The Relationship between Teacher Perceptions of Positive Behavior Intervention Support and the Implementation Process

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between teacher perception of a school’s Positive Behavior Intervention Support program and the implementation process. This study explored perceptions of teachers from three aspects of the PBIS model as they relate to the implementation process. Positive Behavior Intervention Support provides strategies for behavior modification to discourage inappropriate behaviors through the reinforcement of positive behaviors. The study examined participants’ perceptions of PBIS that supported pro-social behaviors and decreased anti-social behaviors to determine if a relationship exists between their perceptions and the implementation processes. The participants rated their perception of the administrator’s role in PBIS, examining the presence of a relationship between this perception and their implementation process.

Keywords: PBIS: Positive Behavior; Positive Behavior Intervention Support; School Culture; PBIS Implementation
The Relationship between Teacher Perceptions
Of Positive Behavior Intervention
Support and the Implementation Process

The academic world is undergoing a dramatic change regarding society's expectations for students. The expectation is that each child will graduate from high school with the expertise necessary to ensure college placement and acquire the job skills necessary to be competitive in a globally environment. President George W. Bush, during his administration, authorized the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (No Child Left Behind, 2002). This legislation required states to bring all students to a proficient level of performance on end of the year assessments of learning objectives established by the states’ departments of education. The deadline for meeting these expectations was the end of the 2013-14 school year. The legislation required states to set challenging academic standards for all students, and mandates that student populations, including all subgroups, make adequate yearly progress (Dee & Jacob, 2011). Schools are accountable for establishing a path for instruction that promote and sustains the academic progress and advancement of their students (Barrett, Bradshaw, & Lewis-Palmer, 2008), while addressing behavioral difficulties and the growing gap in academic performance between the U.S. and other nations (Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008). The challenges that stakeholders face include mandates to improve literacy, enhance student character, and ensure that all students achieve higher levels of academic achievement, but with fewer resources. Along with the call for increased academic achievement is the need for a more productive behavior management system to allow for increased time spent on academics rather than spending time responding to problematic and disruptive behaviors. There are increasing numbers of families who face financial barriers and a greater need for mental health, social welfare, medical, and vocational assistance (Sugai & Horner, 2008) which contribute to behavioral problems in the schools. Dealing with the increased social and emotional needs of students makes it difficult for the public schools to focus solely on student academic outcomes.

Research indicates that students in classrooms with a poorly implemented behavior management system lose instructional time, placing academic performance at risk (Weinstein, 2007). In addition, those students enrolled in poorly managed classes are more likely to experience long-term negative academic, behavioral, and social difficulties compared to students in well-managed classrooms (Kokinos, Panayiotou, & Davazoglou, 2005). For many years, teachers identified classroom management as the most challenging aspect of their profession, and the area in which they receive the least amount of training and support. The most fundamental classroom management practice is to establish a set of classroom rules and expectations with consequences aligned with the severity of the infractions (Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, 2012)

In recent years, however, there has been movement towards the use of positive response systems and more proactive measures to deal with the increased behavioral problems in the schools. Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) is a system that provides for the teaching of positive school-wide behavioral expectations along with the core academic curriculum (Sugai & Horner, 2002a). A positive behavior support system provides strategies to assist schools in addressing the behavioral needs of students, much like academic interventions.

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focus on academic weaknesses. The PBIS model offers faculty and staff additional resources for implementing positive change in the behavior management process (Bradshaw, Koth, Bevans, Ialongo, & Leaf, 2008). Positive Behavior Intervention Support emphasizes positive lessons that are taught, modeled, and reinforced. The basis of the PBIS model focuses on the idea of modeling expected behaviors with explanations of why the behaviors are appropriate, along with reinforcement by acknowledging and rewarding appropriate behaviors (Reinke et al., 2012). The goal is to support pro-social behaviors while decreasing anti-social behaviors. Engaging in such programs allows schools to shift from reactive or punitive strategies (as the primary response to problem behaviors) to more proactive and positive approaches that address individual student behaviors as well as more general school-wide behavioral problems (Colvin & Fernandez, 2000).

The PBIS model employs a tiered system, similar to Response to Intervention (RTI), for supporting all students through positive preventive measures but also serves as a tool for identifying those students who may require extra support to promote their behavioral success (Walker, Horner Sugai, Bullis, Sprague, Bricker, & Kaufman, 1996). Positive behavior intervention support systems first developed as a result of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendment of 1997 (IDEA 97). The goal of such programs was to use positive behavioral interventions and supports for students with disabilities who present with consistent problematic behaviors or who may be at risk for developing problem behaviors (Sugai, Horner, Dunlap, Hieneman, Nelson, & Scott, 2000). Hawken and O’Neill (2006) noted that the foundation and concepts of PBIS originated in research that led to the development of positive support procedures for students with severe disabilities. The use of preventive approaches to inhibit disruptive behaviors and encourage appropriate behaviors for students with severe disabilities became an alternative to punitive interventions. The strategy evolved into an intervention strategies for whole schools. With this shift to population-based strategies, the analysis of the source of undesirable behaviors of individual students, and the development of individual interventions became the foundation for generalized social skill instruction as well as the development of school-wide behavior modification programs.

Review of the literature

Description of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS)

Sugai and Horner (2008) describe Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) as a whole-school approach that emphasizes effective systematic and individualized behavioral interventions for achieving social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behaviors. They suggested that the teaching and learning environment should provide for the modeling, teaching, and support of appropriate behaviors to prevent the incidence of rule-breaking behaviors. Thus, PBSI serves as a framework within which the identification of predictable problem behaviors by school personnel can aid in the definition of appropriate intervention strategies designed to reduce and reform problem behaviors in the school. Along with the implementation of effective strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviors, PBIS also provides a purposeful system for data collection and analysis. This system assists in the effective evaluation of desired outcomes and the development of plans for redirecting or improving behavior management activities. Data collection and analysis are both critical for assessing the effectiveness of behavior management strategies (Scott, Rosenberg, & Borgmeier, 2010).
Positive Behavior Intervention Support provides a broad set of research-based strategies designed to develop a school environment that promote positive behavioral expectations that apply to all students. The behaviors expected and supported within the school are those that apply to society as well (Rosen, 2005). Teaching appropriate and effective behavioral expectations directly and unequivocally to all students throughout the school year creates a culture of high expectations for individual behaviors. The students are acutely aware of expected behaviors at all times. In a PBIS environment, students displaying appropriate behavior receive recognition, adding another positive dimension to the use of PBIS.

Positive Behavior Intervention Support developed from Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), which has a foundation in behaviorism, particularly the work of Albert Bandura and B. F. Skinner (Johnston, Foxx, Jacobson, Green, & Mulick, 2006). Skinner was a behaviorist who developed the theory of operant conditioning (Todd & Morris, 1995). Operant conditioning uses extrinsic factors, such as positive reinforcers and negative consequences to control the probability of a desired behavior. The frequency of a behavior increases due to the effects of positive reinforcement. Skinner’s (1974) theory of operant conditioning, which expanded the classic stimulus-response model to include antecedent events and reinforcing consequences, played a fundamental role in the development of modern behavioral psychology. Modern behavioral psychology is the systematic extension of Skinner’s principles of operant conditioning to problems and issues of social significance (Baer, Wolf, & Risley, 1968). Applied behavior analysis contributes to the theory of positive behavior support by providing the theoretical outline for behavioral change. Applied behavior analysis played a significant role in the development of PBIS where positive behavior support encourages favorable academic or social behaviors. Positive Behavioral Intervention Support concepts also align closely with Bandura’s (1971) social learning theory, in which people learn from one another through observation and imitation of the modeled behaviors. The combined use of behavioral theory and social learning theory in PBIS provides students with exposure to desired personal and social behaviors, and enhances the likelihood of attaining desired academic outcomes.

Positive Behavior Intervention Support provides an environment for the development and integration of inclusive systems for positive behavioral as well as effective academic change among all stakeholders across all school contexts. It exposes classroom management to positive changes in the school culture that directly affects both students and staff (Bradshaw & Elise, 2011). According to Osher, Bear, Sprague, and Doyle (2010) positive behavior frameworks focused on the goal of decreasing the occurrence of problem behaviors in classrooms and schools should develop associated positive support systems for all stakeholders across settings that include classrooms, schools, families and communities. They also noted that the evidence is clear that a system of school-wide positive behavior support prevents many problems that typically arise in school settings (Osher et al., 2010). The overarching goal of PBIS is to respond to a diminished social culture by empowering students collectively to become more positive and academically responsible through the instruction of socially appropriate and acceptable behaviors. McIntosh, Filter, Bennett, Ryan, and Sugai (2010) contend that the main goal of implementing a positive behavior intervention system is to transform the current school environment by exposing students to a greater number of proactive factors while reducing their exposure to common risk factors that promote problematic behaviors. Positive Behavioral Intervention Support systems can vary in detail from school to school, but they commonly

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include practices, processes, procedures, and evidence-based interventions that provide a framework for accomplishing efficient and effective approaches to prevent negative behaviors from affecting the climate and culture of schools (Sugai & Horner, 2008).

Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems involve a three-tier process as a component of Response to Intervention (RTI). Response to Intervention is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions to meet the students’ needs through consistent progress monitoring to make adjustments in instruction and/or achievement of set goals based on the students’ responses to the interventions (Batsche, Elliott, Graden, Grimes, Kovaleski, & Prasse, 2006). The three tiers include a universal goal for all students to have access to a quality curriculum and instruction. Tier 1 provides all students with clearly defined and taught behavioral expectations and the establishment of an effective reward system for appropriate behavior. Designed to meet the needs of 80-90% of all students through combined preventative and proactive measures (Sugai & Horner, 2009), the goal is to reduce the number of new problem behaviors that might occur during the course of the school day.

Tier 2 specifies goals for a targeted group; specifically students identified as needing additional support and would benefit from evidence-based interventions. This level of intervention identifies at risk students who exhibit challenging behavioral problems. Problem behaviors are mitigated using quickly accessed interventions that are highly efficient, flexible, and designed to bring about swift behavioral improvement (Hawken & Horner, 2003). Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems theory suggests that 10-15% of students require Tier 2 level interventions in order to be successful in school. This tier requires the active involvement of school support personnel including school psychologists, counselors, and other behavioral specialists. Progress monitoring is aggressive and continuous to identify at-risk students (Crone, Horner, & Hawken, 2006).

Tier 3 establishes goals and interventions for individual students who display behaviors requiring additional attention (Sandomierski, Kincaid, & Algozzine, 2007). At Tier 3, an in-depth analysis of data occurs providing the basis for the development of individualized plans for supporting desired behavioral outcomes. At this level of intervention, students presenting with highly intensive behavioral problems receive personalized plans to meet their behavioral and social needs. Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems theory predicts that 1-5% of students require this level of behavioral intervention and guidance (Sugai & Horner, 2009).

The Implementation Process

The literature supporting the idea that PBIS implementation leads to a decrease in problematic behaviors and an increase academic performance is abundant (Horner et al., 2009, Nelson, Martella, & Garland, 1998; Simonsen et al., 2008). Studies of the overall effectiveness of PBIS focus heavily on the implementation process and positive behavioral change. Positive behavior intervention programs have become more prevalent based on the identification of the immediate need for behavioral interventions in the schools (Kincaid, Childs, Blase, & Wallace, 2007). Such interventions help to facilitate change by modifying school expectations to promote positive social behaviors while enhancing academic success. The positive nature of PBIS led to its widespread acceptance and popularity. The clear definition of the components of PBIS
provide a basis for the effective assessment, design, implementation and evaluation of behavior management strategies based on developed, tested and systematic methods and frameworks. Sugai and Horner (2002b) recommend that at least 80% of the school faculty and staff have to support PBIS prior to any steps towards implementation in order to enhance the likelihood of its success. Muscott, Mann, Benjamin, Gately, Bell, & Muscott, (2004b) further contend that school-wide support from both faculty and staff is critical to the implementation process. Without faculty and administrative buy-in, the implementation of PBIS programs is more likely to fail. To foster acceptance of PBIS, an effective leadership team must serve as the vehicle for implementation efforts. Additionally, the implementation of the programs is more likely to be successful when the leadership team is in place prior to initiating any PBIS activities (George & Kincaid, 2008). The leadership team should include stakeholders with broad representation from members of special education, regular education, families, community mental health professionals, and the administration. By combining the representation of all stakeholders, the leadership team has the ability to characterize any concern with problematic behaviors and teaching pro-social behaviors to the students (OSEP 2004).

The leadership team, along with stakeholders, should receive training and consultation with any professionals involved, including district coaches and any others with behavioral support expertise (Handler, Rey, Connell, Thier, Feinberg, & Putnam, 2007). The overarching goal of the leadership team is to deliver training relative to all aspects of the PBIS model, to include assessing, developing, implementing, managing, evaluating, and regrouping throughout the data collection process to provide the needed interventions for all students (OSEP, 2004). Handler et al. (2007) suggests that the commitment of team members to the process should be genuine, with a clear understanding of the time commitment. Teams may spend 40-50 hours planning and developing the PBIS system in the first year alone. After the first year of implementation, teams require a minimum of two hours per month to meet, plan, reflect on, and assess the implementation process and practices (Handler et al., 2007).

Sugai and Horner (2002a) suggest that the leadership team establish a one to three year timeline of activities to develop measurable goals and outcomes based upon data provided by staff in order to determine a school’s needs. This action plan should provide an implementation timeline that includes training for staff with ongoing resources for support and a system for collecting and analyzing data to reinforce the established goals. Compliance with established components of the PBIS framework is necessary in order to increase the likelihood of a successful implementation (Sugai & Horner, 2002b).

Lohrmann, Forman, Martin, & Palmieri, (2008) identified the importance of understanding staff perspectives on PBIS when developing the program. The staff should be aware of the requirements of a team-based approach and the importance of school personnel playing a significant role in the development of the desired school climate while working together to establish strong leadership within the school. Organization and a commitment to the use of data-driven decision-making are necessary for an effective leadership team. Training of the leadership team is also essential for a strong staff understanding of the overall concept of PBIS. The implementation process is a critical component to the overall success of PBIS, as it is the most effective and meaningful development and training purpose of the leadership team (Sugai & Horner, 2002b). The team should comprise a group of staff members respected by

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their colleagues, and who are able to communicate the basic concepts of PBIS to faculty and staff.

**Training and Support Systems**

According to Algozzine, Horner, Sugai, Barrett, Dickey, Eber, & Tobin (2010), the achievement of a high quality level of implementation requires that the process begin with professional development and a concentrated level of support. Training from outside sources tends to produce short-term motivation and support for program implementation. Outside consultants who lead staff training may assume a level of staff motivation and support that does not exist. Faculty and staff may not be ready to participate in a new program over the long term (Sugai & Horner, 2006). As a result, this type of training may not prove successful in guiding and supporting the staff, as it does not provide the information and resources required to sustain the established goals for the students involved (OSEP, 2004).

Lindsey (2008) conducted a qualitative study to assess the complications associated with the process of introducing new ideas and procedures. The study involved the ideas of innovation diffusion to PBIS by examining characteristics known to affect the adoption of a new idea for common use and implementation. The data collected from participant interviews suggested that effective training was an advantage in the implementation of the new policies. The study also indicated several negative aspects of implementation—the amount of time necessary to implement the policies of PBIS in addition to the instructional responsibilities. Ninety percent of those surveyed indicated that they participated in summer training for the analysis of data to determine secondary and tertiary level interventions. The interviews indicated that the majority of participants felt that teacher-directed behavior management for problem behaviors was more advantageous for the student than the office referral systems (Lindsey, 2008).

Bambara, Nonnemacher, and Kern (2009) investigated both the perceived barriers and enablers in the implementation and sustaining of positive behavior support across five groups of stakeholders. The study identified specific factors involving ongoing professional development and administrative leadership support that could aid or impede the process of implementation as well as the continuation of the PBIS activity. Both the training efforts and administrative support helped to establish the culture necessary to believe in and support PBIS. However, many staff members indicated that their school culture was not supportive or conducive to the implementation of PBIS. The lack of staff commitment and their unwillingness to participate in training resulted in significant impediments to successful implementation. It was also determined that many school personnel rejected the idea of positive support due to their beliefs regarding the effectiveness of punitive consequences for addressing inappropriate behaviors. LaVigna and Donnellan (2000) distinguished between discipline and punishment, suggesting that this difference was critical to the expectations and requirements for program implementation. Specifically, discipline was essential for the development of appropriate behavioral expectations and requirements established with or for students, while punishment was the penalty imposed on a student for inappropriate behavior.

As the need for the examination of the source of inappropriate student behaviors grew, it became necessary to develop a specific response and intervention plan for initiating a
transformation of student disciplinary practices in schools. As a result, the enhancement of school culture has become a major part of the PBIS implementation process. School culture encompasses the norms, rituals and behaviors, values and beliefs that comprise the makeup of a school (Peterson, 2002). When the perception of the school culture is negative, the successful implementation of PBIS may be difficult. To deal with this concern, it is necessary to analyze the dynamics of student-student, student-teacher, and teacher-teacher relationships in order to identify cultural patterns related to student discipline (Bal, Thorius, & Kozleski, 2012). The examination of cultural patterns and concerns allows the leadership team to better identify problems, and develop solutions to enhance the school’s culture. The examination of the schools cultural history and institutional traditions aids in the identification of the types of behaviors requiring attention and the development of strategies leading to a successful shift towards a positive school culture (Kozleski & Huber, 2010).

**Research Questions (RQ) and Hypotheses**

The following research questions guided this study: First, was there a relationship between teachers’ perception of PBIS and the implementation process? Secondly, did a relationship exist between teachers’ perception of the administrator’s role in PBIS and the implementation process? And, third, was there a relationship between teachers’ perception of PBIS and the administrator’s role in PBIS?

**Theoretical Framework**

Increased student performance drives instruction. Teaching develops through standards-based instruction for all students to achieve success. Parallel to the drive for effective instruction is the need for effective classroom management techniques. There is an increased need for systematic behavioral modification strategies or models to allow students with behavior challenges to function within a classroom. The design of these intervention models typically focuses on whole group management. Best practices in behavior management systems are becoming comparable to best practices in instructional approaches. Positive Behavioral Intervention Support offers a systematic approach to behavioral modification through data analysis and goal setting to meet student needs, and promote academic success.

**Methodology**

**Participants**

One hundred and sixteen (116) certified public school teachers grades K-8 participated in the study. The participants were teachers in a coastal school district located in a southern state. The participants in the study had a wide range of teaching experience with the majority of the respondents reporting ten or more years of experience in the schools.

**Instrumentation**

The administration of a researcher-designed instrument entitled ‘Teacher Perceptions of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS)’ provided data for the study. Demographic
questions assessed years of experience and length of time at present school for each respondent, whether the respondent currently served on a PBIS team and the length of time PBIS has been in place at their school. The design of following questions prompted reflective consideration of the respondent’s perception of the implementation framework of PBIS in the school environment, its effectiveness and the role of the administration in PBIS processes. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: Questions one through eight addressed the implementation framework, questions nine through 19 assessed the overall perception of PBIS and the effectiveness of the program, and questions 20 through 25 concerned the role of the administration in implementing PBIS in the school.

During survey development, a PBIS leadership team from a school district selected to participate in the study served as a panel of experts tasked with evaluating the proposed instrument and providing recommendations to improve it. Upon receipt of their recommendations and following discussions about the items in the instrument, adjustments to the instrument were made. An assessment of the survey instrument’s reliability and validity occurred following a pilot study conducted using a group of volunteer teachers from the same school district. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient test assessed instrument reliability. Table 1 provides the reliability results for each of the three major areas of the survey. Each of the reliability coefficients for the different sections of the survey were >.7 indicating the survey produced reliable results.

Table 1
Cronbach’s alpha results for pilot study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Perception</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator’s Role</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When developing the instrument, the researchers considered various aspects of support systems designed to provide a smooth transition for shifts in educational practice. Consideration of potential barriers to change in education occurred as well. The construction and phrasing of questions precluded any opportunities for the submission of complaints and personal opinions.

Results

The researchers collected and analyzed data from a 25-item questionnaire. The respondents in the study were teachers who taught kindergarten through eighth grade in schools employing the PBIS model at various levels of system implementation. Respondents returned 116 (a 51.56% response rate) of the 225 questionnaires distributed. The tables below provide descriptive statistics and frequencies for the collected data. Table 2 provides information on the participants’ number of years of experience, as well as the number of years they have been

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teaching at their present school. Among the respondents, the highest percentage of teachers reported having 20 or more years of teaching experience. The data revealed that within the last four years, teachers with 20 or more years of experience were more likely to transfer to different campuses. The data also showed that teachers with the least amount of experience started and remained at the same school at a higher rate than the teachers with more experience did. Approximately 47.4% of the participants reported serving four or fewer years in their current position.

Table 2
Participants’ length of time served

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of years teaching</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Years at present school</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20+</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 provides information on the participants’ direct involvement with PBIS. The first item assessed the teachers’ relationship to the PBIS team, and the second item the number of years of implementation of PBIS within the school. Sixty-seven percent of teachers participating in the study were not members of a school-wide PBIS team and therefore not directly involved in the decision-making process on each campus. The data indicated that the schools participating in this study were in the formative years of developing a systematic behavior management program.

Table 3
PBIS Involvement by Teachers and Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PBIS Team Member</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>67.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years with PBIS present in School</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The completed survey consisted of three main sections. The first section, identified below in Table 4, contained eight questions addressing the implementation process. These questions aligned with Research Question One: Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of
PBIS and the implementation process. The design of the survey questions asked the respondents
to analyze their role and participation in the planning and development of the overall framework
of PBIS. For an overall picture of the implementation of PBIS, teachers reflected on their
participation in ongoing training opportunities for developing the behavior management system.
Most teachers indicated that they understood the requirements of the implementation process. A
5-point Likert type scale, ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’, categorized
participant responses. For questions one and two, mean response values of 4.34 and 4.5
indicated a feeling of support towards the teaching and training provided by the leadership team.
Even with the lowest mean of 3.53 reported for question five, the teachers still reported
favorably on the implementation process. This indicated a statistically significant positive
relationship (r = .50, n = 116, p < .001) between teachers’ perceptions of PBIS and the
implementation process. The percentage of variance accounted for was 25% (r² = .25). Table 4
presents the results of this analysis.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics: Administration (n = 116) PBIS implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 A behavioral curriculum has been established that teaches positive expectations and rules based on data.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 As a staff, we have been provided with an outline for teaching behavioral expectations that align with PBIS.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 I have been taught a procedure that will allow me to be objective in the analysis of student behavior.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 My PBIS team leaders keep me updated on data summaries.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5 I am included in decision making based on the data.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6 Based on the data collected, my students’ expectations and goals are adjusted.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7. I am provided with training and ongoing professional development and support to fully understand PBIS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8 We have ongoing professional development sessions to review PBIS framework and discuss areas of concern.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scale: 1 = Strong Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree

The second set of questions identified below in Table 5 assessed the respondents’ perspectives on how various components of PBIS affected classroom management as well as the PBIS program as a whole. Research Question Two, ‘Is there a relationship between the teachers’ perceptions of the administrator’s role in PBIS and the implementation process?’ was designed to initiate reflection on all aspects of PBIS from the earliest level of implementation to actual classroom practices. Questions 11, 16, 17, and 18 were reversed, and all four reflected the lowest means: 2.63, 2.86, 2.41, and 2.99, respectively, indicating that the teachers surveyed in this study were supportive of the inclusion of PBIS for behavior management. There was a statistically significant relationship ($r = .69, n=116, p < .001$), between teachers’ perceptions of the administrator’s role in PBIS and the implementation process. The percentage of variance accounted for was approximately 48% ($r^2 = .4761$)

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics: Administration (n = 116) Teacher Perception of PBIS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q9 PBIS has increased student engagement, thereby reducing disruptions within the classroom and daily routine.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10 PBIS is an effective tool in promoting positive behaviors in students.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11 The framework of PBIS needs to be analyzed and restructured at my school; the goals and objectives are not increasing positive behaviors by my students. *</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12 The positive behavior support program is an effective tool for handling disruptive students in my school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13 PBIS has reduced the number of major discipline issues in my classroom.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14 PBIS is necessary as the behavior management system.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q15 I give positive reinforcement to all students who follow the rules and meet the expectations as taught.  

Q16 My students who misbehave are still misbehaving; they are not motivated by the reward system in place.  

Q17 PBIS has created an environment where inappropriate behaviors are not punished. *  

Q18 PBIS is targeting the students who normally behave without any intrinsic motivation. *  

Q19 The teachers were included in developing a behavior matrix to align with PBIS standards.  

*Reversed Items

The last section of the survey instrument, as identified in Table 6 below, consisted of six questions addressing the teachers’ perceptions of the administrator’s role in the implementation and management of PBIS. Research Question Three sought to investigate whether a relationship existed between teachers’ perceptions of PBIS and the administrator’s role in PBIS. The analysis of responses to Research Question Three, ‘Is there a relationship between teachers’ perception of PBIS and the role of the administration?’ provided similar results with ($r = .66$, $n =116$, $p < .001$), again a positive correlation, and a moderate effect size ($r^2 = .43$).

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics: Administration ($n = 116$) Role of the Administrator in PBIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q20 The leadership at my school takes an active role in the development and implementation of PBIS.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q21 My administrators have provided tools and strategies for behavior interventions to improve behavior management techniques.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q22 The PBIS leadership team at my school has executed the required components to meet the goals of the school’s vision.  
Q23 The leadership team has differentiated between classroom-managed behavior and office-managed behaviors.  
Q24 The PBIS team has established criteria to determine the need for additional training and support.  
Q25 The leadership team was included in developing a behavior matrix to align with PBIS standards.

Discussion

During the initial phase of the literature review, the researchers identified many studies that examined whether a relationship existed between PBIS and student achievement. In general, these studies suggested that in schools using PBIS, a reduction in time spent dealing with behavioral issues correlated inversely with increased student achievement and engagement. (Anderson & Kincaid, 2005; Barrett et al., 2008; Horner et al., 2009; Luiselli et al, 2005; MacNeil et al., 2009; Nelson et al., 1998; Simonsen et al., 2008). The present study did not examine the success or failure of PBIS, nor its influence on student outcomes; rather, it sought to measure the teachers’ perception of the different aspects of the PBIS implementation process. Sugai and Horner (2002b) recommend that faculty and staff support of PBIS is critical to the likelihood of success prior to, during, and following the implementation process. The current study examined whether a relationship existed between the teachers’ perception of PBIS and the implementation process. In addition, the study examined teachers’ perception based on the role of the administration in the PBIS model. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom (2004), in agreement with the creators of the PBIS model, also pointed to administrative support as a vital element to the success of PBIS. Based on responses to the survey, teachers’ perception of the administrator’s role in PBIS was similar to previous findings regarding teacher perception of the administrator’s role in the context of support and leadership in professional development and training events to promote teacher buy-in and improved teacher involvement in policies and procedures (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2009).

The initial goal of the study was to determine if teachers would implement a behavior management strategy using positive behavior interventions and modification approaches rather than a traditional punitive system. The analysis of prior studies such as that of Sugai and Horner (2002b), provided an indication that PBIS yielded questions pertaining to the effectiveness of not only the program itself, but the quality of the implementation process. Discussions regarding quality of implementation provide the opportunity for further investigation.
The results of this study also indicated a positive and significant relationship between teachers’ perception of PBIS and the success of implementation process. Additionally, there is a positive correlation between teachers’ perception of PBIS and the effort teachers put into its implementation. This suggests that teachers believe in the opportunity for improved behavioral outcomes through the use of PBIS they are more likely to implement and use the system in their classrooms to promote their students’ behavioral growth. The principles of PBIS support developing strategies to provide interventions for specific unwanted behaviors in order to reduce and reform those behaviors (Sugai & Horner, 2008).

The teachers’ perception of the role of the administration in PBIS indicate that they see the leadership team, administrators, and themselves as collaborative teams operating collectively to best meet the needs of students. This allows them to address the evolving social needs of students, as well as increase the opportunity for enhancing learning while decreasing problematic behaviors. As a result of such collaborative efforts, teachers support the PBIS model, and there is support for their efforts to implement the model. Combined, they are more likely to be successful in their implementation of PBIS.

The results of this study support the research of Cushing, Horner, and Barrier (2003) which indicated that administrator’s played a critical role for the effective implementation of PBIS as well as for promoting the development of a social climate of positive interaction between students and teachers. In addition, McKevitt and Braaksma (2008), found that an essential component for successful implementation is a supportive administrator, noting a positive relationship between the administrator’s role in PBIS implementation and the teachers’ perception of PBIS.

There may be several reasons for the positive outcomes of this study. For example, the presence of a successful PBIS program at the participating school, or the existence of a supportive administration and leadership team. Additionally, collaborative school staff may enjoy the opportunity to develop a cohesive program to support behavioral interventions that lead to a positive school culture.

**Recommendations for Policy or Practice**

The results of this study informs schools in the process of adopting a behavior management program of the importance of analyzing the implementation of the PBIS model from a teacher’s perspective. Establishing PBIS in schools is an idea that is gaining more attention in schools each year as the need for systematic interventions and behavior modification systems increases. With so many studies indicating the overall success and impact that PBIS, the present study points towards the role of teacher perceptions as another factor underlying such successful implementations. It also points suggests that the teachers’ perception of administrative support for PBIS may be critical in successfully establishing such programs in a school.

This research study may also provide school administrators with insight on common teacher perceptions of PBIS, and the extent to which the administrations support and involvement can influence its implementation. It also may allow administrators to assess how
teachers would respond to any program that endorses positive behavior strategies by pointing out the importance of training and support provided by leadership teams and administrators in contributing to positive teacher attitudes towards their implementation.

Many school districts are exploring how the implementation of behavioral plans can enhance the continuity of instruction. This study provides insight on the significance of teacher perception of PBIS implementation efforts, and the relationship between the variables required for successful implementation. If building-level administrators are aware of teacher perceptions of their implementation efforts, then the establishment of continued and recurring behavioral expectations on a district level can occur, allowing for smooth transitions and improved continuity of instruction as students advance through grade levels.

Quality of implementation is one of the most critical aspects for the successful use of PBIS. This should be the focus of attention for administrators interested in developing their own behavioral expectations and a positive behavior program. Developing a strong level of teacher buy-in to the program by being familiar with common teacher perceptions can assist the leadership teams in considering all perspectives and in further developing these existing relationships.

References


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