



# Impact of Race and Ethnicity on a School-Based Restorative Justice Program

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## BACKGROUND

- Estimated that 700,000 juvenile offenders, under the age of 18, are arrested during a single year in the US (“Juvenile Arrests,” 2019).
- **Juvenile Justice System (JJS):** made up of state and local court-based systems, aimed to help juveniles avoid future delinquency.
- **Restorative Justice (RJ):** works to bring together all parties involved in an offense to collectively resolve and deal with the aftermath of the offense and future implications.
- Latimer and colleagues (2005) found that on average, RJ programs had reduced recidivism rates compared to nonrestorative approaches. Additionally, they found that RJ programs, when compared to more traditional criminal justice responses, such as probation, are more effective methods of enhancing both victim and offender satisfaction, increasing the offender compliance with restoration, and decreasing recidivism of offenders.
- RJ has also been shown to decrease Black-White discipline disparities in school settings.
- There are significant racial and ethnic disparities that are shown in the juvenile justice system.
- Juveniles aged 10-17 arrest rates are as followed (“Juvenile Arrest Rates by Offense and Race, 2018”, 2019).
  - Black juveniles: 4,619.5 arrests per 100,000
  - Minority juveniles: 3,371.9 arrests per 100,000
  - White juveniles: 1,793.4 per 100,000
- **Shared identity:** viewing yourself as belonging to a social category or group is another important component to consider. People will endorse a retributive response and not a restorative one when they do not perceive a shared identity group with an offender (Gromet et al., 2009).

## PURPOSE

- Examine potential influence of race and ethnicity on juveniles’ participation in a RJ program
- Crucial that youth are not unintentionally excluded from RJ programs based on race or ethnicity

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Are students who commit assaults on those they **share racial identities** with more likely to be accepted into a school-based restorative justice program?
- Are students who commit assaults on those they **share ethnic identities** with more likely to be accepted into a school-based restorative justice program?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Participants

- 385 juveniles who had committed assaults
- 324 identified as non-Hispanic and 61 as Hispanic
- 63.9% were Caucasian, 32.5% were Black, 2.6% were American Indian, and 1% were Asian
- 227 had a shared race, and 237 had a shared ethnicity

### Procedure

- Data about victims’ race was collected directly from a police department in the same midwestern city from the participants
- Researchers compiled data by reviewing the physical files, and a secondary data analysis from the review was used

### Analysis

- SPSS was used to conduct Chi-Square analysis to test whether assaults among students sharing race identity groups with their victim are more likely to be accepted into a school-based restorative justice program
- SPSS was used to conduct Chi-Square analysis to test whether assaults among students sharing ethnic identity groups with their victim are more likely to be accepted into a school-based restorative justice program

## RESULTS

Table 1. Racial Relationship Between Shared Racial Identity and Acceptance (N = 385)

Variable	Accepted	Not Accepted	Total
Shared Race	32.2%	67.8%	100%
No shared race	39.2%	60.8%	100%

Table 2. Ethnic Relationship Between Shared Ethnic Identity and Acceptance (N = 385)

Variable	Accepted	Not Accepted	Total
Shared Ethnicity	31.6%	68.4%	100%
No Shared Ethnicity	40.5%	59.5%	100%

## RESULTS

Table 3. Shared Racial and Ethnic Identity Descriptive (N = 385)

Variables	Yes	No	Total
Shared Race	59%	41%	100%
Shared Ethnicity	61.6%	38.4%	100%

- In this sample, 59% of offenders had a shared racial identity with their victim, and 61.6% had a shared ethnic identity with their victim
- Results did not indicate a significant association between shared racial identity and acceptance into a restorative justice program,  $X^2(1) = 2.052, p = .152$
- Results did not indicate a significant association between shared ethnic identity and acceptance into a restorative justice program,  $X^2(1) = 3.166, p = .075$

## CONCLUSIONS

- Juveniles are not considered for acceptance into a school-based restorative justice program based on race and how that race relates to their victim
- Furthermore, this finding indicates that juveniles are not more likely to be accepted into a school-based restorative justice program if they have a shared ethnic identity with their victim.
- Juveniles of all races are provided with equal opportunity to participate in a school-based restorative justice program
- Future research should investigate how race or ethnicity impacts a different component of restorative justice programs, such as completion of program

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