global identities; affirming and celebrating students' cultural backgrounds; and developing teacher-student relationships that are fluid, humanely equitable, and that extend to interactions beyond the classroom. In order to enact such practices, teachers must have a fundamental understanding of the range of cultural norms, values, behaviors, and attitudes of racially/ethnically diverse students. Teachers of color may be equipped with this knowledge, giving them the ability to "read" students' of colors' behavior and more effectively establish trusting relationships.

Perhaps it is teacher expectancies or implicit biases that are driving the effects evidenced in the literature. The body of literature on teacher expectation effects and their close link to

student academic achievement is robust, and suggests that when students are taught by teachers with high expectations, they perform better academically as compared to when they are taught by teachers with low expectations (de Boer, Bosker, & van der Werf, 2010; Peterson, Rubie-Davies, Osborne, & Sibley, 2016; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, & Hamilton, 2006). A recent study has linked teacher-student racial match with teacher expectancy. Gershenson, Holt, and Papageorge (2016) found that racial mismatch between teachers and students was related to decreased expectations for Black students. In fact, they found that expectations of Black teachers for Black students were up to 40% higher than non-Black teachers' expectations of Black students. The role of implicit racial bias as it relates to the Black/White discipline gap has also been discussed in recent reviews of the literature (see: Gregory & Roberts, 2017). It is possible that unconscious negative beliefs or stereotypes held by teachers regarding their Black students may lead to lower expectations, higher exclusionary discipline use, or other forms of differential treatment.

Additional theories regarding the mechanisms of change that lead to positive outcomes for students when teachers of color enter the teaching force warrant further research. In 2004, members of the National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force presented a report in which several potential impacts of increasing diversity were discussed, including (1) increased access to role models for diverse students; (2) provision of opportunities for *all* students to learn about ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity; (3) enriched learning for diverse students because of shared racial, ethnic, and cultural identities; and (4) presence of "cultural brokers" who could help students navigate their school context and facilitate increased parent and teacher involvement (p. 6). Taken together, it is possible that shared racial identity may provide a bedrock of mutual understanding and trust based on common life experiences—real or perceived—thus, setting the foundation for a positive relationship to be built.

Restorative Practices in classrooms. Restorative Practices (RP) is another major reform effort that has been undertaken in various school districts around the U.S. (RP; See: Fronius, Persson, Guckenburg, Hurley, & Petrosino, 2016). RP is an offshoot of Restorative Justice, which is defined by Dr. Howard Zehr as "a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible" (Zehr, 2002, p. 37). This definition emphasizes the importance of community and mending of broken relationships when harm occurs. This emphasis on community and relationship is enacted through the practices implemented in schools. Although there are various definitions posited for RP, the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) refrains from providing a definition and rather states the focus of RP, which is to "build healthy communities, increase social capital, reduce the impact of crime, decrease antisocial behavior, repair harm and restore relationships." This description, once again, emphasizes the relational approach of the restorative intervention. The program has been disseminated in school districts with the aim of being used as an alternative to exclusionary discipline practices in schools and to facilitate building stronger relationships within classrooms and school buildings.

In order to strengthen aspects of teacher-student relationships in schools, community-building activities are infused into the school day and student voice and problem-solving are integrated into daily activity. The IIRP offers a series of training and professional development opportunities to support practitioners in effective RP implementation. In the training, practitioners are taught the "essential elements" of RP, including using Affective Statements, asking Restorative Questions, facilitating Proactive Circles, and demonstrating Fair Process in decision-making.

Affective Statements are more informal restorative practice elements that provide opportunities for an individual to express personal feelings in response to specific behaviors of others without using punitive language. Teacher are taught to use these statements when responding to student conflict or disciplinary infractions, and to encourage students to use the same language. Restorative Questions are used when there is a disagreement or when harm has been done. These questions address inappropriate behavior and help to identify who is harmed in the conflict. For example, a teacher may ask students for their side of the story during an argument using questions such as: What happened? Who has been affected by the actions? What do you think needs to happen to make things right? This practice supports the integration of student voice into disciplinary problem-solving. The Proactive Circles provide opportunities for students to share feelings and experiences, voice problems, and engage in problem-solving in a structured manner. In these circles, participants sit facing each other without barriers between them (e.g., backpacks, desks), and pass a talking piece, allowing each circle member a chance for their voice to be heard by others in the group. Participants engage in sharing and open dialogue in order to build trust and understanding between circle members. Teachers are trained in methods of facilitating these circles. Finally, Fair Process is a method to ensure that people are treated respectfully throughout any decision-making processes. For example, a teacher would be encouraged to ask a student about his or her thoughts or feelings regarding a specific decision. Infusing these RP elements into the classroom context is theorized to facilitate positive growth in relationships between students and with their teachers.

Acosta et. al. (2016) uses the psychology of affect to outline three psychological mechanisms through which RP use may facilitate improved student connectedness. They contend that RP (1) maximizes positive affect through practices aimed at developing close bonds among

participants; (2) minimizes negative affect by training teachers to get students engaged in

practices that promote taking responsibility and reintegration into the school community; and (3)

encourages teachers and students alike to appropriately and openly express emotions. Together,

these practices help to develop strong relationships by fostering a climate of trust, safety, and

vulnerability within the school community.

Despite much theorizing, there still exists a paucity of empirical research on RP and its

links to improved relationships. In their study of 412 students in 29 high school classrooms,

Gregory, Clawson, Davis, and Gerewitz (2015) examined the link between high RP use in

classrooms as reported by students and quality of teacher-student relationships. Students' reports

of perceived respect from their teachers and teachers' use of office disciplinary referrals were

used as the indicators of teacher-student relationships. It was found that teachers who were

perceived by students to be high implementers of RP in their classrooms had better relationships

with students as compared to teachers perceived as low RP implementers. Notably, it was found

that teachers who implemented RP more frequently also issued fewer discipline referrals to

Latino and African American students than teachers who were low RP implementers, indicating

the potential for RP promoting equity in discipline. The current study will add to the literature

examining RP use and its association with teacher-student relationship.

Summary

In sum, there are persistent relationship gaps and related discipline and achievement

disparities in the U.S. school system for Black and Latino students that must be addressed.

Reform strategies are currently being undertaken to reduce the existing disparities, including

implementation of programs to increase the diversity in the teacher workforce and interventions

such as RP intended to build relationships among individuals in schools. While both strategies

hold promise for reducing relationship gaps and, in turn, discipline and achievement disparities, the current landscape within the teaching profession may demand a particular strategy to meet urgent needs. According to a U.S. Department of Education report on The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce (2017), in the 2011–12 school year, 82% of public school teachers were White, while only 51% of public school students were White. It was also predicted that by 2024, White students will represent 46% of public school students; meaning that the number of diverse students, along with the need for diverse teachers, will be rapidly increasing over the next several years. This reality highlights the need for a long-term plan for increasing diversity in the teaching workforce; however, it also underscores the importance of understanding whether a readily available intervention for relationship-building (i.e., RP) may buffer the risks of racial mismatch as it exists in the system currently.

Methods

Participating Schools

The two schools in the sample for this study were part of a larger longitudinal study across two years. The schools were originally selected given the district indicated they were contracted for a two-year RP training through the IIRP SaferSanerSchools program. The program included an initial staff training, booster sessions, and on-site consultation and coaching. As part of the initial training, staff were introduced to the RP model of using circles for behavioral and academic purposes in a two-day training. They were then given access to technical assistance from an on-site IIRP consultant to enhance their RP skills throughout the school year. The consultant would observe teachers' RP implementation in their classrooms and provide them with feedback regarding their performance. The IIRP training also included discussion of what IIRP calls the "eleven essential elements" of RP (See Table 1 and Appendix

A). The elements ranged from more preventative measures to targeted intervention processes, however, all related to the goals of increasing students' connectedness and voice in the classroom context.

Staff from the two schools only participated in one of the two years of IIRP training. After the first training year, a change in administration led to the discontinuation of the RP training and implementation procedures. The current study was conducted in the year following year one of the IIRP training program.

Table 1

Eleven Essential Elements of RP

RP Elements	Definition
1. Affective Statements	Statements that express personal feelings in response to specific behaviors of others
2. Restorative Questions	Questions that address inappropriate behavior and help to identify who is harmed
3. Small Impromptu Conference	Structured conversations used to resolve low-level conflict
4. Proactive Circles	Provide opportunities to share feelings and experiences to build trust and understanding
5. Responsive Circles	Engage students in conflict management by repairing harm and restoring relationships
6. Restorative Conferences	Structured conversations used to resolve high-level conflict
7. Fair Process	Ensures that people are treated respectfully throughout any decision-making processes
8. Reintegrative Management of Shame	Encourages acknowledgement of feelings of the shamed person
9. Restorative Staff Community	Modeling and consistent use of RP to build and maintain healthy staff relationships
10. Restorative Approach with Families	Consistent use of RP in interactions with students' families
11. Fundamental Hypothesis Understandings	Humans are happiest when those in authority do things *with* them rather than *to* them

Note: Adapted from the International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP): SaferSanerSchools Program.

According to data from the State of NJ Department of Education, school enrollment for Arts High School (please note: name has been removed) in 2014-2015 was a total of 537 students who were 68.2% Hispanic, 30.0% Black, 1.5% White, 0.2% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian. The gender breakdown was 51.2% male and 48.8% female. The enrolled students were

comprised of 77.1% economically disadvantaged students, 24% students with disability, and 16.4% English Language Learners. The school's 4-year graduation rate was 36%, significantly lower than the state target of 78%, and the dropout rate was 12.8% as compared to the state target of 2%. These graduation and dropout rates placed the school in the 5th percentile of their peer schools and the 1st percentile statewide. Regarding behavior data, the student suspension rate was 18.8%.

In 2014-2015, Science High School (please note: name has been removed) enrolled socio-demographically similar students. In 2014-2015, the school enrolled 606 students who were 70.0% Hispanic, 29.2% Black, 0.7% White, and 0.2% Pacific Islander. The gender breakdown was 62.7% male and 37.3% female. The student population was comprised of 72.6% economically disadvantaged students, 20% students with disability, and 19.3% English Language Learners. The school's 4-year graduation rate was 81%, surpassing the state target of 78%, and the dropout rate was 3.1% as compared to the state target of 2%. The student suspension rate was 13.5%.

Teacher Participants

In June of 2014, 76 teachers from the participating schools were asked to participate in a study in which they completed surveys and interviews regarding their experience of RP training and implementation. Fifty-one teachers consented to participate in that study (return rate = 67.1%). In the following school year (September, 2014), previously consented teachers were contacted for follow-up. Thirty-four of the consented teachers remained in the school in the Fall semester of 2014 and were part of the current study sample. Five teachers provided surveys containing their demographic data, however, they did not have any consented student data and were thus excluded from the analysis. Ten teacher participants self-selected focal classrooms in

both the fall and spring semesters while nine exclusively participated in either fall or spring.

Thus, 19 individual teachers were included who led 29 classrooms.

Although many countries of origin were represented in the sample, the teacher race

groupings fell into four subgroups: Black/African-American, White/Caucasian, Hispanic/Latino,

and Other. The sample breakdown by race was as follows: 34.5% of teachers identified as

Black/African-American ($n = 10$), 34.5% identified as Hispanic/Latino ($n = 10$), 20.7%

identified as White/Caucasian ($n = 6$), and the rest of the sample fell into the Other race category

($n = 3$). The sample of teachers was comprised of 72.4% female ($n = 21$) and 27.6% male ($n =$

8). Teachers also varied in the grades taught (i.e., $9^{th} - 12^{th}$ grades), subject areas taught (e.g.,

Financial Literacy, Spanish, Graphic Design, Physics), and years of teaching experience (i.e.,

from 2 years to 7 years).

Student Participants

The student sample was comprised of 183 students taught by 19 teachers and enrolled in

29 different classrooms. Similar to the teacher sample, the students also were from various

countries of origin (e.g., Guyana, Dominican Republic, Trinidad, Haiti). The student sample was

comprised of 66.7% Hispanic/Latino ($n = 122$), 23.0% Black/African-American ($n = 42$), 9.3%

Other race students ($n = 17$), and 1.0% White/Caucasian ($n = 2$). The sample of students' gender

breakdown was 50.8% male ($n = 93$) and 48.6% female ($n = 89$). One student identified as

transgender.

Survey Measures

Teacher and student self-reported demographic data. On surveys, teachers and students were asked to indicate their gender and race. Teachers also reported their years of experience in the teaching profession.

Teacher use of exclusionary discipline. To measure teachers' use of exclusionary discipline in their classroom, students reported on whether their teacher had ever issued them three different forms of discipline. Specifically, students were asked to report the number of times they were a) asked to leave the classroom, b) written up by their teacher (ODR), or c) had security called on them for their behavior. Three forms of exclusionary discipline were included in this measurement to ensure a more accurate representation of the range of ways in which exclusionary discipline is used in schools. The variable was dichotomized (1/0) given the skewed distribution of the variable. In other words, if a student reported one or more times for any of the three forms of exclusionary discipline, they were issued a 1. Measures of exclusionary discipline have been found to demonstrate predictive validity: students who receive exclusionary discipline in school are at greater risk for negative outcomes such as dropping out of school and entering the juvenile justice system (Fabelo et al., 2011). Moreover, research has shown that the average ODR results in a loss of 20-45 minutes of instructional time (Muscott, Mann, & LeBrun, 2008; Scott & Barrett, 2004).

Student-reported teacher trust. Students completed a five item scale to indicate the degree to which they felt trust in teachers in their school. On a 4-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4), students rated their agreement on items such as "Thinking about the teachers in your school: I trust the way they use their power and authority" and "I feel like they make good decisions for everyone" (See Appendix B for all items). In this sample, the

scale was found to have a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86, indicating good internal consistency. The

trust scale was adapted from a scale that measured people's willingness to support governmental

authority (Tyler & Degoey, 1995) and has been used in its adapted form in prior research

(Gregory & Ripski, 2008). Prior research has demonstrated this scale has concurrent validity.

Specifically, students who report higher trust tend to be perceived by their teachers as more

cooperative (Gregory & Ripski, 2008).

Student-reported teacher fairness. Students also completed a six-item scale to indicate

the degree to which they experienced fair treatment in various interactions with teachers in their

school. On a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4),

students rated their agreement to items such as "I am treated fairly by teachers of the same race

or ethnicity as me" and "The punishment for breaking school rules is the same for all students"

(see Appendix B). The scale was found to have a Cronbach's alpha of 0.63.

RP Use scale. Students rated the RP use of the participating teacher in reference to the

specific classroom in which they were completing the survey. Given the time constraints for data

collection, a short RP Use scale was developed from IIRP's 50-item RP self-assessment scale

with multiple items for a range of RP elements (e.g., Affective Statements, Proactive Circles,

Fair Process). The items were purposely selected to reflect four of the 11 Essential Elements of

RP that are used by teachers in classrooms. The RP Use Scale is comprised of six items and uses

a 5-point Likert scale ranging from not at all (1) to always (5). The elements represented are

Affective Statements (i.e., "My teacher asks students to express their feelings, ideas, and

experiences"); Restorative Questions (i.e., "When someone misbehaves: my teacher asks

students questions about their side of the story; my teacher has that person to talk to who they

hurt and asks them to make things right; and my teacher has those who were hurt have a say in

what needs to happen to make things right"); Proactive Circles (i.e., "My teacher uses circles as a

time for students to share feelings, ideas, and experiences"); and Fair Process (i.e., "My teacher

takes the thoughts and ideas of students into account when making decisions"). The RP use scale

was found to have a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86, indicating good internal consistency. In this

sample, the scale also demonstrates concurrent validity; students who indicated their teacher

frequently used RP in their classrooms on the RP Use scale reported having a greater sense of

community as compared to their peers in classrooms who reported less frequent RP use by their

teachers (Gregory, 2016).

Racial match. The racial match variable was created to identify student-teacher pairs

with the same race within a classroom. In order to have a common race code for the matching

analysis, both teacher and student data were collapsed into the following categories:

Black/African American, White/Caucasian, Hispanic/Latino, Other. In the match variable, a

student was given a "1" to indicate he or she matched with his or her teacher's race and a "0" for

a racial mismatch.

Gender match. The gender match variable was created to classify student-teacher pairs

in classrooms who identified as the same gender. A student was given a "1" to indicate that they

matched with their teacher's gender and a "0" for a gender mismatch.

Data Analytic Plan

Descriptive analysis was conducted on the quantitative variables (e.g., means, correlations). In

addition, hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) was conducted to account for the nesting of

students in teacher classrooms. In other words, HLM accounted for the shared variance in

responses reported by students within the same classrooms taught by the same teacher. Within

the HLM analysis, the classroom data was at Level 2 and student data was at Level 1. Due to the

small sample size, no classroom predictors were entered at Level 2. Additional detail regarding

the analytic plan is provided below under each research question.

Research Question 1: Does racial match between students and teachers predict reports of

exclusionary classroom discipline?

Multilevel logistic regression analyses were conducted to examine whether racial match

was a significant predictor of the dependent variable: student reports of receiving exclusionary

classroom discipline.

Research Question 2: Does racial match between students and teachers predict student ratings

of schoolwide teacher trust and fair treatment?

Statistical analysis was conducted to examine whether racial match is a significant

predictor of the two dependent variables: student perceptions of teacher trust and fair treatment.

It was posited that if the match variable were positive and statistically significant when

predicting trust or fair treatment, then hypotheses would be confirmed. This would indicate

students who have a racial match with their teachers tended to report greater trust and fairness.

Research Question 3: Is teacher's frequent use of RP associated with reduced risk related to

teacher/student mismatch?

Contingent upon findings from the analysis of the relationship between racial match and

teacher-student relationship quality, analysis of the interaction between race mismatch and

reported RP use in classrooms by teachers (e.g., RACIAL MISMATCH X RP USE) was planned

to examine whether RP use moderates the relationship between racial match and teacher-student

relationship quality.

Results

Descriptive Findings

Descriptive Statistics. Descriptive statistics were run for the teacher trust, teacher

fairness, teacher RP Use, teacher use of exclusionary discipline, and match variables. On the

match variables, approximately half of the student sample matched their teacher on both race and

gender (see Table 2).

Table 2

Descriptive analysis of racial match and gender match

	Race		Gender	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*
No Match	82	44.8	89	48.6
Match	101	55.2	94	51.4

As seen in Table 3 below, the full scale range was used by the student participants when asked to

report on teacher trust, fairness, and RP use. Student endorsements on both the teacher trust scale

and the teacher fairness scale indicate that students had an overall positive perception of their

teachers. Similarly, the mean ratings of RP use indicate that students perceived teachers as using

RP in their classrooms often.

Table 3

Descriptive analysis for student sample (n =183)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*Range*
Teacher Trust	2.89	.67	1.2 - 4.0
Teacher Fairness	2.80	.60	1.0 - 4.0
Teacher RP Use	3.57	1.00	1.0 – 5.0

Note: *M* = mean, *SD* = standard deviation

Descriptive analysis for the exclusionary discipline variable is illustrated below in Figure 1. This

analysis revealed that the majority of students in the study sample (83%; $n = 151$) reported they

had not received any exclusionary discipline from their classroom teacher while 17% of the

student participants reported that they had experienced one or more exclusionary discipline
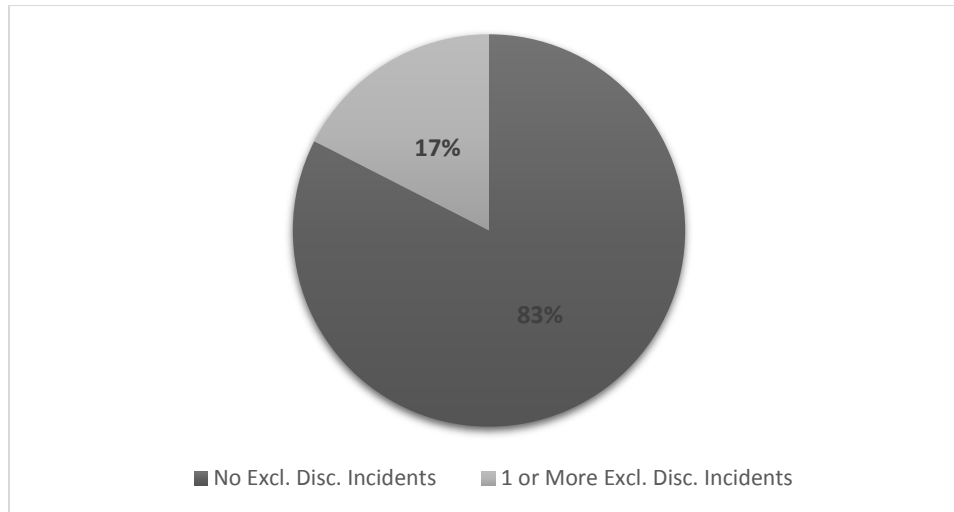
incidents with their teacher.

Figure 1. Student reported Teacher Exclusionary Discipline Use

Correlations. Results of the Pearson correlations of the independent variables and

dependent variables used in the analysis are displayed below in Table 4. Significant correlations

between various variables were observed and the relationships were in the expected direction.

Teacher-student gender match was significantly negatively correlated with teacher exclusionary

discipline use ($r = -.30$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that when teachers and students were of the same

gender, students also reported less exclusionary discipline use by their teachers. Student reported

teacher trust was significantly positively correlated with reports of teacher fairness ($r = .57$, $p <$

0.01) and student-reported teacher RP use ($r = .21$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that students who

reported higher levels of trust in teachers also reported higher levels of fairness with their

teachers and perceived more RP Use in their focal teacher's classroom. Finally, students who

experienced higher levels of fairness in their classrooms also reported higher RP Use in their

focal teacher's classroom ($r = .16$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 4

Correlations of student-report variables and match variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Gender Match	--	0.07	-0.07	0.02	-.30**	0.10
2. Race Match		--	-0.02	0.02	0.13	-0.11
3. Tch Trust			--	.57**	-0.11	.21**
4. Tch Fairness				--	0.03	.16*
5. Tch Exc. Disc. Use					--	-0.09
6. Tch RP Use						--

$p < 0.01**$, $p < 0.05*$

Student Reports of Teacher-Student Relationship. An independent samples t-test was

conducted to compare the mean ratings of racially matched and non-matched students on teacher

trust, teacher fairness, and teacher RP use. The analysis revealed that there was no significant

difference between racially matched and non-matched students' ratings of teacher trust, teacher

fairness, or teacher RP use.

Chi-square analysis was computed to compare racially matched vs. non-matched

students' ratings of teacher use of exclusionary discipline (see Table 5). While the findings were

just shy of statistical significance, it is notable that the results were not in the expected direction

($p < .10$). A higher percentage of students in the racially matched category reported one or more

incidents of exclusionary discipline use as compared to students who did not racially match with

their teachers.

Table 5

Chi-Square analysis of racial match and teacher exclusionary discipline use

	No Excl. Disc.		One or more Excl. Disc	
	N	%	N	%
No Match	72	87.8	10	12.2
Match	79	78.2	22	21.8

p < .10

Chi-square analysis was also used to compare gender matched vs. non-matched students'

ratings of teacher use of exclusionary discipline (see Table 6). Significant results were found in

the expected direction. The results showed that when teacher-student gender matched, students

reported less exclusionary discipline by their teachers as compared to when teacher-student

gender did not match (X^2 = 16.515, *p* < .001).

Table 6

Chi-Square analysis of gender match and teacher exclusionary discipline use

	No Excl. Disc.		One or more Excl. Disc	
	N	%	N	%
No Match	63	70.8	26	29.2
Match	88	93.6	6	6.4

p < .001

Race-Matching Predicting Teacher-Student Relationship Quality

Hierarchical Linear Modeling was used to examine the relationship between race-

matching and the three measures of teacher-student relationship quality: student-reported teacher

trust, fairness, and exclusionary discipline use. Student data was entered at Level 1 and

classroom data was entered at Level 2. Teacher-student race match was entered as the

independent variable and used to predict student reports of teacher trust, fairness, and

exclusionary discipline use, respectively. No covariates were entered into the models as the small

sample size would limit the power to find a significant result if one did, in fact, exist in the

population. Results of the HLM analyses showed that race-matching was not a significant predictor of students' reports of teacher trust ($\beta = -0.04$, $p = 0.756$) or fairness ($\beta = -0.02$, $p = 0.856$) after accounting for classroom membership. Race-matching also was not a significant predictor of the likelihood of students receiving one or more exclusionary discipline sanctions from their teachers ($\beta = 0.68$, $p = 0.153$).

After analyzing race match, gender match was entered as the independent variable and used to predict student reports of teacher trust, fairness, and exclusionary discipline use. There was no significant relationship found between gender match and teacher trust ($\beta = -0.15$, $p = 0.155$) or fairness ($\beta = 0.01$, $p = 0.906$). Gender match did, however, significantly predict teacher exclusionary discipline use. When a teacher and student's gender matched, there was a lower likelihood of students receiving one or more exclusionary discipline sanctions from their teacher ($\beta = -1.45$, $p = 0.003$).

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between teacher-student racial match and teacher-student relationship quality, as measured by student reports of teacher trust, fairness, and exclusionary discipline use. Initially, the chi-square analysis revealed that students who racially matched their teachers also reported a higher likelihood of receiving one or more disciplinary sanctions from their teacher; however, when subjected to the more rigorous HLM analysis, this relationship along with the hypothesized relationship between teacher-student racial match and quality of teacher-student relationships was not supported. This finding indicates that perhaps, in the context of the urban, predominantly Latino and Black, US schools in which the study was implemented, teacher-student match in individual classrooms was not related to students' overall perceptions of their relationship quality with teachers in the larger school body. That said, given

accumulating body of research on the positive correlates of race match, the current study's seemingly contradictory findings may simply be related to methodological limitations (i.e., the small sample size).

It is important, however, to consider additional drivers of this finding. In the study sample, of the 29 classrooms that were analyzed, 69% of the teachers in these classrooms identified as either Black or Latino. Approximately 90% of the students in these classrooms identified as either Black or Latino. While there is clearly a gap between the number of Black or Latino teachers versus students, it is important to note that most teachers in the schools identified as teachers of color. Due to the high percentage of minority teachers represented in the schools, it is likely that students in this study who did not racially match their focal classroom teacher were still exposed to one or more racially matched teachers in other classrooms. This is significant as prior research has shown the long-term positive effects of exposure to at least one racially matched classroom teacher (Gershenson, Hart, Lindsay, & Papageorge, 2017).

Furthermore, the apparent racially diverse racial composition of the schools in this study may contribute to the findings. Recent literature on racial match support the assertion that having an ethnically diverse teaching staff that mirrors the diversity of the student body may lead to more positive teacher-student relationships (see, Blake et al., 2016). It is possible that the generally diverse racial composition of the staff in the study schools contributed to students' overall positive perceptions of trust and fairness, overriding the effects of individual teacher-student racial match (at the individual classroom level) on teacher-student relationships in the school. In other words, in the study middle and high school students interact with numerous adults in a given day. Experiencing racial match with one or more adults across the school day

may have associated benefits—benefits not detected in this study given the focus on race match

in a single classroom for each participating student.

In addition, exploratory analysis found that teacher-student gender match was a

significant predictor of one dimension of teacher-student relationship quality: teacher use of

exclusionary discipline. This finding indicates that similar to the hypothesized links between

racial match and teacher-student relationship, gender match may have a significant effect on

student perception of relationships. The match literature suggests that gender match may play an

important role in how teachers perceive their students. In a study examining how dynamics of

teacher-student race, ethnicity, and gender match affect teachers' perceptions of student

performance, Dee (2015) found that teachers were 19% more likely to perceive a student as

inattentive and 37% more likely to perceive a student as disruptive when teacher-student genders

mismatched. He also found that teachers were 15% more likely to report that a student rarely

completes his or her homework when the teacher and student were of opposite gender. The more

negative views perceived by the mismatched teachers may lead to outcomes such as increased

exclusionary discipline use, an indicator of poor relationship quality.

Whereas gender was not the focus of this study, the previously reviewed literature

regarding cultural synchrony theory may be expanded to include gender diversity. It is possible

that in the same way teachers of color may exhibit greater cultural competence than their White

peers which can lead to divergent outcomes of interactions with students of color, teachers

whose gender matches that of their student may be uniquely equipped to manage disciplinary

issues that arise with the matched student. This may be due to a gender-matched teacher drawing

on shared personal experiences or similar perspectives as the student, which would then facilitate

more effective interventions with that student. Likewise, teachers whose gender matches a

student may interpret the behavior of the student as less "pathological" or "deviant" than a teacher of mismatched gender, who may be more likely to interpret behavior as atypical or aberrant. Such a difference in perception may, in turn, lead to the exclusionary discipline disparities found between gender matched vs mismatched teacher-student pairs.

Gender socialization may also play a role in driving the divergent outcomes for matched versus mismatched teacher-student pairs. Traditional definitions of gender roles are embedded in society and reinforced in various contexts from home to school and beyond. These internalized values and roles influence the behavior of males and females in society and create an understanding of what is typical behavior. Thus, a woman who is socialized similarly to the girls in her classroom may be able to better recognize the range of "acceptable" behavior for her female students, while a man socialized in a cultural context similar to the boys in his classroom may have a better understanding of the range of gender-typical male behaviors. While this is a cursory speculation about the potential mechanisms that may help explain the findings, further examination is warranted that better integrates a wide range of gender identity and expression for both teachers and students.

Finally, the non-significant findings in this study are important to discuss given their potential implications for school districts. As discussed in detail earlier, the relationship-building focus of Restorative Practices was theorized mainly as an intervention for narrowing the racial relationship gaps that exist for students of color. RP in schools is commonly regarded as an alternative to exclusionary discipline use—one of the indicators of relationship quality used in this study. However, correlational findings in the study suggest that exclusionary discipline use is not linked to the quality of adult-student relationships. Given this finding, it is important to consider other potential interventions that might interrupt the pattern of exclusionary discipline

use. Additional research is needed on the impacts of interventions such social-emotional learning curricula, programs supporting coping skill-building for students, and interventions targeting the development of academic skills for students and the reduction of adults' racial implicit bias.

Limitations

Various limitations of this study must be considered in order to draw appropriate conclusions. Given the multicultural nature of the schools and the many subgroups represented within them, there were various groups that were re-categorized into other racial groups. For example, students who identified as mixed race were represented in the Other category along with students who identified themselves as Other race. Due to the very small number of students in the discrete groups, these individuals were collapsed into the Other category. Similarly, teachers who did not identify within one of the three major categories of focus within the study (e.g., Black, Latino, White) were also categorized in Other race. Thus, conclusions drawn regarding individuals within this category should be understood within this context.

Furthermore, the study was conducted with a small sample of matched and mismatched pairs ($n = 183$). A study using a larger sample of teacher-student pairs may have had greater power to detect a statistically significant difference if one did, in fact, exist in the population. Further research should examine the relationship between teacher-student racial match and teacher-student relationship quality with a larger sample of matched pairs.

In addition, students were asked to report on their schoolwide perceptions of teacher trust and fairness. That is, they were asked about their experiences of teachers in their schools on a whole as opposed to their perceptions of specific classroom teachers. While a schoolwide understanding of student perception of their teachers provides important information regarding a

students' experiences in school and has been used in prior published research (See Okonofua, Paunesku, & Walton, 2016), it may be useful to examine individual students' perceptions of individual teachers in order to better understand the link between racial match and relationship quality in future studies.

Given that the data collected was self-reported by students, it is possible that social desirability bias or other factors may have affected the students' reporting. For example, a student may have endorsed a rating higher than their true feelings would dictate in order to appear more favorably in the eyes of data collectors, teachers, administrators, etc. In the future, additional research methods such as student interviews or observations of teacher-student interactions may provide important insights into the quality of teacher student relationships.

Future Directions

Further examination of teacher-student relationships is warranted in order to understand the nuances and multidimensionality of relationships. This study examined trust, fairness, and exclusionary discipline use as indicators of relationship quality; however, additional constructs may be important to consider when aiming to understand relationships. For example, examining nuanced levels of teacher-student relationships by highlighting the difference between a respectful, "working" relationship versus a deeper, more meaningful relationship may provide important insights regarding how relationships impact student behavior and experiences in school. It may also reveal implications that could support the creation of effective relationship-building interventions. In addition, further inquiry about how implicit racial bias, teacher expectancies, stereotype threat, colorblind vs multicultural ideologies, and the role of family engagement contribute to achievement and discipline gaps is needed.

Implications for Practice

The study findings suggest that gender match may have implications for teacher-student relationship. Thus, it may be important to consider gender representation, as well as racial representation, in the classroom and provide interventions for ensuring that the teacher force matches the student body on gender lines. Additionally, it is important that teachers understand the dangers of alienating students through exclusionary discipline use. Continued education on the risks of exclusionary discipline use, especially for Black male students, should be provided along with more positive alternatives that can support all students.

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Appendix A

Eleven Essential Elements of RP

RP Elements	Definition
1. Affective Statements	Statements that express personal feelings in response to specific behaviors of others
2. Restorative Questions	Questions that address inappropriate behavior and help to identify who is harmed
3. Small Impromptu Conference	Structured conversations used to resolve low-level conflict
4. Proactive Circles	Provide opportunities to share feelings and experiences to build trust and understanding
5. Responsive Circles	Engage students in conflict management by repairing harm and restoring relationships
6. Restorative Conferences	Structured conversations used to resolve high-level conflict
7. Fair Process	Ensures that people are treated respectfully throughout any decision-making processes
8. Reintegrative Management of Shame	Encourages acknowledgement of feelings of the shamed person
9. Restorative Staff Community	Modeling and consistent use of RP to build and maintain healthy staff relationships
10. Restorative Approach with Families	Consistent use of RP in interactions with students' families
11. Fundamental Hypothesis Understandings	Humans are happiest when those in authority do things *with* them rather than *to* them

Note: Adapted from the International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP): SaferSanerSchools Program.

Appendix B

Restorative Practices Implementation Survey Items

Teacher Trust Scale

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Strongly disagree = 1, Somewhat disagree = 2, Somewhat agree = 3, Strongly agree = 4

1. Thinking about teachers in your school:

    a. I trust the way they use their power and authority.

    b. I respect their power and authority.

    c. I feel fairly treated by them.

    d. I feel like they make good decisions for everyone.

    e. I feel like they help me solve my problems by talking it out.

Teacher Fairness Scale

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Strongly disagree = 1, Somewhat disagree = 2, Somewhat agree = 3, Strongly agree = 4

2. We are interested in learning more about your experience with rules in this school.

    a. The punishment for breaking school rules is the same for all students.

    b. When students are accused of doing something wrong, they get a chance to explain,

    c. I am treated fairly by teachers of the same race or ethnicity as me.

    d. I am treated fairly by teachers of a different race or ethnicity than me.

    e. Students get suspended for minor things.

    f. Students can get away with breaking the rules at this school pretty easily.

Exclusionary discipline

3. Thus far in the school year, how many times has your teacher in this classroom...

    a. Asked you to leave the classroom because of your behavior, but DID NOT write a formal discipline referral?

    b. Asked you to leave the classroom because of your behavior AND wrote a formal discipline referral.

    c. Called security on you for your behavior.

RP Use Scale

Please circle the best number for each statement:

Not at all = 1, Rarely = 2, Sometimes = 3, Often = 4, Always = 5

1. My teacher asks students to express their feelings, ideas, and experiences.
2. When someone misbehaves, my teacher asks students questions about their side of the story.
3. When someone misbehaves, my teacher has that person talk to who they hurt and asks them to make things right.
4. When someone misbehaves, my teacher has those who were hurt have a say in what needs to happen to make things right.
5. My teacher uses circles as a time for students to share feelings, ideas, and experiences.
6. My teacher takes the thoughts and ideas of students into account when making decisions.