The Absence of a Father in the Home as a Predictor for Students Receiving Long-Term Suspensions and Students Failing to Complete High School

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The undersigned, approved by the Director of the EdD Degree in the Graduate Studies in Education, have examined a dissertation titled:

The Absence of a Father in the Home as a Predictor for Students Receiving Long-Term Suspensions and Students Failing to Complete High School

Presented by Wendell IaKopo Fuimaono, a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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Abstract

Children growing up in a home with no father have become increasingly more common in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Consequences of absentee fathers include; increased chances of poverty and negative impacts on social, emotional, behavioral and educational outcomes. This study investigated whether a relationship exists between absent fathers and students who dropped out of high school and students who engaged in behavior resulting in long-term out-of-school suspension. The researcher collected graduation and discipline data from five different school districts over a five year period, including demographic information to consider gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status as factors. The researcher used correlations to determine if a relationship exists between father status and students who drop out of school. The researcher used correlations as well as regression analysis to analyze whether a relationship exists between father status and students who received long-term suspensions and whether father status can be identified as a predictor for students who received long-term out-of-school suspensions. The study found there to be a relationship between father status and students suspended long-term and identified father status as a predictor of students suspended out-of-school. However, the data did not find a statistically significant correlation between absent fathers and dropouts. The results of the study align with Sobolewski's research (2007) which has indicated children have the highest level of health, security, education, and contentment when raised in a low-conflict household in which the parents are married.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The number of students growing up in a home with no father has increased almost 200 percent since 1960. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 1960, 8.0 percent of children under eighteen years were living with mother only. In 1980, that number increased to 18.0 percent of children under eighteen years living with mother only. In the years 1990, 2000, and 2010, the percentages of children under eighteen years living with mother only increased from 21.6 percent to 22.4 percent to 23.1 percent respectively (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). With no strong, positive male presence in the home, students are left to be guided by one parent. Students may also look to television, musical artists and social media for advice or guidance. Sometimes these sources can be negative and misleading. Kendrick and Alcorn (2011) contend the next generation of young men is remaining dependent on their mothers while becoming addicted to things such as entertainment, pornography, and video games while other research indicates that adolescent girls who have lower levels of father-daughter relationships are more likely to have sex before age sixteen (Ikramullah, Manlove, Cui, & Moore 2009). Students who face those aforementioned challenges are at risk of not completing high school. While many factors contribute to the dropout rate, discipline issues, and juvenile criminal activity; the absence of a father is consistent in each (Osborne, C., & McLanahan, S. 2007).

Two organizations and major contributors to research on the importance and benefit of fathers taking an active parenting role as well as the consequences for absent fathers are; The National Fatherhood Initiative and The National Center for Fathering. Regarding dropouts, the major reasons for students not completing high school include lack of parental support and single parent households. Dr. Edward Kruk's research adds fatherless children have more trouble

academically, citing 71 percent of high school dropouts are fatherless (Kruk, 2012). Students who are raised in a home with no father increase their chances of not completing high school, among other concerns including but not limited to: teen pregnancy, mental and physical health disorders, drug and alcohol abuse, and higher rates of suicide (Kruk, 2012).

The National Center for Fathering (NFC) was founded in 1990 with the purpose of turning the hearts of fathers to their children (Our History 2014, n.p.). Prior to its foundation, a man named Ken Canfield conducted research on fathering in pursuit of his Ph.D. He analyzed the statistics and research on fathering and concluded helping men become better fathers is one of the most effective ways to benefit children and strengthen families (Canfield, 1996, p. 14). Canfield's conclusion provided the foundation and mission for the NFC which is to "work to improve the lives of children and reverse the trends of fatherlessness by inspiring and equipping fathers, grandfathers, and father figures to be actively engaged in the life of every child" (About NFC 2014). The NFC's contention is absent fathers are associated with almost all societal concerns. Their theory is many of these concerns can be combatted when an actively engaged father or father figure is in the life of each child.

The National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) has a similar history and purpose as the NFC. In 1993, Don Eberly organized a team of twenty social experts from throughout the United States and met in Aspen, Colorado to develop an all-inclusive organization to debate the effects of absent fathers (History/ National Fatherhood Initiative 2014). Within one year of the meeting, the NFI was formed. Since then, the NFI has accepted a mission and believes if the number of involved, responsible, and committed fathers increased, the result would be the improvement of the well-being of children and challenges their families face (Mission and Values/ National Fatherhood Initiative 2014, n.p.). The absent father concerns of the NFC and NFI are shared in

other research (Dornbusch et al., 1985; Teachman, Day, Paasch, Carver & Call, 1998). Additional research on this topic can benefit families and schools; specifically as it pertains to dropouts and behaviors resulting in long-term out-of-school suspensions.

Problem Statement

Absentee fathers may be a predictor of students failing to earn a high school diploma and students engaging in behavior resulting in long-term suspensions (Carver & Call, 1998). According to Stanton (2009), the absence of a father is among the most significant problems facing the United States. Some of the consequences of father absence include increased drug and alcohol abuse (Patock-Peckham, 2007), increased likelihood of teen pregnancy (Jordahl, 2009) and increased chance of juvenile and risky behaviors (Dornbusch et al., 1985; Teachman, Day, Paasch, Carver & Call, 1998).

The dropout rate and long-term suspensions are a concern for educators, juvenile officers, social workers, and a problem for society as students with these problems may not be productive citizens. Educators are held accountable for dropouts and are continually seeking to understand the factors related to the problems of behavior leading to long-term suspensions and possible dropping out of school. The absence of a father in the home may be a predictor of future problems with behavior leading to long-term suspensions and possibly dropping out of school. Kruk, (2012) stated students who are raised in a home with no father increase their chances of not completing high school, among other concerns including teen pregnancy, health issues and higher rates of suicide. Others such as Parke (2003) contend if a single parent can provide financial stability and quality time with their children; this concept suggests the children of single parent homes will be just as successful as their counterparts from two-parent homes. The

most important factor is providing an environment that is stable and not full of conflict (Parke 2003).

The researcher has observed professionals such as teachers and school administrators who want to understand what may put a student at risk of having behavior problems and possibly dropping out of school. The researcher intends to use data from the student information systems of 27 high schools in the suburban area around Kansas City. The 27 high schools have 38,862 students and the high schools are located within 15 Missouri public school districts. The data will be analyzed using long-term suspensions as the dependent variable and father status, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status as the independent variables. According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), free or reduced lunch eligibility is the current proxy for identifying low socioeconomic status (DESE, 2017). The purpose is to provide support to educators by adding another tool to recognize if a student may need additional services to stay out of trouble and finish school.

Theoretical Framework

The research of Bocknek (2014) and Pougnet (2012) will serve as the foundation for the framework of the study. Father involvement and the need to strengthen families can be found in the work of both Bocknek and Pougnet. Bocknek (2014) concluded the role of a consistently present father can increase the likelihood the children can experience a superior sense of external organization which can lead to a more ideal internal organization and indicated father presence can impact family stability. Pougnet (2012) found children who experienced father absence were more likely to drop out of high school, become teen parents, and have lower paying jobs when compared to their peers living with both parents. The lower paying jobs result in a lower socioeconomic status (SES) and Pougnet's (2012) research indicated a lower SES is linked to

increased alcohol and drug abuse. Pougnet also identified children who experienced father absence as a result of divorce had an increased likelihood of hyperactivity, interpersonal aggression, and criminal behavior which could lead to out-of-school suspensions or expulsions. These issues can compromise a marital or cohabitating relationship and can lead to divorce or the dissolution of a cohabitating relationship, resulting in the continuation of the cycle of father absence (Pougnet, 2012). The objective of this study is to determine if their findings concerning behavior leading to long-term suspensions and dropping out of school correlates to the absence of a father in the home.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine if a relationship exists between the absence of a father or father figure and long-term out-of-school suspensions and high school dropouts and if the relationship is significant enough to be used to enable educators to predict if the student is at-risk of having behavior problems and dropping out of school. The researcher will also determine if the gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status of the student are factors that may change the relationship.

The researcher intends to add additional knowledge about the father or father figure present in the home for the purpose of enabling educators to help students before behavior problems become serious and the student disconnects from the education process, possibly leading the student to drop out of school.

Research Questions (RQ) and Null Hypotheses (H_0)

RQ_1 Is there a relationship between the absence of a father and the number of long-term suspensions received and dropping out of school?

Ho_1 There is no statistically significant correlation between the absence of a father in the home and the number of long-term suspensions received by a student.

Ho_2 There is no statistically significant correlation between the absence of a father in the home and a student dropping out of school.

RQ_2 Is there a relationship between the absence of a father and the number of long-term suspensions received when gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status are factors?

Ho_3 There is no statistically significant correlation between the absence of a father in the home and long-term suspensions received by a student when gender is a factor.

Ho_4 There is no statistically significant correlation between the absence of a father in the home and long-term suspensions received by a student when ethnicity is a factor.

Ho_5 There is no statistically significant correlation between the absence of a father in the home and long-term suspensions received by a student when socioeconomic status is a factor.

Limitations of Study

The researcher relied on the school districts for the accuracy of the data provided by participating high schools. The researcher relied on the accuracy of information provided by parents to the school district providing the data regarding district demographics. The data received included only demographic information on dropouts and students who received long-term suspension. Given the opportunity to run the study again, the researcher would request demographic information on all students from the Fall of 2009 to the Spring of 2014 in order to gain a wider perspective of how absent fathers impact the lives of students.

Delimitations of Study

The study data includes dropout and long-term suspension data from five school districts in the Kansas City Metropolitan area. The five districts include eight high schools with 12,677 students.

Definition of Terms

Father- For the purpose of this study, the term 'father' will include a biological or adoptive male parent who resides with the children

Father Figure- For the purpose of this study, the term 'father figure' will include an adult male who is not the biological father but resides with the children

Father status- Whether a student resides in a home with a father or without a father

Long-term Suspension- An out-of-school suspension of ten or more consecutive school days

Dropout- A student who fails to fulfill graduation requirements and as a result, does not complete high school

High School- Grades nine through twelve

Socioeconomic status- For the purpose of this study, this term defines whether or not a student qualifies for free or reduced lunch

Summary

Chapter One includes the problem statement explaining the concern with students who are suspended out-of-school long-term and students who drop out of high school. The theoretical framework includes research on the importance of present fathers and the benefit children experience because engaged fathers are in the home. The purpose of the study explains the researcher's intent to identify if a relationship exists between the absence of a father and school suspensions and dropouts. The research questions and hypotheses outline specifically if a relationship does exist between absent fathers, long-term suspensions and high school dropouts. The research questions and hypotheses also consider gender and race. The Limitations and Delimitations sections of Chapter One illustrate the researcher's dependence on school districts for reliable data and accurate parent reporting to those districts for the data. The definition of

terms of the study clearly defines what a father is for the purpose of this study along with long-term suspensions and dropouts. Chapter Two presents the review of literature which includes benefits of a two-parent home, importance of a father's role, out-of-school suspensions, and literature regarding high school dropouts. Chapter Three describes the methodology implemented for this research study. It includes the participants, selection and sampling, research setting, research design, data collection and analysis processes.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Research has indicated children have the highest level of health, security, education, and contentment when raised in a low-conflict household in which the parents are married (Sobolewski, 2007). Students raised in a two-parent household are more likely to persist in graduating high school (Kruk, 2012; North Carolina State University, 2012). Consequently, students raised in a home with no father have an increased likelihood to engage in risky behavior, child abuse, criminal and delinquent activity, drug and alcohol abuse and poor mental health (Kruk, 2012). These behaviors can result in out-of-school suspensions. Researchers found out-of-school suspensions can increase the likelihood of future disciplinary problems and academic concerns resulting in students dropping out of school (Skiba, 2006). A statewide study conducted in the state of Washington found districts throughout the state with higher suspension rates had lower graduation rates (Shaw, 2012).

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Education conducted a study to explore the factors or reasons why students drop out of high school. The study used data from the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS: 2002). The data of ELS: 2002 featured a nationally representative, longitudinal study of 10th graders in 2002 and a follow up for the same cohort group as 12th graders in 2004. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the data collected included reading and math achievement scores, surveys completed by students, parents, teachers, and administrators and school records from approximately 750 schools and over 17,000 students (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The study yielded a variety of reasons for students dropping out of school and Doll (2013) grouped those factors into three categories. The first category was being "pushed out." Being pushed out is described as

the school initiating the process to remove the student from the school setting. This could be the result of the student falling so far behind, they feel they could not finish and become at-risk for not graduating. According to the Department of Education (2009), the top push out factors included: poor attendance, failing classes, not keeping up with homework, peer interaction concerns, suspension, and expulsion.

The second category of reasons for students dropping out of high school was the "pulled out" problem. With the "pulled out" issue, students take the initiative to remove themselves from the school setting as a result of various distractions or attractions. According to the Department of Education (2009), the top "pull out" factors included: students thinking it was easier to earn a GED, students becoming pregnant, needing to support family, students needing to care for a family member, or student becoming a father or mother of a baby.

The third category, according to Doll (2013) for students dropping out of high school was due to them "falling out." This category noted neither the school nor the student initiated the process of removal. Instead, situations and circumstances outside of the control of both the school and the student occurred, eventually reducing the connection between the two. Examples of "falling out" included: students not liking school or feeling like they did not belong. All three of these categories resulted in students failing to complete high school.

An important variable weaving throughout each of the categories was the family structure. Support from parents can help increase communication between the school and the home and deters some of the factors of being "pushed out" (Doll, 2013). A strong relationship between the school and the home can help align the two to the goals of their child progressing towards graduation. Parents have the opportunity to have an impact to ensure students attend school. This will allow them to not fall behind academically. Parents also have the opportunity

to invest time to help students with homework which can decrease the likelihood of failed courses which can increase their chances of graduation. Having two parents help carry the load can be a benefit to the student's progress towards high school graduation (North Carolina State University, 2012).

Students who engage in behaviors resulting in long-term suspensions increase the likelihood of being a high school dropout. Research has found the chances of dropping out of school double with even one suspension. Long-term suspension from school is identified as a triggering event to dropping out (Balfanz, 2012).

In this chapter, the researcher detailed the benefits for children living in a two-parent home, including the involvement of stepfathers. This chapter elaborated on the benefits of a father's presence in the home related to the development of the child and the potential consequences of a father absence including the possibility of an increase in the child's criminal and delinquent activity. Research is also presented on how a father's absence may impact children's mental health and result in additional discipline infractions leading to out-of-school suspensions. Literature is presented elaborating on the effectiveness of out-of-school suspensions and characteristics of students receiving out-of-school suspension are detailed.

"I said that the biggest ingredient in school performance is the teacher. That's the biggest ingredient within a school. But the single biggest ingredient is the parent" (Obama 2009, p. 5). President Obama supported the notion by stating active and engaged parents are vital to student success and progress towards graduation. The President's comments are supported in the next section on the benefits of a two-parent home.

Benefits of a Two-Parent Home

Researcher Sobolewski (2007) articulates it best when he stated: "Children have the highest level of well-being when they are raised in a low-conflict married household, acknowledging the importance of strong maternal as well as paternal relationships" (p 1120). Others agree with President Obama and Sobolewski while acknowledging the contributions of teachers. Teachers have the opportunity to help develop and grow students academically, however, the impact they have is dependent upon the home environment provided by parents (Drotar, Robinson, Jeavons, & Kirchner, 2009). The general stability of a two-parent home is considered a foundation and key component to raising a successful and healthy adult. A study by the National Center for Fathering (2009) conducted a survey of 1,000 adults and eighty-nine percent of the participants agreed it is important for children to live in a home where both their mother and father reside. When both parents take an active role, they share many responsibilities; among these are reading to your children, helping them with and reviewing homework, being involved in teacher meetings and school events. Research by North Carolina State University (NCSU) (2012) supports the findings of the National Center for Fathering and states the practice of two parents taking an active role in shared parent responsibility can have a more positive impact regarding academic achievement, regardless of the quality of the school.

The benefits of children living in a two-parent home are numerous. Married couples who graduated from college tend to stay married. This provides for dual incomes as well as more earning power because of their levels of education in comparison to single-parent homes (Howard and Reeves 2014). This can allow for more experiences and opportunities for their children. Stable and healthy relationships are key to fostering positive parental interactions. With two parents, one does not have to shoulder sole responsibility for raising the children while

providing an income to support the family. Time, money, social, and emotional needs can be shared between the parents. Each parent has roles and responsibilities and these must be accepted by both parents to provide the best opportunities for their children. While the maternal influence of a mother to her child cannot be replaced, it is important for men to step into and accept their role of a father (Howard and Reeves, 2014).

However, not all researchers agree a two-parent household is the ideal environment for developing and educating a child. Some research indicates simply having two parents in the home does not automatically remove children from becoming at-risk of not receiving a high school diploma. Divorce rates have increased and the number of children born outside of wedlock has also risen. As such, single-parent families are more common (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2012). The research of Peters and Kamp Dusch (2009) contends children who live in a stable single-parent environment generally perform behaviorally and academically as well as children who live in homes with both parents. It is the stable environment that makes a difference, not the number of parents with whom a child lives (Peters & Kamp Dush, 2009). Children of married couples who live in a home that experiences high levels of conflict can experience as many behavioral and academic issues as their counterparts who live in a single-parent home (Amato, 2000).

Stepfather's Role in a Child's Life.

Divorce and out-of-wedlock child birth can result in blended families and step-parents. The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health was used to analyze the relationship between stepfather involvement and adolescent wellbeing. The results from the study indicated a positive and engaged stepfather-stepchild relationship is a benefit to adolescent wellbeing but most beneficial when the child also has a positive relationship with the mother (Vogt Yuan,

2006). The study also indicated a decrease in adolescent depression in cases when the stepfather has resided in the home over a long period of time and engages in shared activities. Another study showed the potential impact stepfathers can provide when engaged. Researchers examined paternal involvement for 68 stepfathers and 68 biological fathers of first grade students. The findings suggested no difference in the involvement in child-rearing activities or in the quality of engagement with the children (Pasley, 2007). The results also showed a positive correlation between marital satisfaction and the involvement in child-rearing activities for the stepfathers. This was not the case for biological fathers. The research related to biological fathers indicated the more number of hours the mother worked correlated to a lower quality of father engagement (Pasley, 2007). This could lead one to conclude, in this particular study, the stepfathers were intentional with their relationships with the stepchildren because they were conscious of how it would impact their relationship with the child's mother. The importance of a stepfather was also found in a study by King (2006). These results indicated teens had more positive outcomes when they maintained strong relationships with both a stepfather and the biological father who did not reside in the home. The study also concluded the stepfathers had closer relationships with the children due to their resident status (King, 2006).

Tillman's (2007) study also revealed insight on the impact of stepfamilies which, according to their research, cohabitating stepfather families is the fastest growing family type. Their research revealed grades were lower for children living in a cohabitating stepfather family formed after a divorce or separation when compared to children living in single-mother families formed after a divorce or separation. College expectations were also significantly lower for children in stepfather families when compared to other types of stepfamily and single-parent households (Tillman, 2007). This emphasizes the importance of a healthy marriage as other

research identified divorce as a reason for reduced children's psychosocial well-being, which can cause a decline in academic achievement (Potter, 2010).

Financial Stability for Children Living in a Two-Parent Family.

As Howard and Reeves noted, a two-parent home also has the possibility for multiple sources of income which can decrease the chances of the family living in poverty. Howard and Reeves (2014) conclude both higher income and more engaged parenting contribute to successful children and this is generally found in a home where parents are married and reside in the same home. Fathers living in the home can positively impact the earning power for the family. One can assume a home with two working parents is able to provide financial stability compared to single-parent homes. Child poverty is a consequence for families who are unable to provide an income to care for their children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Historical data reveals from 1970-1996, child poverty increased five percent due to single-parent families, particularly mothers who were never married (Sawhill, 2006). In 2004, nine percent of children in a two-parent home lived under the poverty line; 47 percent of children raised by single mothers lived under the poverty line in 2010 (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2012). In 2009, the poverty rate for single parents with children in the United States was 37.1 percent while 6.8 percent was the rate for married couples with children (Rector, 2012). Some of the difference in poverty is due to education and marriage. Single parents are likely to have less education than married couples. Rector (2012) analyzed data from 2008 which included children born and education level of the mother. His analysis indicated 65.2 percent of the children born to mothers who were high school dropouts were born out-of-wedlock. The same year, 54.5 percent of the children born to mothers who were high school graduates were born out-of-wedlock. The same research showed 8.1 percent of the children born to mothers who were college graduates

were born out-of-wedlock. However, when single parents are compared to married couples, with the head of the household having the same level of education as the single parent, the married poverty rate is over 75 percent lower (Rector, 2012). In 2007, statistics showed a significant difference in poverty rates between custodial mothers and custodial fathers. The poverty rate for custodial mothers was 27 percent compared to the 12.9 percent poverty rate for custodial fathers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). In the same year, research was conducted and analyzed involving families at risk of being homeless. Families with children accounted for between one-third and one-half of all people considered homeless (Predictors of Homelessness, 2008). In 2008, research continued to support the trend and cited poverty rates for different groups. According to one particular study, the poverty rate was 13.2 percent for the entire population, 19 percent for children, and 28.7 percent for female-headed households (Edin, 2010). In 2009, a study was conducted including almost 5,000 children born to parents who lived in twenty large American cities. The study found "unmarried childbearing (women) helped sustain high poverty rates due to multiple partner fertility and relationship instability" (McLanahan, 2009). The research indicated the need for men to enter healthy marital relationships for the financial benefit of their children.

Rector's (2009) research indicated child poverty is a national concern and identified the absence of married fathers in the home as the primary cause. He considered marriage to be the greatest weapon against child poverty. The two-parent household generally benefits children by giving them the opportunity to experience parental time and money. Money allows parents to provide basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing. It also gives children the economic resources and opportunity to experience and participate in enrichment, travel, and extracurricular activities. Carlson (2006) found spending time together gives parents and children the

opportunity to connect and establish a healthy stable environment in the home. When one parent is removed from the home, time and money become more limited and those opportunities become less frequent and can impact families. Howard and Reeves (2014) attribute the higher level of success of the children of married couples to two sources. They call them "the income effect" and "the parenting effect." "The income effect" is simple math. Two sources of income are better than one. The "parenting effect" states two parents are better than one.

Howard and Reeves (2014) believe children raised by married couples experience better economic and social lives when compared to single-parent children. They contend two-parent families are generally more educated which is related to an increased earning capacity for the household. This can provide more social and education experiences for their children.

Social and Sexuality Stability for Children Living in a Two-Parent Family.

Two-parent families create an environment that promotes social stability. According to Howard and Reeves (2014) families with two parents are typically more affluent and well-educated. This same study compared children of single-parent homes to children of married couples at different stages of life starting at early childhood extending to adulthood. They used the Brookings Social Genome Model as measurement to compare the groups. The research indicated children of continuously married mothers achieved higher levels of success in every benchmark in every life stage measured. This is what they call "the parenting effect." As such, their research seeks to find out if marriage itself is the key component to successful children. They concluded children of married couples do not outperform children of single-parent homes just because their parents show better parenting behavior, but it is a factor in the marriage gap. The marriage gap refers to the economic disparities between those who are married and those who are single.

As they progress through their schooling, children have the opportunity to learn accountability. In a National Education Association (NEA) article on student accountability, Graham (2013) stated parents are an essential part of the partnership to help students grow to become productive and self-conscious adults. With parental support, students are held accountable at home and school which can increase the likelihood students follow through on their efforts and goals. Holding students accountable for their success can be a challenge. Expectations and consequences must be established to reach the goal of every student to take ownership of their own behavior and success (Graham, 2013). Students who fail to follow the guidelines and expectations can experience not only academic consequences, but disciplinary consequences as well. Disciplinary consequences range from parent contacts, to detentions, and even out-of-school suspensions or expulsion.

Another study yielded results finding another positive influence of father involvement to be beneficial for children. In this study, which analyzed low-income families, the results revealed father involvement seemed to reduce the occurrence of behavioral problems in boys and psychological problems in young women (Sarkadi, 2008). Anthes (2010) reported similar findings as Sarkadi (2008) and cited high levels of father involvement has a correlation with children's confidence and self-control leading to children who are less likely to act out in school or engage in risky behaviors in adolescents.

Jablonska (2007) concluded risky behaviors and mental distress for children are more prevalent in single-parent homes compared to those in two-parent homes. Jablonska found children who reside in a single-parent home, whether they reside with the mother or the father, are at higher risk of different behavioral problems than children in two-parent families.

Men have a responsibility to provide a model and example of healthy relationships for their children (Martin, 2010). A father's failure to be present can increase the probability for their children to engage in risky behavior, specifically adolescent sexual activity. One study assessed the risk and protective factors associated with early sexual activity among low-income adolescents. The research identified two variables as protective factors against early sexual activity. The protective factors were maternal education and father involvement. However, father involvement was the only factor to decrease the odds of engaging in sexual activity while none of the other family processes was found to be statistically significant (Jordahl, 2009). Another study illustrated the importance of involved and engaged fathers by examining the relationship between adolescents' sexual risk behaviors and their parenting processes with their residential parents. The study found adolescents who engage more often in family activities and had fathers who were aware of their peer groups and non-family activities "reported lower levels of sexual risk behaviors in comparison to the parents who were less engaged" (Coley, 2009). Coley's research also included step-families and found adolescents who resided with step-parents reported their parents to be less involved and engaged when compared to their peers who resided with their biological parents. Moreover, the study revealed adolescents in stepfamilies who spent time in a single-parent home showed significantly higher average levels of sexual risk behaviors when compared to peers who resided with their biological parents. One of the reasons for the increased sexual activity of adolescents with absent fathers, specifically girls, is the need to be able to form healthy relationships with men. One study explored this need by interviewing daughters who experienced father absence as a child or adolescent. The subjects interviewed were women aged 22 to 46 and shared insights and struggles they experienced because of father absence. The participants shared they had a difficult time developing healthy relationships with

men as a result of not having a father present. The participants also identified a strong need for attention and affection from men which was also associated by the participants with the lack of affection received from their fathers (East, 2007). This need for attention and affection made these participants vulnerable to any positive male attention and put them at risk of making poor relationship decisions. A possible result of these poor relationship decisions is teen pregnancy. One study identified girls growing up without a strong father figure as an important factor for having become sexually active (Burn, 2008). The study found the inability to develop a healthy relationship with a father or father figure may contribute to the need for male attention and earlier onset of sexual activity. This puts those girls at higher risk for teen pregnancy. Ikramulla's (2009) research supported the need for fathers to be present and engaged and by doing so, they can impact their children's decisions of engaging in early sexual activity. The research concluded girls who reported to have strong, healthy relationships with their parents noted these guardians were aware of their friends and their whereabouts when not at home and were less likely to become sexually active at an early age when compared to peers with lower levels of parental relationship quality. These findings stress the importance of intentional quality family time and the benefits it can have on teens. If Jablonska (2007) and others are correct in their conclusions that risky behaviors and mental distress for children are more prevalent in single-parent homes compared to those in two-parent homes; then a father in the home should positively affect the academic and social behaviors of the children when working in harmony with the mother. If a father in the home, working in harmony with the mother, is the ideal living environment for children, an absent father can result in consequences. The next section presents consequences of a father's absence and the impact it has on the students' education, discipline

record and criminal and delinquent activity, drug and alcohol use, and mental health development.

Consequences of a Father's Absence

Generally, when one parent leaves the home, it is the mother who is left to lead the household. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 1960, 8.0 percent of children under eighteen years were living with mother only. In 1980, that number increased to 18.0 percent of children under eighteen years living with mother only. In the years 1990, 2000, and 2010, the percentages of children under eighteen years living with mother only increased from 21.6 percent to 22.4 percent to 23.1 percent respectively (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). The physical absence of fathers is now considered the most significant family and social problem facing America (Stanton, 2009). Reasons for father absenteeism include issues ranging from divorce, to denial of paternity, to incarceration. Approximately 1.7 million American children, or 2.3 percent of the population of children in the United States under the age of 18 years, have a parent in the federal or state prison system (Rossen, 2011). The problem of absent fathers does not limit itself to lower socioeconomic homes. It is a wide spread problem. The mere presence of a father in the home is not enough to positively impact children. Many suburban men spend more than 60 hours a week to provide for their families which leaves little time for their children, so from a time standpoint, many days, those children are left without a father as well (Rosiak, 2012). The father's role in the family is more than that of an authority figure or breadwinner. Men must be actively engaged in each facet of a child's life. Sitcoms and television shows often portray men as weak and clumsy while the wives run the homes and wield the authority (Goudreau, 2012). While a mother's love and attention cannot be replaced, fathers must embrace their role and work in step to provide the best opportunity for their children.

Father's Absence and Impacts on Children's Education.

Many benefits of the father being present are found at the early childhood level. A study was conducted to examine the connection between father involvement and infant cognitive outcomes (Bronte-Tinkew, 2008). The study indicated certain aspects of father involvement and interaction such as cognitively stimulating activities, physical care, and paternal warmth were related to lower chances of infant cognitive delay (Bronte-Tinkew, 2008). Stimulating activities can include: reading and talking to the baby, playing music, interacting with toys that expose them to different sounds, colors and textures. The study found early positive father-child involvement can reduce cognitive delays in their children. Garfield's (2006) research aligned with that study and cited father involvement is connected to positive cognitive, developmental, and socio-behavioral child outcomes, including improved weight gain in premature infants, improved breastfeeding rates, higher receptive language skills, and higher academic achievement.

As children grow, the impact of a present father can influence at what academic and social level a child is ready to attend elementary school. A study done by Martin, (2010) analyzed parental supportiveness. Parental supportiveness was assessed by parent-child video-taped sessions during preschool and observations and measures on interaction and approach were documented. The data was collected, including measures of time spent with the children of mothers and fathers, and how they impacted their children's school readiness. The study revealed a father's supportiveness was crucial in homes where the mother's supportiveness score was below the mean. The study indicated fathers' supportiveness has a significant impact on children's school readiness in families when the mothers' levels of support are relatively low.

This illustrates the importance of an engaged father and the responsibility to lead his family to give children the opportunity to be successful when entering school.

As children enter school, the presence of a father continues to be a benefit. One study examined the father involvement of children born to adolescent mothers over the first ten years of the child's life (Howard, 2006). The study found father involvement to be associated with better socio-emotional and academic functioning for children. The results of the study found children with more involved fathers experienced fewer behavioral problems and scored higher on reading achievement assessments. The study illustrated the importance of active and engaged fathers of at-risk children. The impact was also present for nonresident fathers. Other research reveals fathers can increase their children's literacy skills by reading to and with their children, discussing books with them, and encouraging reading at home (Saracho, 2007). These benefits create a strong foundation for children as they grow and become more active in school and with peers.

Research also shows a father's presence can have an impact on the student's academic performance. A study by Paulson (2009) analyzed parental depression and its impact on expressive language development for children at 24 months of age. The study specifically investigated the role parent-to-child reading played, if any, in the children's language development. The study included 4,109 two-parent families and found mothers and fathers with depressive symptoms negatively impacted parent-to-child reading. However, parents' depression had more impact on how often fathers read to their children compared to mothers. The study revealed a correlation between the amount of time a father read to their infant and their child's expressive vocabulary. The less the fathers read to their infants, the poorer their toddler scored on a standard measure of expressive vocabulary at age two (Paulson, 2009). A

different study included 1,997 children ages three and older who lived with a residential father or father figure. This study by Hofferth (2006) found the biological paternal relationships to have greater influence than marital relationships. Hofferth's (2006) study cited children living with their married biological father tested at significant higher academic levels than those living with a nonbioligical father. In regard to mathematical and comprehension tests, no significant difference existed between students living with unmarried biological parents and students living with married biological parents, which indicated living with both biological parents, married or not, was beneficial for students in this study. Hofferth's research continued to state children living with a biological father and nonbioligical mother scored at similar academic levels to children living with both married biological parents. However, the study found children living with single fathers performed significantly lower academically than children living with both married biological parents (Hofferth, 2006). Another study conducted by Tillman (2007) included 13,988 students in grades 7-12 who experienced divorce, separation, or being born out of wedlock. Each of these children lived with at least one biological parent. The study found these students reported lower grade point averages as well as significantly higher levels of behavioral concerns in school than their counterparts who had always lived with both biological parents.

Absent fathers are considered to have many adverse effects on children. From an academic standpoint, research suggests children living in a home with no father present are more likely to not complete high school compared to a child living with both parents. Further, students from fatherless homes who do graduate high school do not perform as well with regards to college enrollment and graduation (Hetherington, 1999). Children from fatherless homes also show increased issues related to behavior which may result in a criminal record and delinquency.

Father's Absence Impact on Children's Criminal and Delinquent Activity.

One concerning consequence resulting from absent fathers is for the child to become involved in crime or delinquent activity. Much research has been conducted to determine the criminal consequences of absent fathers. Coley (2007) conducted a study of minority adolescents from low-income families ranging from ages ten to fourteen years. From a behavioral standpoint, children who do not live with their fathers are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school (Dawson, 1991). Children not living with their fathers may result in a higher possibility of juvenile delinquent activity (Dornbusch et al., 1985; Teachman, Day, Paasch, Carver, & Call, 1998).

The study revealed the adolescents who had more frequent communication and interaction with their nonresident biological fathers had a decrease in adolescent delinquency (Dornbusch et al., 1985; Teachman, Day, Paasch, Carver, & Call, 1998). Not only is father presence important, the approach fathers take with their children has an impact on delinquency. A team of researchers examined youth criminal offenders and divided them into three groups. The first group was offenders against people, the second group were property offenders and the third group were non-offenders. The non-offender group "perceived their fathers to be warmer and more overprotective compared to person offenders" (Palmer, 2007) indicating a nurturing father-child relationship is common among non-offenders. Research from Bronte-Tinkew (2006) supported Palmer's (2007) research and showed a positive father-child relationship indicated a decrease of engagement in multiple initial risky behaviors, adding children who had fathers with an authoritarian parenting style were associated with an increased risk of engaging in delinquent activity and substance abuse (Bronte-Tinkew, 2006). Their research also indicated the positive influence of a father-child relationship on risky behaviors was perceived to be

stronger for males than female adolescents. Research using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health studied the relationship between the risk of violent acts in neighborhoods and the family structure in the neighborhoods. The results showed when there was a low number of fathers in a neighborhood, there was an increased level of teen violence present (Knoester, 2005). Conversely, neighborhoods with an increased level of two-parent households experienced less violence.

Harper and McLanahan (2004) researched father absence and youth incarceration and found youths from fatherless homes had a higher incarceration risk than youths from two-parent homes. Their study associated father absence with other disadvantages including low parent education, teen motherhood, and low family income. However, controlling for income and these other factors, they found youths in homes with no father still had significantly increased chances of incarceration when compared to those from two-parent homes. Their study also found children born to single mothers who never had a father in the home had an increased chance of incarceration than children whose fathers left during their childhood or adolescent years (Harper & McLanahan, 2004). These risky behaviors can have academic consequences. Dawson (1991) would agree father absence contributes to the increased likelihood for children to be suspended or expelled from school.

Father's Absence Impact on Children's Mental Health, Drugs and Alcohol Misuse.

The father's presence and role in a stable and healthy marriage also impacts the emotional and behavioral well-being of their children. One study analyzed 1,997 children age three and older who lived with their biological father or father figure and found children living with married biological parents had significantly fewer externalizing and internalizing behavioral concerns than children living with at least one nonbioligical parent (Hofferth, 2006). When a

child experiences a divorce, typically one parent is removed from the home. Regardless of the reasons, divorce can damage a child's emotional and behavioral well-being. One study found adolescent girls to be the most at risk to develop depressive symptoms following their parents' divorce (Oldehikinel, 2008). At times, the relationship between the child and each parent can change as a result of divorce. Research was conducted to see if this impacted the child's emotional well-being. The research analyzed the effects of mothers' relationship changes between the birth of the child to age three. The research found children born to single mothers showed higher levels of aggressive behavior than children born to married mothers. The data showed children living in single mother households are like experiencing 5.25 partnership transitions (Osborne, 2007). This instability can make it difficult for children to adjust. Reeb's (2009) research found the gender of the children and their perception of their relationship with their father were important factors contributing to the relationship between fathers with depressive symptoms and adolescent adjustment (Reeb, 2009).

Drug and alcohol use and abuse are also consequences related to father absence. A study done by Patock-Peckham (2007) included 441 college students. The research discovered a poor bond with the student's father increased the chances of depression which, in turn, increased the likelihood of alcohol abuse among males and females (Patock-Peckham, 2007). Another study analyzed 296 at-risk adolescents whose fathers abused drugs. The study found the drug use by the father put a strain on the father-child relationship. The strained relationship increased the risk for adolescent drug use and smoking (Brook 2006).

A study conducted by Mandara (2006) considered the effects of father absence and African American adolescent drug use. This study was conducted in Southern California and analyzed 86 African American adolescents and their mothers. Forty of the participants were

girls and the other forty-six were boys. Half of the participants had two married parents and the other half had an unmarried mother. The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire developed to evaluate different parts of their personal and family life. Parents and adolescents completed the questionnaires separately to ensure confidentiality. The results of the study were different between the girls and boys. The study indicated boys from homes with an absent father were more likely to use drugs when compared to boys from homes where the father is present. The boys living in father present homes with increased parental monitoring, higher academic expectations resided in neighborhoods with less criminal activity and associated with peer groups who used less drugs, were less likely to use drugs than father absent boys. The results revealed no difference in drug use when comparing girls to absent father homes to girls living with their father. The study included key information related to African American boys and stated this group of boys from father-absent homes might be at increased risk for drug use problems (Mandara, 2006).

As the literature illustrates, the consequences of father absence impacts the probability of their children engaging in criminal activity, drug and alcohol abuse and can affect the mental health of their students. These concerns can lead to discipline infractions in school that could result in out-of-school suspensions.

Discipline Infractions Leading to Out-of-School Suspensions

When a student fails to complete high school, multiple variables can be contributing factors. It is not a decision made overnight but rather a process taking place over time (Doll, 2013). One variable hindering the ability for a student to graduate is suspension, specifically being suspended out of school. Social justice groups such as Appleseed and TeamChild recognize exclusionary discipline is sometimes necessary for safety reasons but advocate for

alternative ways to educate students if out-of-school suspension is put in place (Shaw, 2012). These discipline tools are designed to remove the student from the school environment to implement consequences for the violating student and to maintain safety of the rest of the student population. However, the literature written on this subject suggests there are significant negative effects for students who experience suspensions, "zero tolerance" policies, and grade retention. Often these experiences result in dropping out of school and involvement in juvenile delinquent activity which can have economic impacts and lack of civic participation (Balfanz, 2012; Fabelo, 2011; Shollenberger, 2013). Research suggests alternative means of discipline and restorative justice can reduce the number of suspensions and discipline infractions domestically and internationally (Schiff, 2013).

A longitudinal study of data was conducted for all 9th graders in the state of Florida for the academic year 2000-2001 (Balfanz, 2012). The intent of the researchers was to analyze the data to examine out-of-school suspensions for this freshman class and the impact on post-secondary outcomes. Their findings concluded out-of-school suspensions for disciplinary reasons, "are directly related to lower attendance rates, increased course failures," sending suspended students down a path of further disengagement from school and ultimately not completing high school, failing to earn a high school diploma (Balfanz, 2012). Dawson's (1991) research stated children who do not live with their fathers are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school.

The Balfanz (2012) research found of the 181,897 9th grades Florida students included in the study, 27 percent were suspended out-of-school during the 2000-2001 school year. This 27 percent, on average, were suspended twice during the year and missed an average of seven school days as a result of suspension.

Marchbanks (2013) conducted a longitudinal study in Texas, tracking 7th grade students through their 12th grade year. Their study found school discipline to be associated with approximately 4,700 grade retentions per year in the state of Texas which led to further disengagement from school and failure to earn a high school diploma. The Marchbanks (2013) data supports the data of Balfanz (2012) stating suspensions, whether in-school or out-of-school, remove the student from classroom support, giving them less opportunities and instruction exposure than their peers, which decreases their chances of academic success. The findings from the Texas research (Marchbanks, 2013) regarding discipline and grade retention state a student with no discipline violations has a probability of 0.027 of being retained in grades 7-12. The average number of discipline incidents for students referred to the office is 3.2. This figure more than doubles the students' probability of being retained to 0.063. Students in the study who received disciplinary action averaged 1.4 discipline infractions per school year between 7th and 12th grade. Those students have a 0.055 probability of grade retention which more than doubles the rate for students with no discipline history. Ten percent of the drops had a discipline history compared to the two percent that did not. These results indicated school discipline infractions in this Texas cohort related to a 29 percent increase in the likelihood of a high school dropout (Marchbanks, 2013). Researchers (Skiba, 2006) found out-of-school suspensions can increase the likelihood of future disciplinary problems, and academic concerns resulting in students dropping out of school.

Characteristics of Students Receiving Out-of-School Suspensions.

One of the initial components of the Skiba (2006) research identified characteristics of students who received suspensions during the school year. The subgroups suspended the most school days included black students, students eligible for free or reduced lunch, students

receiving special education, and students older than their cohort class. A racial breakdown found black students received almost double the number of suspensions as white students as 39 percent of black students were suspended one or more times while 22 percent of white students were suspended one or more times. In the cohort, 31percent of special education students were suspended compared to 25 percent of students suspended who were not on an IEP. Of the students eligible for free or reduced lunch subgroup, 34 percent were suspended while 16 percent of their classmates not eligible were suspended. As the Balfanz (2012) study looked at data from 2000-2001, the researchers pulled more recent data from 2011-2012 and found similar results. In the 2011-2012 academic school year, black students received 42 percent of all out-of-school suspensions of the K-12 population (Balfanz, 2012).

The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights released a School Discipline issue in March 2014. Included in the report were the suspension rates for male and female students for the 2011-2012 academic school year. With males and females representing approximately half of the student population, the male students represented almost three out of four students suspended out-of-school multiple times or expelled. Male students represented 72 percent of the student population suspended out-of-school multiple times while 28 percent of the student population suspended out-of-school multiple times were female students. The percentages for expulsions were similar as 74 percent of expulsions were male students and 26 percent were female. The report also gave state statistics and concluded in the state of Missouri; male students were suspended out-of-school at approximately twice the rate of female students (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014). These suspensions can impact the probability of the students graduating from high school.

Other Factors Increasing Likelihood of Students Dropping Out of School

Graduation is among the top priorities of school districts. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has implemented the Missouri School Improvement Plan (MSIP) and MSIP 5 is the most recent version of this plan. MSIP 5 is the Missouri's school "accountability system for reviewing and accrediting public schools in Missouri" (MSIP 5/ DESE 2013). MSIP 5 has an accountability component (Performance Standard 5) specifically designed to assess graduation rates for Missouri public schools. Performance Standard 5 states all students successfully complete high school (MSIP 5/ DESE 2013). Districts aim to have a high graduation rate and more importantly, graduate seniors who will be college or career ready. The number of students who do not earn a high school diploma is an issue concerning both parents and schools. Districts who continually fail to meet the graduations requirements set forth by MSIP 5 risk their state accreditation. Those districts with high rates of out-of-school suspension experience lower rates of graduation (Shaw, 2012). A Florida study (Balfanz, 2012) connected out-of-school suspensions to post-secondary outcomes. Their findings seemingly showed a connection to out-of-school suspensions and failure to graduate high school. Of the students who were never suspended during their 9th grade year, 16 percent dropped out of school. Of the students who were suspended one time, 32 percent dropped out. Of the students who were suspended twice during the year, 42 percent of them dropped out. Of the students who were suspended three times during the year, 49 percent of them dropped out. Finally, 53 percent of students suspended four or more times that year failed to earn a high school diploma. The researchers found the chances of dropping out double with even one suspension and identified suspension from school a triggering event which eventually

leads to poor attendance and course failure and then dropping out (Balfanz, 2012). The conclusion of the Marchbanks (2013) study found 6.7 percent of the cohort dropped out of school for reasons related to discipline issues.

Each day school is in session, approximately 7,000 students drop out of school, amounting to 1.3 million students each year (Inglee, 2012). Nearly one half of all black, Hispanic and Native American students fail to graduate highs school (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006). Several factors are attributed to this problem. Everest College via Harris/Decima conducted a national survey of 513 adults whose ages ranged from nineteen to thirty-five who dropped out of high school. The results of the survey provided insight as to why teens are not completing high school. Factors included absenteeism, and out-of-school suspension. Failing classes was another contributing factor which led to a lack of academic credit. A statewide study conducted in the state of Washington found districts throughout the state with higher suspension rates had lower graduation rates (Shaw, 2012). In turn, districts in Washington with low rates of suspension had higher graduation rates. But according to another study, a major reason students do not finish high school is the lack of parental support or encouragement (Why Dropouts Are Leaving School, 2013). One study on high school dropouts stated only fifty-nine percent of parents were involved, and their involvement was mainly regarding discipline issues (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006). This indicated the need for administrators to encourage parental involvement of all students, especially students who are at-risk of not earning a high school diploma (Why Dropouts Are Leaving School, 2013). The survey shows 21 percent of the high school dropouts in the survey indicated becoming a parent themselves as the reason they did not complete high school (Why Dropouts Are Leaving School, 2013). Research has shown students are more likely to drop out if parents have divorced, live in

a single parent home, or if they were born to a teen mom. Parents in those circumstances find it more difficult to find and invest the amount of time and resources needed to guide their children through school and ensure attending regularly. In addition, these parents are likely to have been high school dropouts themselves (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990). In these situations, parents are more engaged with providing basic needs to survive and education becomes less important in the pursuit of meeting those needs. Englund, Egeland, & Collins (2008) concluded a child experiences the most change between ages 6-10 and 11-14. These stages in students' lives often determine how interested they are in school until they graduate due to environment and engagement. Their research found expected graduates had higher levels of parent involvement than students who became dropouts. If parents, teachers, and mentors do not engage during these crucial times, they may miss the opportunity to foster student graduation progress and, as a result, the student may become disengaged and begin a path to a high school dropout.

A report developed for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation gleaned insight from adults who did not complete high school (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006). The researchers interviewed 467 ethnically and racially diverse students ranging from age sixteen to twenty-five who dropped out of public high schools. The schools were in twenty-five different locations including urban, suburban, and rural schools with high dropout rates. The data supports the dropouts' belief they could have finished as 88 percent of dropouts surveyed had passing grades and two years or less to complete high school. The survey also stated that 74 percent would have stayed in school if they had the opportunity to do it over again. According to the survey 69 percent of students dropped out because they were not motivated or inspired. Seventy-eight percent of those students state their parents were not involved, or engaged too late. Nearly half of the respondents stated their parents' work schedule did not allow them to be available to be

informed or help them engage in school. Again, Dawson (1991) would argue father absence contributed to the increased likelihood for children to be suspended or expelled from school. Dropping out of school is not a decision made in one day, it is the culmination of a long process of disengagement, absenteeism, lack of parental support and other individual variables (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006).

Implications of Dropping Out.

Though the reasons for students not earning a high school diploma vary, the research consistently indicates dropouts will face tremendous challenges, including financial and social challenges compared to their graduated peers. Research from Messacar & Oreopoulos (2013) states high school dropouts struggle more economically and socially than those who have completed a full K-12 education. A high school dropout has a lower income, increased chance of health issues, increased chance of incarceration, and is less likely to be married (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013).

From a societal standpoint, students who fail to earn a high school diploma have an increased chance of poverty, government assistance, and incarceration compared to their counterparts who graduate high school (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2010). The Marchbanks (2013) study included economic effects of exclusionary discipline. The study indicated, at the time, the average cost per pupil in the state of Texas was $11,543. When a student is not on track to graduate, the state and districts are forced to spend those funds for additional years. When those students dropout, of school the economic impact increases. Their research states a "single cohort's dropouts have between $5.0 billion and $9.0 billion in present value lost wages over the course of their careers" and the state loses between $270 million and $507 million in lost revenue over the course of the cohort's lifetime (Marchbanks, 2013). Moreover, when

students become dropouts, they increase their chances to rely on public assistance (Belfield & Levin, 2007). The economic impact of dropouts is discussed further in this paper in the section titled: Implications of Dropping out.

From a financial standpoint, Convissor (2013) explains without a high school diploma, dropouts will have difficulty finding and retaining employment and when they do, they will earn much less than their high school graduate peers (about one million dollars less over the span of a lifetime). Messacar & Oreopoulos (2013) research found among recent United States dropouts, 16 percent are unemployed and 32 percent live below the poverty line. Education Week stated in 2009, adults ages twenty-five and older who did not earn a high school diploma or General Education Development (GED) earned up to 41 percent less than those who completed high school or earned a GED (Dropouts, 2011). Dropping out not only impacts these individuals, they have societal consequences as well. According to the RAND Corporation (2005), "estimates indicate the total lifetime costs to society for each individual who drops out of high school rages from $243,000 to $388,000." According to the American Council on Education (2012), the 2010 U.S. Census revealed more than 39 million adults (18 percent) aged 16 and older in the United States lack a high school credential and are not enrolled in any educational program. This coupled with the RAND Corporation data, notes the individual estimates could theoretically cost society anywhere from $9.4 trillion to over $15.1 trillion of lifetime costs for dropouts (RAND, 2005).

While researchers indicate high school dropouts are less likely to be married (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013), those who do marry have an increased chance of marrying other dropouts (Cohen, 2013). Cohen's (2013) research concluded 71 percent of college graduates married other college graduates. Included in the 71 percent, 25 percent of individuals with a PhD

married others with a PhD. On the other end of the education spectrum, 48 percent of women who dropped out of high school married another high school dropout, reinforcing the disparity between the socioeconomic status of graduates and high school dropouts. This trend of dropouts marrying other dropouts, or not marrying at all limits parental earning power and could foster generational poverty (Cohen, 2013).

While dropping out has financial costs, there are also personal health costs that exist. A correlation exists between education and good health. Research by Zajacova (2012) indicated dropouts experience increased health issues compared to high school graduates. The study considered twenty-five different health problems ranging from the common cold to cancer and compared three different education groups: adults who were high school graduates, adults who earned a GED, and high school dropouts. The results found significant differences across the three education groups and showed high school graduates had a lower frequency of all conditions and general health problems than the GED recipients or dropouts. High school graduates had a higher family income and were more likely to have health insurance.

Dr. Freudenberg's research supports the research conducted by Zajacova identifying education as one of the strongest predictors of health and argued school dropout should be considered a public health issue (Freudenberg, 2007). The study found more formal education is consistent with lower death rates whereas less formal education is consistent with earlier death (Freudenberg, 2007). During the year 2000, Freudenberg's (2007) data quantified the lack of a high school education to be related to approximately 245,000 deaths. Freudenberg's work indicated high school graduation impacted overall health. He contended more schooling allows increased salary which enables people to buy homes in safer neighborhoods, healthier foods, and

dependable medical insurance; all of which are associated with improved health protection (Freudenberg, 2007).

Another societal concern is the correlation between dropouts and incarceration. Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin & Palma (2009) conducted a study illustrating the consequences of dropping out of high school. Their study included research on the population in correctional facilities, men and women ages sixteen to twenty-four and their levels of education. They studied data from the years 2006 and 2007. Their findings indicated the occurrence of institutionalization problems among young high school dropouts was more than 63 times higher than among young four-year college graduates (Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin & Palma (2009). The study concluded for young males, high school dropouts were 47 times more likely to be incarcerated than their similar aged peers who earned a four-year college degree, with the incarceration rates considerably higher among young black males (Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin & Palma 2009). Those incarcerated increase the toll on their communities as it is challenging for them to find gainful employment, contributing to the poverty cycle.

Summary

"Children have the highest level of well-being when they are raised in a low-conflict married household, acknowledging the importance of strong maternal as well as paternal relationships" (Sobolewski, 2007, p. 1120). Children born into a family where both parents are engaged and active perform higher academically, socially and behaviorally (Sobolewski, 2007). This environment provides both an increased financial and relationship stability for the child (Howard and Reeves, 2014). This two-parent home includes the importance of the stepfather's role in a child's life. The importance of the father's role in a child's life is emphasized by the number of single mothers in the United States. The benefits of a father's presence are

numerous. Fathers can have an impact on the cognitive development of their children and their children experience better socioemotional and academic functioning (Howard, 2006).

Subsequently, consequences of a father's absence exist. A father's absence may affect an increase in children's risky behavior, potentially increase child abuse, and may impact children's criminal and delinquent activity (Bronte-Tinkew, 2006). A father's absence may also impact the children's drug and alcohol abuse and can have an impact on children's mental health. These concerns can lead to behaviors that would result in school discipline, specifically infractions leading to out-of-school suspensions (Balfanz, 2012).

Students from homes without a father face several disadvantages when compared to students who come from two-parent homes. Research has shown these students contend with low parent education, residence in urban areas, teen motherhood, higher unemployment rate and lower family income (Harper & McLanahan 2004). These disadvantages resulting from absent fathers show an increased likelihood of students participating in behaviors leading to incarceration and long-term suspensions. Engaged fathers can have a positive impact on both boys and girls. Sarkadi (2008) found father involvement seemed to reduce the occurrence of behavioral problems in boys and psychological problems in young women. Anthes (2010) revealed consistent findings of father involvement and a correlation with children's confidence and self-control leading to children who are less likely to act out in school or engage in behaviors that would result in suspension. Again, Dawson (1991) would argue father absence to contribute to the increased likelihood for children to be suspended or expelled from school. These behaviors can result in students not completing high school because of what Doll (2013) terms being "pushed out" or "pulled out" of school.

Students from homes without a father face several disadvantages when compared to students who come from two-parent homes. Research has shown these students contend with low parent education, residence in urban areas, teen motherhood, higher unemployment rate and lower family income (Harper & McLanahan 2004). These disadvantages resulting from absent fathers show an increased likelihood of students participating in behaviors leading to incarceration and long-term suspensions. Engaged fathers can have a positive impact on both boys and girls. Sarkadi (2008) found father involvement seemed to reduce the occurrence of behavioral problems in boys and psychological problems in young women. Anthes (2010) revealed consistent findings of father involvement and a correlation with children's confidence and self-control leading to children who are less likely to act out in school or engage in behaviors that would result in suspension. Again, Dawson (1991) would argue father absence to contribute to the increased likelihood for children to be suspended or expelled from school. These behaviors can result in students not completing high school because of what Doll (2013) terms being "pushed out" or "pulled out" of school.

The rates of out-of-school suspension differ between male and female students with male students almost doubling the percentage of suspensions of female students. These suspensions create a disconnect between the student and the school and by default, increases the absenteeism of the student putting them further behind academically. As a result, out-of-school suspensions are linked to an increased likelihood a student will drop out (Skiba, 2006).

Many factors are associated to why students drop out of high school. Factors outside of the school system such as working, becoming parents, or pursuing a GED pull students out leading to the decision for students to dropout (Doll, 2013). Factors such as absenteeism, falling behind academically, suspensions and expulsions are concerns that would make it difficult for a

student to graduate and push a student out of the school system. Absent fathers is a related factor as children who do not live with their fathers are more likely to be suspended out-of-school (Dawson, 1991) and are more likely to engage in juvenile delinquent behavior (Dornbusch et al., 1985; Teachman, Day, Paasch, Carver, & Call, 1998).

The implications of dropping out of high school are a concern on multiple levels. High school dropouts on average earn less income than students who graduate and pursue education beyond high school. Dropouts who live below the poverty line depend on government assistance and cost tax payers millions of dollars in lost tax revenue because of unemployment coupled with governmental assistance for housing and health coverage (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013). As a result, students who drop out of high school are less likely to afford to lead healthier lifestyles which are linked to many health concerns and premature deaths (Freudenberg, 2007). Dropouts also have an increased likelihood of incarceration compared to high school graduates which also requires tax dollars to support (Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin & Palma (2009).

The literature on these topics led the researcher to examine and identify if a correlation exists between absent fathers and students who fail to graduate high school or engage in behavior resulting in out-of-school suspension.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The researcher will detail the procedures for conducting the study in chapter three including who the participants were and how the selection of the participants was determined. The researcher will also describe the research setting pertaining to the high schools where the students attended. Research design is outlined and data treatment discussed.

The researcher requested from the school districts agreeing to participate five years of historical data from each district beginning with the 2009-2010 school year and ending with the 2013-2014 school year. The data included dropout information, long-term suspension information, earning of a high school diploma, and whether or not the student resided with a father in the home, along with gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. The researcher requested from these organizations only numbers and percentages. The names, ages, and grades of the students were not requested and offenses committed are not pertinent for the study. At no time in the study was the student or school district identified and all data was coded to ensure anonymity. After the data was coded, it was kept in a locked file draw with the researcher having the only access to the contents of the drawer. After a three-year period, the data will be disposed of and used for no other purposes.

Participants

The researcher received consent to use data from the district and building administrators in five different suburban Kansas City area school districts. The five suburban Kansas City area school districts have a combined total of eight high schools. The comprehensive enrollment of the eight high schools within the five districts is 12,677 (DESE, 2015).

Table 1 Summary Data for Participating Districts

	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
Total Population	14,244	14,308	3,949	6,236	4,688
Asian (Percent)	2.50	0.80	*	1.50	0.60
Black (Percent)	11.0	11.10	*	75.50	8.40
Hispanic (Percent)	5.40	17.30	6.40	8.90	13.10
Indian (Percent)	.40	0.50	*	0.20	0.30
Multi-race (Percent)	5.20	7.40	*	3.00	4.80
Pacific Islander (Percent)	.50	1.00	*	0.30	0.50
White (Percent)	75.10	61.90	87.30	10.60	72.30
Free/Reduced lunch (Percent)	30.7	70.7	21.5	*	51.2

* - Indicates the number/percent has been suppressed due to a potential small sample size

The age range of the student is 14-18 years old. The ethnic background within the five districts range from 0.60 percent to 2.50 percent Asian, 8.40 percent to 75.50 percent Black, 5.40 percent to 17.30 percent Hispanic, 0.20 percent to 0.50 percent Indian, 3.0 percent to 7.40 percent Multi-race, 0.30 percent to 1.00 percent Pacific Islander, 10.60 percent to 75.10 percent White, and 30.70 percent to 70.7 percent on Free and Reduced lunch (DESE, 2015). The range of ethnicity and the range in Free and Reduced lunch populations across the districts indicate a diverse student population.

Sampling Procedures

The researcher used a purposive sample to determine participant selection. The criterion for inclusion was the location as a suburban school district around Kansas City as that is the population meeting the criteria for inclusion the researcher establish to ensure school districts with similar characteristics. The researcher is a resident of the area and an administrator in a suburban Kansas City school district and is interested in the academic and sociological aspects of the students attending suburban area high schools rather than rural or urban high schools. Within the population of interest, the criteria for inclusion was met and approved by five school districts with eight high schools that have a combined student body of 12,677 students (DESE, 2015).

Research Setting

Eight high schools from five school districts in and around the Kansas City Metro Area was the setting for the study. The researcher requested participation from seventeen districts composed of twenty-seven high schools and a combined student population of 40,672 (DESE, 2015). Of the seventeen districts asked to participate, five consented to be in included in the study giving the researcher 29.41% participation. As a result, of the twenty-seven high schools included in the request, eight high schools were part of the consenting districts giving the researcher 29.62% high school participation. The requested student population for the study was 40,672. The student population from the responding districts totaled 12,677 which resulted in 31.16% participation. The participating students reside in school districts from Jackson county and Cass county. The high school population includes ninth grade through twelfth grade and enrollment for these identified schools range from 999 to 2,548 students. The cities within the counties vary in population, home ownership, education, income, and poverty levels.

Two of the communities have a population between 13,000 and 30,000. One community has a population above 30,000 and below 55,000. One community has a population of over 115,000. Three of the communities have multiple high schools while two have one high school to serve students (United States Census Bureau, 2014).

Between 2009 and 2013, home ownership in the cities ranged from 61.8 percent to 69.5 percent. Most residents in each city work near the communities in which they live. The mean travel time to work for workers ages 16 and older is as low as 16 minutes and as high as 27 minutes (United Census Bureau, 2014).

The population within the cities of the region also varies in education. Between the years 2009 to 2013, the percentage of residents 25 years or older with a Bachelor's degree or higher ranged from 17.5 percent to 30.1 percent. Two of the cities' percentage of residents 25 years or older with a Bachelor's degree was less than 20 while three of the cities fell in the 20 to 30 percent range. (United States Census Bureau, 2014).

The median household income and poverty levels among the communities differ. The median household income between 2009 and 2013 ranged from a low of $44,000 a year to a high of $65,000 per year. The poverty levels between 2009 and 2013 varied in the communities from less than 9 percent of the community's population below the poverty level to a high of over 17 percent of the community's population below the poverty level (United States Census Bureau, 2015).

Research Design

The students whose information was provided served as the participants but the districts served as facilitators providing the data. The researcher sent requests via email to the superintendent of each school district meeting the researcher's criteria requesting permission to

contact their designee to request help in the collection of data in their district. The researcher contacted the superintendent or a designee of the school districts where permission was granted by the superintendent. The request was sent via email explaining the purpose of the study, the data needed, the timeline for completion and the benefits the research may have for the district and any possible negative consequences because of their participation in the study. The researcher did not foresee any negative consequences as the data was non-identifiable to any individual or high school. A second request followed after one week to superintendents not responding to the first request. The researcher waited one week for a response from the second request. The researcher reached out a third time to non-responding districts after the second email request. The researcher provided all high schools meeting the criteria an equal opportunity to participate in the research by the utilization of this process.

The researcher sought approval from the superintendents of seventeen districts in Buchanan, Cass, Clay, Jackson and Platte counties for permission to include their high school student data in the study and the collection of student data regarding dropout rates, long-term suspensions and students who failed to earn a high school diploma. All of the high schools are located in the Kansas City Metropolitan area. The researcher also requested the status of the students as to the presence or absence of a father. The intent of the study was to determine if students with no father present drop out of high school, receive long-term suspensions, and/or fail to earn a high school diploma at a greater percentage than students with a father present.

The researcher requested from the five districts agreeing to participate five years of historical data from each district beginning with the 2009-2010 school year and ending with the 2013-2014 school year. The data included dropout information, long-term suspension information, whether or not the student resided with a father in the home, gender, ethnicity, and

socioeconomic status. The researcher requested from these organizations only numbers and percentages. The names, ages, and grades of the students were not requested and offenses committed were not pertinent for the study. At no time in the study was the student or school district identified and all data was coded to ensure anonymity and kept in a locked file drawer with the researcher having the only access to the contents of the drawer. After a three year period, the data will be disposed of and used for no other purposes.

A correlation will be run to identify relationships between the variables and then a regression analysis will be used for a more precise analysis of the independent variable's relationship to the dependent variable (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002). To answer question 1, long-term suspensions serve as the dependent variable and, father status, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status will serve as the independent variables. The researcher analyzed dropout data, long-term suspension data and demographic data including gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and whether or not the student's father was present in the home. A regression analysis was used to answer the research questions by conducting a statistical analysis to test the hypotheses. The researcher tested the hypotheses to determine if a statistically significant correlation existed between the absence of a father in the home and the number of long-term suspensions a student received as well as a correlation between the absence of a father and a student dropping out of school. The researcher then tested the hypotheses to determine if the absence of a father, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status can be used as predictors for students who receive long-term suspensions.

The researcher has worked with surrounding district offices to access five years of historical data and utilize the student information system from each. The study includes data from the Fall of 2009 through the Spring of 2014. In the case of school district 1 and some of the

surrounding districts, Powerschool is used as the student information and management system. Each student entry will be coded to keep the subject's identity confidential.

The student information system for each district is the most appropriate tool available to the researcher in that it stores information that is reported to the state including but not limited to: graduation and dropout data, academic records, discipline history and demographic information. This will allow the researcher to collect the most appropriate, and available data, to further identify the family structure of students who fail to complete high school and violate policies that result in long-term out-of-school suspensions. As the information in the student information systems are updated at registration each year, the data should be accurate and current. For the purpose of this study, a student has been identified as having an absent father if they do not reside with their biological father.

All subject data has been assigned a number to keep the subjects' identity unknown. The researcher has identified students who failed to graduate from the selected school districts. The researcher has also identified students who received a long-term suspension from the identified school districts. The demographics of these students has been analyzed to determine if each student resides with his/her biological father. The variables identified include: gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, father status, dropouts, and long-term suspensions. The Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to exam the relationship between father status and students not completing high school. The Regression Analysis has allowed the researcher to identify whether or not a father status, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status do indeed predict students engaging in behavior that results in long-term suspensions.

Data Treatment

The data collected from the different student information systems allowed the researcher to determine whether a relationship exists between absent fathers, students who drop out of school, and students who receive long-term suspensions. The researcher received all requested data from three districts from the Fall of 2009 to the Spring of 2014. A fourth district was only able to provide long-term suspension data from the Fall of 2009 to the Spring of 2014. A fifth district was only able to provide the requested data from the 2013-2014 school year. The researcher analyzed all dropout data from each district and identified, of the students who dropped out, how many came from homes with no biological father present compared to the dropouts who resided with their biological father. Dropouts who come from father present homes has been coded with a '1' and dropouts who come from a father absent home will be coded with a '0.' The researcher then used the long-term suspension data collected from the facilitating districts and identify, of those suspended long-term, how many were suspended multiple times and how many came from homes with no biological father compared to those who resided with their biological father. Those suspended multiple times were coded with a '2' while students receiving one suspension were coded with a '1'. Those suspended who lived in a father present home were coded with a '1' and those suspended who lived in a father absent home were coded with a '0.' To ensure anonymity, male students were coded with a '1' and female students were coded with a '0.' While five years of data was used in the study, the researcher combined the available data for the five years to increase the sample size for the study. As such, the study does not include a year-by-year analysis, but rather a total number of dropouts and long-term suspensions for each district. All data was put into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program to perform the appropriate statistical procedures. Data analysis began

with summarizing the data using descriptive statistical techniques. The distribution of data for the independent and dependent variables were examined for measures of central tendency, including range and mean. The study examined distribution frequencies for each variable including range and standard deviation. Correlations were also calculated and reported to examine dropouts. Finally, regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between the variables regarding students who received long-term suspensions.

Regression analysis allowed the researcher to focus on a relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002). Regression analysis also showed which of the related variables are related to the dependent variable and the extent of each of the relationships. The correlation coefficient data was also included for descriptive reporting. Dropouts, long-term suspensions, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status served as the independent variables. Father status served as the dependent variable.

Summary

This chapter restated the purpose of this research and presented the procedures for conducting the study. The participants were identified through a purposive sample. The seventeen school districts, twenty-seven high schools and specific populations and communities were defined. The research setting described the procedures for requesting and collecting data and identified regression analysis as the method test for relationships between variables. The results of the data analysis are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The researcher detailed the procedures for conducting the study in chapter three including who the participants were and how the selections of the participants were determined. The researcher also described the research setting pertaining to the high schools where the students attend. Research design is outlined and data treatment discussed. The researcher began with the participants.

The researcher requested from the school districts agreeing to participate five years of historical data from each district beginning with the 2009-2010 school year and ending with the 2013-2014 school year. The data includes dropout information, long-term suspension information, earning of a high school diploma, and whether or not the student resided with a father in the home, along with gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. The researcher requested from these organizations only numbers and percentages. The names, ages, and grades of the students were not requested and offenses committed are not pertinent for the study. At no time in the study was the student or school district identified and all data were coded to ensure anonymity. After the data was coded, it was kept in a locked file drawer with the researcher having the only access to the contents of the drawer. After a three-year period, the data will be disposed of and used for no other purposes.

Results

Data Presentation for Long-Term Suspensions.

Long-term suspension data was collected from five districts in the Kansas City metropolitan area. For the purpose of this study, long-term suspension is defined as an out-of-school suspension greater than ten days.

Table 1 separates the long-term suspensions into 2 categories: 1 indicates a one-time suspension, 2 indicates a suspension of two or more times. The frequency table indicates 70.4 percent of the students in the study were suspended one time while 29.3 percent of the students included in the sample were suspended two or more times.

Table 2 Frequency Table for Long-Term Suspensions

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	1276	70.4
	2	536	29.6
	Total	1812	100.0

Demographic information was collected for students who were suspended out of school long-term from the five Kansas City metropolitan area districts. Table 2 identifies students eligible for free or reduced lunch within the sample of students suspended from the Fall of 2009 to the Spring of 2014. The numeral 0 represents the students eligible for free or reduced lunch as 33.8 percent of the total of suspended students. The numeral 1 represents the students not eligible for free or reduced lunch as 66.2 percent of the total suspended students.

Table 3 Free or Reduced Lunch Eligibility for Lon-Term Suspensions

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	612	33.8
	1	1200	66.2
	Total	1812	100.0

Demographic information collected for students who received long-term suspensions included ethnicity. Each ethnicity has been coded and Table 3 illustrates the frequency of suspensions for each ethnic group. The ethnic groups in each district generally reflected the populations of each

district. The largest ethnic group for the combined districts is white, followed, by black and Hispanic.

The numeral 1 represents white students as 56.6 percent of the total suspended students. The numeral 2 represents black students as 33.2 percent of the total suspended students. The numeral 3 represents Hispanic students as 4.7 percent of the total suspended students. The numeral 4 represents Asian students as .7 percent of the total suspended students. The numeral 5 represents American Indian/ Alaska native students as .6 percent of the total suspended students. The numeral 6 represents Pacific Islander students as .3 percent of the total suspended students. The numeral 7 represents students who are multi-ethic as 4 percent of the total suspended students.

Table 4 Ethnicity Table for Long-Term Suspensions

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	1025	56.6
	2	601	33.2
	3	86	4.7
	4	12	.7
	5	10	.6
	6	5	.3
	7	73	4.0
	Total	1812	100.0

Demographic information collected from each participating district, included gender. Table 4 separates all suspended students by gender. Female students suspended long-term were coded with the numeral 0. The numeral 1 represents males who were suspended long-term during the five year period. The table illustrates males have a higher frequency of suspensions with 74.8 percent as opposed to female students who made up 25.2 percent of all students suspended from the Fall of 2009 to the Spring of 2014 in the sample group.

Table 5 Gender Table for Long-Term Suspensions

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	457	25.2
	1	1355	74.8
	Total	1812	100.0

Table 5 identifies demographic information collected from each district including with what parents each student resides. Students who were suspended long-term and reside in a home with no father were coded with the numeral 0 in the table. The numeral 1 represents the students who were suspended long-term and live in a home with their father. The table illustrates 60.0 percent of all students with suspensions do not reside with a father in the home as opposed to students who reside with a father in the home which made up 40.0 percent of all students suspended from the Fall of 2009 to the Spring of 2014 in the sample group.

Table 6 Father Status Table for Long-Term Suspensions

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	1087	60.0
	1	725	40.0
	Total	1812	100.0

Correlations

Table 6 presents a bivariate analysis of the data which indicates there was a significant correlation of .118 between students receiving long-term suspensions and students eligible for free or reduced lunch at the .000 level. The data showed a negative correlation of -.022 between students who received free or reduced lunch and ethnicity at the .357 level. The data indicated a positive correlation of .062 between students who received long-term suspensions and gender at

the .009 level. The data showed a significant correlation of .068 between students who received long-term suspensions and father status at the .004 level. The data showed a significant correlation of -.181 between students who received free or reduced lunch and ethnicity at the .000 level. The data also showed a significant correlation of .074 between students eligible for free or reduced lunch and gender at the .002 level. The data showed a significant correlation of .150 between students suspended and father status at the .000 level. The data showed a significant correlation of -.078 between ethnicity and gender at the .001 level and a correlation of -.085 between ethnicity and father status at the .000 level. The final correlation in the table showed a significant correlation of .033 between gender and father status at the .156 level. The table reported correlations between districts and the other variables. However, the intent of the study was not to examine the difference between districts, therefore, this data is not reviewed.

Table 7 Long-Term Suspension and Father Status Correlations

		Number of Suspensions	District	FRLunch	Ethnicity	Gender	Father status
Number of Suspensions	Pearson Correlation	1	-.090**	.118**	-.022	.062**	.068**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.357	.009	.004
District	Pearson Correlation	-.090**	1	-.485**	.039	-.052*	-.137**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.101	.025	.000
FRLunch	Pearson Correlation	.118**	-.485**	1	-.181**	.074**	.150**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.002	.000
Ethnicity	Pearson Correlation	-.022	.039	-.181**	1	-.078**	-.085**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.357	.101	.000		.001	.000
Gender	Pearson Correlation	.062**	-.052*	.074**	-.078**	1	.033
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.025	.002	.001		.156
Father status	Pearson Correlation	.068**	-.137**	.150**	-.085**	.033	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.000	.000	.000	.156	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table identified students who were suspended also have an increased chance of receiving free or reduced lunch. Table 6 along with the data in Table 4 also revealed male students are suspended at a higher percentage than female students and students who come from homes with an absent father are suspended at a higher percentage. The data also showed students who qualify for free or reduced lunch have a higher likelihood to belong to a minority ethnic group and reside in a home with no father. In regard to ethnicity, the table showed students who belong to minority group to have an increased likelihood to reside in a home with an absent father.

Based on the observed correlations, further analysis was indicated and a regression analysis was performed with long-term suspensions as the dependent variable and father status, gender, ethnicity, free/reduced lunch and district as the independent predictors. The *R* value identified in Table 7 for the full model of .142 is significant at the .05 level. Table 8 further displays the ANOVA of the full model which supports the model's predictor variables and indicates a significant p value of .001 for the full model.

Table 8 Model Summary Table

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.142[a]	.020	.018	.453

a. Predictors: (Constant), District, Ethnicity, Gender, Father status, FRLunch

Table 9 ANOVA[b] Table

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.655	5	1.531	7.477	.000[a]
	Residual	369.793	1806	.205		
	Total	377.448	1811			

Table 10 Coefficients Table

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.206	.044		27.486	.000
	Father status	.045	.022	.048	2.029	.043
	Gender	.055	.025	.052	2.215	.027
	Ethnicity	.001	.008	.004	.168	.867
	FRLunch	.086	.026	.089	3.267	.001
	District	-.015	.010	-.038	-1.418	.156

a. Dependent Variable: Number of Suspensions

Additional analysis of the regression model is presented in the Table 9 Coefficients Table. The student suspension data set indicates that as the number of suspensions increase, father status, gender, and free and reduced lunch all had significant increases in observations. These were significant at the .043, .027, and .001 level respectively.

Data Presentation for Dropouts

Demographic information was collected for students who dropped out of school from the five Kansas City metropolitan area districts. Table 10, Free or Reduced Lunch Eligibility for Dropouts, illustrates the number of students eligible for free or reduced lunch and those who were not for the sample group from the Fall of 2009 to the Spring of 2014. Students eligible for free or reduced lunch are coded with a 0. Students not eligible for free or reduced lunch are coded with a 1. 50.6 percent were eligible for free or reduced lunch while 49.3 percent of dropouts did not qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Table 11 Free or Reduced Lunch Eligibility for Dropouts

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	753	50.6
	1	733	49.3
	Total	1487	100.0

Demographic information collected for students who dropped out of high school included ethnicity. Table 11, Ethnicity Table for Dropouts, identifies the frequency of dropouts for each ethnic group. The numeral 1 represents white students as 69.9 percent of the total dropouts. The numeral 2 represents black students as 14.7 percent of the total dropouts. The numeral 3 represents Hispanic students as 9.4 percent of the total dropouts. The numeral 4 represents Asian students as .8 percent of the total dropouts. The numeral 5 represents American Indian/ Alaska native students as .5 percent of the total dropouts. The numeral 6 represents Pacific Islander students as .6 percent of the total dropouts. The numeral 7 represents students who are multi-ethic as 3.9 percent of the total dropouts. The ethnic groups in each district generally reflect the populations of each district. The largest ethnic group for the combined districts is white, followed, by black and Hispanic.

Table 12 Ethnicity Table for Dropouts

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	1040	69.9
	2	219	14.7
	3	140	9.4
	4	12	.8
	5	8	.5
	6	9	.6
	7	58	3.9
Missing	System	1	.1
	Total	1487	100.0

Demographic information collected for students who dropped out included gender. Table 12, Gender Table for Dropouts, identifies the frequency of dropouts for each gender. Female students who dropped out are represented by the numeral 0. Male students who dropped out are represented by the numeral 1. The table illustrates males have a higher frequency dropouts with 60.5 percent as opposed to female students who made up 39.4 percent of all dropouts from the Fall of 2009 to the Spring of 2014 for the sample group.

Table 13 Gender Table for Dropouts

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	586	39.4
	1	900	60.5
	Total	1486	99.9

Demographic information collected for students who dropped out of school included whether the student resided with a father in the home or not. Father status was coded in order to process the data. Students who dropped out and did not reside with a father in the home were coded with a 0. Students who dropped out and reside in a home with a father were coded with a

1. Table 131 illustrates 51.3 percent of all dropouts were students who do not reside with a father in the home as opposed to students who resided with a father in the home which made up 48.7 percent of all dropouts from the Fall of 2009 to the Spring of 2014 in the sample group.

Table 14 Father Status Table for Dropouts

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	763	51.3
	1	724	48.7
	Total	1487	100.0

Correlations

The data shows of all of the dropouts, there was a positive significant correlation between students residing in a home with an absent father and students eligible for free and reduced lunch at the .01 level. The data shows a positive correlation between dropouts who were eligible for free and reduced lunch and gender at the .05 level. The data shows a negative correlation between dropouts and the different ethnic groups at the .01 level. The data also revealed a negative correlation between the ethnicity of the dropouts and free and reduced lunch eligibility at the .01 level.

Table 15 Dropout and District, Free/Reduced Lunch, Ethnicity, Gender, and Father Status Correlations

		District	FRLunch	Ethnicity	Gender	Father Status
District	Pearson Correlation	1	-.191**	-.031	-.063*	.047
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.233	.015	.071
FRLunch	Pearson Correlation	-.191**	1	-.074**	.055*	.143**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.004	.036	.000
Ethnicity	Pearson Correlation	-.031	-.074**	1	-.028	-.079**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.233	.004		.286	.002
Gender	Pearson Correlation	-.063*	.055*	-.028	1	.029
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.036	.286		.265
Father Status	Pearson Correlation	.047	.143**	-.079**	.029	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.071	.000	.002	.265	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The data in table 14 shows the different statistically significant correlations among variables for the sample of dropouts. The correlation between free and reduced lunch and ethnicity is -.074 which is significant at the .004 level. The correlation between free or reduced lunch and gender is .055 which is significant at the .036 level while the correlation between free and reduced lunch and father status is .143 which is significant at the .000 level. The correlation between ethnicity and gender is -.028 which is significant at the .286 level. The correlation between ethnicity and father status is -.079 which is significant at the .002 level. The final correlation in the table is the correlation between gender and father status is .029 which is significant at the .265 level.

Table 14 revealed of all dropouts in the group sample, students eligible for free and reduced lunch have an increased likelihood to belong to an ethnic minority group, male, and

reside in a home with an absent father. Regarding ethnicity, the dropouts in the minority groups have a higher likelihood to reside in a home with no father.

Analysis of Data

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

Research questions were presented in chapter one and chapter three further defined the focus of the study. The following lists these and presents the findings.

RQ_1 Is there a relationship between the absence of a father and the number of long-term suspensions received and dropping out of school?

Ho_1 There is no statistically significant correlation between the absence of a father in the home and the number of long-term suspensions received by a student. Table 6 illustrates a significant correlation between the absence of a father in the home and the number of long-term suspensions at the 0.01 level. As such, the researcher must reject the null hypothesis of no relationship.

Ho_2 There is no statistically significant correlation between the absence of a father in the home and a student dropping out of school. The data in table 13 showed 51.3 percent of all dropouts resided in a home with no father as opposed to 48.7 percent of dropouts who resided in a home with a father. Since there is no statistically significant correlation between father status and dropouts, the researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis.

RQ_2 Is there a relationship between the absence of a father and the number of long-term suspensions received when gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status are factors?

Ho_3 There is no statistically significant correlation between the absence of a father in the home and long-term suspensions received by a student when gender is a factor. Results of the

regression analysis included gender in the model of significant predictors for students receiving long-term suspensions at the .05 level. Therefore, the researcher must reject this null hypothesis.

H_{O4} There is no statistically significant correlation between the absence of a father in the home and long-term suspensions received by a student when ethnicity is a factor. Results of the regression analysis did not include ethnicity in the model of significant predictors for students receiving long-term suspensions at the 0.01 or the .05 level. Therefore, the researcher fails to reject this null hypothesis.

H_{O5} There is no statistically significant correlation between the absence of a father in the home and long-term suspensions received by a student when socioeconomic status is a factor. Results of the regression analysis included socioeconomic status in the model of significant predictors for students receiving long-term suspensions at the 0.01 level. As a result, the researcher must reject this null hypothesis.

Summary of the Study

In this chapter, an introduction was given regarding the collection of data, participants, processes, analysis and statistical correlation of the data. The data was then organized and presented in tables to illustrate the relationships of each of the variables. Descriptive statistical reporting was presented, followed by correlations.

The data was then used to answer the research questions and either reject or fail to reject the five null hypotheses. Results from the quantitative research revealed there to be no statistically significant correlation between absent fathers and dropouts. This continued to be the case when gender was a factor. However, the research did reveal statistically significant correlations between absent fathers and dropout when socioeconomic factors and ethnicity were factors.

Regarding absent fathers and long-term suspensions, the results from the quantitative research revealed a statistically significant relationship between absent fathers and the number of suspensions a student received. Of the students suspended, father status, gender and socioeconomic status were significant predictors. However, the data did not reveal a statistically significant correlation between absent fathers and long-term suspensions when ethnicity was a factor.

Chapter five states the researcher's findings, conclusions, drawn from the findings, possible implications for educators, recommendations of the researcher as to additional research that may provide insight into the topic of absent fathers and student problems, and summary of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In chapter four, the presentation and data analysis were reported. Chapter Five includes a discussion of the findings and how the findings allowed the researcher to answer the research questions. The findings also include the results of each null hypothesis. The conclusions drawn from the findings are stated. Next, the implications for education and educators on the negative impact absent fathers may have on graduation and students receiving long-term suspensions are discussed. Recommendations for further research are shared including a study of different family dynamics. The summary reviews the process and explanation of the study and provides closure to the research. The intent of the implications on education and recommendation for further research sections is to broaden the concepts in this study to provide a deeper understanding of absent fathers and their impact on student behaviors and education.

Findings

Previous research has been done on the importance of engaged fathers and the impact they have on families and student health and success (Bocknek, 2014; Pougnet, 2012). The intent of this study was to answer one of two questions.

The first question was: Is there a relationship between the absence of a father and the number of long-term suspensions received and dropping out of school? From a descriptive statistical standpoint, the data identified a relationship between the two. Included in the study are 1,812 students who were suspended out-of-school from the Fall of 2009 to the Spring of 2014 in the sample group. Of the 1,812 suspended, 1,087 came from homes with no father. This revealed 60 percent of all suspended students came from a home with no father. The first null

hypothesis stated there is no statistically significant correlation between the absence of a father in the home and the number of long-term suspensions received by a student. The data rejected this null hypothesis as statistically significant. A relationship does exist between absent fathers and the number of suspensions received. The relationship shows a statistically significant relationship between students who have been suspended multiple times and living in a home with an absent father at the 0.01 level.

The second null hypotheses for question one stated there is no significant correlation between the absence of a father in the home and a student dropping out of school. Included in the study are 1,487 dropouts from the Fall of 2009 to the Spring of 2014. Of the 1,487 dropouts, 763 came from homes with an absent father. This revealed a majority, 51.3 percent of all dropouts in the study came from a home with no father. While there was not a statistically significant relationship between absent fathers and dropouts, the data indicated a possible difference.

The second research question in the study was: Is there a relationship between the absence of a father and the number of long-term suspensions received and dropping out of school when gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status are factors? The answers varied depending on each factor and are outlined in the succeeding paragraphs.

When considering gender, a relationship does exist between the absence of a father and students suspended long-term and dropping out of high school. When considering ethnicity, a negative relationship exists between the absence of a father and students suspended long-term. Of the 1,812 suspended students included in the study, 1,025 were white, 601 were black, 86 were Hispanic, 12 were Asian, 10 were American Indian/ Alaska native, 5 were Pacific Islander, and 73 were multi-ethnic. Each ethnicity was given a numeral code. Of the students sampled in

the study, 44 percent were identified in an ethnicity considered to be a minority group while 56 percent were white. The dropout data revealed similar results. Of the 1,487 dropouts in the study, 1,040 were white, 219 were black, 140 were Hispanic, 12 were Asian, 8 were American Indian/ Alaska native, 9 were Pacific Islander, and 58 were multi-ethnic. The data revealed of all dropouts, a higher rate of absent fathers was experienced by students who were multi-ethnic, Pacific Islander, American Indian/ Alaska native when compared to white, black and Hispanic students.

When considering socioeconomic status as a factor, the researcher divided the student population into those who qualify for free or reduced lunch or not as the threshold for socioeconomic status. The data showed a statistically significant relationship does exist between absent fathers and students suspended long-term and dropping out of high school. The long-term suspension data revealed a positive correlation between students who qualified for free and reduced lunch and those living in a home with an absent father. The dropout data also showed a positive correlation between absent fathers and students who qualified for free or reduced lunch.

Conclusions

Sobolewski's research (2007) has indicated children have the highest level of health, security, education, and contentment when raised in a low-conflict household in which the parents are married. The results of this study aligns with Sobolewski's contention.

The data in this study revealed students who dropped out of high school have an increased likelihood to reside in a home with an absent father. The dropout data also revealed a statistically significant relationship between absent fathers and the increased likelihood a student would be eligible for free or reduced lunch. These results support the research of Howard and

Reeves as they noted a two-parent home has the possibility for multiple sources of income which can decrease the chances of the family living in poverty (2014).

The long-term suspension data in this study yielded similar results. The students who were suspended out-of-school long-term have an increased likelihood to reside in a home with an absent father. The data also showed a positive statistically significant relationship between absent fathers and students who qualified for free or reduced lunch. Absentee fathers may be a predictor of students failing to earn a high school diploma and students engaging in behavior resulting in long-term suspensions. The data identified father status, gender, and students eligible for free or reduced lunch as predictors of students for receiving long-term suspensions. This research concluded a positive presence of a father in the home can help decrease instances of long-term out-of-school suspension and the chances of students dropping out of school.

Implications for Education

This study examined whether absent fathers have an educational impact in regard to students who drop out of school and students who receive long-term suspensions. While teachers, administrators, counselors, and coaches have no control over the family structure of their students, they can be educated and made aware of some of the concerns facing our students and schools with regard to absentee fathers. For male staff members, this study offers insight as to how important positive male engagement is for our students, especially the male students. This study revealed males were suspended at a higher percentage than their female counterparts. The data shows of the 1,812 suspended students in the study, 1,355 were males, accounting for 74.8 percent of all suspended students. The data also showed of all dropouts included in the study, 51.3 percent were male.

This study will be useful to administrators and counselors in identifying students who are at-risk of not graduating or engaging in behavior resulting in long-term suspensions. The study showed students who come from homes with absent fathers have a decreased likelihood of completing high school. The study also identified absent fathers as a predictor of students who receive long-term suspensions. This study showed differences in the impact of absent fathers and dropouts and long-term suspension when gender was a factor. This data would be beneficial for administrative professional development. Advisory groups could be developed with impacted students to provide specific resources and strategies to help these students.

In summary, students who come from homes without a father face additional challenges when compared to students who come from a two-parent home. These challenges are magnified when socioeconomic and gender factors are considered.

Recommendations

The objective of this study was to investigate the impact of absent fathers on graduation outcomes and students receiving long-term suspensions. This data is important for educators to help identify absent fathers as a contributor to students who receive long-term suspensions and students who fail to graduate. The data collected only considered dropout information so the researcher was limited to statistical descriptive reporting with the results. However, the results did find a relationship between absent fathers and students who fail to complete high school. Further research may include data for both graduates and dropouts during the same time period to compare the graduation outcomes from families with a father present and a home with no father. This data would allow the researcher to consider the family structure of the graduates and not only the dropouts.

The study identified an absent father as the biological father not living in the home so did not consider the mothers' cohabitation. Future studies might include identifying how a stepfather or live-in boyfriend could impact those educational outcomes. Further research could also include investigation of why the student is without a father, comparing students who lost their father through divorce, death, or random circumstance to see if those variables would result in different outcomes. Future research could also consider investigating the educational outcomes of students who reside with single-fathers compared to students who reside with single-mothers.

Summary

The problem identified was absentee fathers may be a predictor of students failing to earn a high school diploma and students engaging in behavior resulting in long-term suspension. The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between the absence of a father or and long-term out-of-school suspensions and high school dropouts and if the relationship was significant enough to be used to enable educators to predict if the student was at-risk of having behavior problems and dropping out of school. The work of Bocknek (2014) and Pougnet (2012) served as the foundation for the framework of the study as their research emphasized father involvement and the need to strengthen families. In addition, their work included consequences when father absence is a factor.

The intent of the study was to answer the following two questions: Is there a relationship between the absence of a father and the number of long-term suspensions received and dropping out of school? Is there a relationship between the absence of a father and the number of long-term suspensions received and dropping out of school when, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status are factors? The researcher collected data from five different school

districts in the Kansas City metropolitan area. The data included all dropout and long-term suspension information from the Fall of 2009 to the Spring of 2014 for each district. The data from each district was coded and combined to increase the sample size. Demographic information was included to determine father status, free or reduced lunch status, gender, and ethnicity. The dropout data included 1,487 students and the long-term suspension data included 1,812 students from the same five years of the study. Once the data was coded, it was put into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program to perform the appropriate statistical procedures and a regression analysis was used to determine the relationships between the variables. The data showed a relationship between absent fathers and dropouts but showed a statistically significant relationship between absent fathers and students who engaged in behavior resulting in long-term suspensions and identified father status, gender, and socioeconomic status as predictors for students who receive long-term suspensions. This supports the work of Bocknek (2014) and Pougnet (2012) whose research emphasized the importance of engaged fathers and the consequences of absent fathers.

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Appendix

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

-- The Absence of a Father in the Home as a Predictor for Students Receiving Long-Term Suspensions and Students Failing to Complete High School

Principal Investigator: Wendell Fuimaono, Researcher, Southwest Baptist University Doctoral Student

You are invited to be a part of a research study that will examine the impact of absent fathers in the lives of high school students. The purpose of the study is to determine if a relationship exists between the absence of a father or father figure and students who experience long-term out-of-school suspensions and students who fail to complete high school. The researcher will also determine if the gender of the student is a factor that may change the relationship. I am asking you to participate because the area of interest is school districts in the Kansas City Metropolitan area.

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to provide data from your student information system. The information requested is long-term suspension data, (10 days OSS or more) graduation data, residency and gender information from the fall of 2009 to the spring of 2014.

A benefit from participating in this research will include receiving the findings of the study. I hope this study will contribute to understanding the impact of absent fathers of high school students in the Kansas City area.

This study will not include any information that would identify your district or student information. To ensure district, school and student anonymity, the requested data will be coded numerically and no names will be needed or necessary to complete the study. The researcher will enter study data on a computer that is password-protected and uses special coding of the data to protect the information. As soon as this process is complete, all identifiable information will be destroyed and used for no other purpose.

If you have questions about this research, you can contact Wendell Fuimaono at (816) 665-7596 or wfuimaono@bssd.net. You may also contact his faculty advisor, Dr. Robert Perry, Southwest Baptist University, Department of Educational Administration at rperry@sbuniv.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Southwest Baptist University *Research Review Board, Dr. Terry Cox, 1600 University Ave. Bolivar, MO 65613(417)328-1992;RRB@sbuniv.edu*

By signing this document or consenting via email, you agree to be part of the study. Participating in this research is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You will be given a copy of this document for your records and one copy will be kept with the study records. Please be sure questions you have about the study have been answered and that you understand what you are being asked to provide. You may contact the researcher anytime you have questions.

Place an X beside the statement you agree to and to request a copy of the study. You are giving your consent by signing and dating this form where provided below. If more convenient for you, an email response indicating your consent will also be acceptable. If this is approved and acceptable in the eyes of the district please let me know at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration.

I agree to participate in the study. _____

I do not agree to participate in the study. _____

_____ _____

Signature Date