

Black Girls in Orange Jumpsuits: A Scoping Review of How School Pushout Leads to the Criminalization of Black Girls in Canadian Schools.

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Abstract

Black youth in Canada face significant obstacles when navigating the education system due to institutional and social barriers that impede their access to a comprehensive education. This situation is particularly problematic for Black girls, who experience compounded challenges due to their intersecting identities. To explore the relationship between the lived experiences of Black girls in Canadian schools and school pushout and the school-to-prison pipeline, I conducted a scoping review of literature published between 2010 and 2022. A search of 10 databases yielded 1404 articles, which were then screened and reduced to 12 using inclusion and exclusion criteria. Three common themes emerged from the analysis: 1) exclusionary discipline policies, including zero-tolerance policies, often criminalize Black girls' actions and lead to premature school dropout, 2) Black girls are subjected to static, stereotypical identities that result in alienation and otherization within Canadian classrooms, and 3) systemic racism perpetuates racial inequalities and discrimination, contributing significantly to school pushout. The review underscores the need for further ethnographical research that centers the voices and perspectives of Black girls to gain a better understanding of how zero-tolerance policies, static stereotypes, and systemic racism contribute to their marginalization and pushout from schools and into the school-to-prison pipeline in Canada. Such research is essential to inform equity and diversity policies and design strategies that address the institutional and interpersonal barriers and discrimination that Black girls face.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this scoping review is to gain an understanding of the scope and depth of the literature describing the relationship between school pushout and the criminalization of Black girls in Canadian schools.

Research Question

To fully explore the issue this research examines the following question: (1) Is there a direct relationship between the lived experiences of school pushout for Black girls in Canadian schools and the school-to-prison pipeline?

Theoretical Framework

This research utilizes the Intersectionality Framework. As a strategy, a disposition, and a heuristic analytical tool, intersectionality draws on Black Feminism and Critical Race Theory to understand the complex interplay of social identities and power dynamics that shape individual experiences (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1991).

Methodology

The framework chosen for this scoping review is Arksey & O'Malley's (2005) five-stage methodological framework: identifying the research question, identifying relevant studies, selecting studies, charting the data, and collating, summarizing, and reporting the results. This framework is described as follows:

- Framework Stage 1 - Identifying the Research Question
- Framework Stage 2 - Identifying Relevant Studies
- Framework Stage 3 - Study Selection
- Framework Stage 4 – Charting the Data
- Framework Stage 5 – Collating, Summarizing and Reporting the Results

Table 1.0 – Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Key Words	Key terms in title or abstract	No key term in title or abstract
Language	English	Any other than English
Location	Canada	Any country other than Canada
Publication date	After January 1 st , 2010	Before January 1 st , 2010
Black girls	Must be a variable	Black girls not a variable

Findings

During the charting process, several themes appeared consistently across the literature. The three major themes are systemic racism, static representations of Black girl identities, and zero tolerance policies.

Table 6.0 Major Themes and Sub-themes

Major Themes			
	Systemic Racism	Static Representations of Black Girl Identities	Zero-tolerance Policies
Sub-themes	Streaming	Sexualization/adultification	School pushout
	Anti-black racism	Sapphire/Jezebel/Mammy	Criminalization
	Teacher microaggressions	The Invisible Black Girl	School-to-prison-pipeline
	Curriculum marginalization	The Angry Black Girl	
	Color blindness/colorless education	The Silent Black Girl The Loud Black Girl The Mule	

Findings (cont.)

Theme #1 – Systemic Racism

- Systemic racism perpetuates racial inequalities
- Policies overlook the multiple identities of Black girls
- Absence of recognition and acknowledgement of ethnicity

Theme #2 – Static

- Representations of Black Girl Identities
- Whiteness is used to measure and manifest other identities
- Black girls are “othered” in Canadian schools

Theme #3 – Zero-tolerance Policies

- Zero-tolerance policies disproportionately affect Black girls
- Higher probability of suspension and/or expulsion
- Cultural insensitivity among educators increases usage

Recommendations

Child & Youth Studies Practitioners, Researchers and government bodies can help develop solutions for school pushout of Black girls through these sustainable practices:

- Revised Intersectional Policy for Gender and Racial Equity.
- Revised EDI Framework for Black Girls.
- Collect Data to Amplify Black Voices.
- Collaborative Government Action on Gender Policy.
- Anti-Oppression Initiatives for Black Communities.
- Research: School Pushout Impact on Black Girls.
- Diversify Curriculum to Reflect racial diversity.
- Promote Black Women in Leadership.
- Demographic Investigation: Black Girls' Experiences.
- Enhance Methodologies in Black Studies.
- Research Impact of Racism.
- Curriculum Reflecting Black Girls' Contributions.

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