A CASE STUDY ON THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

RELATED TO POSITIVE BEHAVIOR AND INTERVENTION SUPPORTS (PBIS)

by

Dellphine Sterling

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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APPROVED BY:

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the lived experiences of elementary teachers related to PBIS in an elementary school in a mid-Atlantic state. More specifically, this study examined the lived experiences of elementary school teachers related to a reward system for improving academic achievement and student behavior. The theory guiding this study was Bandura's theory on social learning as the theory assists in understanding the problem of poor behavior and poor academic performance among students as well as providing insights on intervention tools for improving students' behavior and academic performances. The research wass qualitative and utilized a case-study methodology. This case study had a sample of 10 teachers from one elementary school in Maryland. The data collection was from individual interviews of participants, review of documents, and a focus group from one purposefully-selected elementary school. All data were organized using a descriptive framework approach. The organized information was coded using The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers. All data is thematically analyzed. The results from the study were that the use of the PBIS framework in an elementary school improved student behavior and academic outcome. It was determined from the findings that the use of PBIS had positive influence on school climate. The findings from the study will add to the literature on the use of the PBIS approach to improve behavior and academic performance.

Keywords: Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), fidelity, intervention, student growth, behavior

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to God, my creator, from whom all good things flow! If it were not for all of God's blessings, I would not have made it this far. I also dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Winsome, who made every sacrifice, including putting off her education and career to make a way for all her children. To my brother Craig who was always there to help me out when I needed someone in my life to move about. To my sister Rhonda, oh, where do I start? You have made the impossible possible for me. You were always there for me. If it were not for you, I would not have known what college life feels like. You always put your family first, even to this very day. To my brother Dafton, who paid for my very first exams in my life. You have set the way for me. To my sister Alecia, all those long walks that you have taken to ensure that I had something to eat while I was busy studying. To my sister Coleen, for your help with my son. To my sister Natalie, for all your prayers and encouragement, and to my youngest sister, Sashanne, for your continued motivation and encouragement and for being a parent to my eldest child.

To my children, the greatest blessings in my life, Dani-Lee, Rayon Jr., and Zoe. Thank you for your understanding and patience with me. Keep on being the best version of yourselves and always put God first, and pray daily. Never forget that I, Dellphine, your mother, loves you for forever and a day.

Lastly, to my grandson, Jordan. You have made me see the world from a different perspective from the day I found out that you were on the way. I am thankful that I will be able to spend more quality time with you.

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I would like to first thank God for His grace and mercy that has kept me throughout the process. To my family, thank you for being my biggest supporters throughout the process. To my chair and my committee member, thank you for all your help.

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List of Abbreviations

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS)

Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Education of Handicapped Children Act (EHCA)

Students with Disabilities (SWD)

In School Suspension (ISS)

Out of School Suspension (OSS)

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The current education system requires a school environment to be motivating and engaging. Positive student outcomes have been linked with a motivating and engaging school environment (Gage et al., 2020). Every school has the opportunity to ensure that a positive culture is promoted, and that culture supports students in developing and maintaining their engagement, self-improvement, learning outcome, motivation, and discipline, and it is the school's responsibility to ensure that this culture is promoted (Gage et al., 2020; Gagnon et al., 2020; James et al., 2019). There are different ways in which such culture can be promoted. One way to promote a positive culture in schools that support learning outcomes, learning engagement, and positive behavior is by using a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS) framework (Gage et al., 2020; Gagnon et al., 2020; James et al., 2019; Petrasek et al., 2022). The missing link is the critical component of implementing PBIS with fidelity to ensure it is effective. This topic is important because it can be studied using various qualitative and quantitative approaches. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the lived experiences of elementary teachers related to PBIS in an elementary school in a mid-Atlantic state. This chapter provides a foundation for the research conducted for this study. Appurtenant social, historical, and theoretical contextual background information is provided, along with the practical significance of the specific topic. The problem and purpose statement provide the context and focus of the study, followed by the significance of the study. Key terms and definitions critical to the study are listed.

Background

Positive behavioral and intervention support is a system that many schools use in today's society to promote school safety and good behavior (Ohtani et al., 2018; Simonsen et al., 2022; Wienen et al., 2019). There is a large number of students who struggle with behavior in school (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Oswald et al., 2005). Schools need to react to these negative behaviors in a positive manner in order to have a safe and positive school climate (Simonsen et al., 2022; Wienen et al., 2019). If the schools react in a punitive manner, students will not learn the skills that they need to learn to improve their behavior (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Ohtani et al., 2018; Oswald et al., 2005; Simonsen et al., 2022; Wienen et al., 2019). This is where schools should adopt a positive behavioral approach such as PBIS. Using the PBIS framework, educators teach students about behavior expectations and strategies (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Ohtani et al., 2018; Oswald et al., 2005; Simonsen et al., 2022).

Historical Context

There are many schools across the United States of America that are faced with behavioral problems (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Oswald et al., 2005; Reno et al., 2015). Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, also known as School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS), was developed during the 1970s and 1980s as a proactive approach to improving the academic and behavioral outcomes of students by targeting the school's organizational and social culture (Wienen et al., 2019). PBIS was introduced in the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which was originally known as the Education of Handicapped Children Act (EHCA) (Ohtani et al., 2018; Simonsen et al., 2022; Wienen et al., 2019). It was executed to protect the rights of Students with Disabilities (SWD) and to ensure that all their needs were met (Ohtani et al., 2018; Simonsen et al., 2022).

Although PBIS was first used in the reauthorization of the IDEA, the procedures, ideas, and frameworks that makeup PBIS have been researched, discussed, and implemented since the early 1960s and 1970s (Ohtani et al., 2018; Simonsen et al., 2022; Wienen et al., 2019). PBIS is recognized as a tiered system that targets academic and behavioral problems (Alonzo-Vaughn et al., 2015). If students do not respond to Tier 1 instruction, then they transition to Tier 2 instruction. Tier 2 instruction is for students who need additional support, and it focuses on targeted skills and more rigorous instruction (Alonzo-Vaughn et al., 2015; Gage et al., 2020; Nese et al., 2023). If students do not respond to Tier 2, then they move on to Tier 3, which is more intense and targets students who do not respond to Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction (Alonzo-Vaughn et al., 2015; Gage et al., 2020; Nese et al., 2023).

Social Context

The PBIS framework recognizes that all students can and will only meet their behavioral expectations when they know and understand the expectations (Gage et al., 2020; Nese et al., 2023). There are a lot of students who display poor behavioral skills in the classroom and will need to have an understanding of expected behaviors in order for them to make the necessary changes (Bastable et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2020; Nese et al., 2023). Misbehavior can have an adverse effect on the teaching and learning process (James et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2018). Misbehaviors in the classroom interrupt valuable teaching and learning time (Gagnon et al., 2020; James et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2018). Therefore, it is best to have specified disciplinary measures in place to address inappropriate behaviors that interfere with students' learning, or the learning of others (Bastable et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2020; Gagnon et al., 2020; Nese et al., 2023). Students with poor behavioral skills tend to do poorly in school, and this may cause them

to miss out on other educational opportunities, such as attending college (Pas et al., 2019; Petrasek et al., 2022; Wienen et al., 2019).

Students who have behavioral problems tend to have a lower academic achievement outcome (Nese et al., 2023; Sabin, 2012; Şahin & Çoban, 2020; Wienen et al., 2019). Therefore, these students should be introduced to the appropriate behavioral interventions that will help promote academic and behavioral progress (Bastable et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2020; Gagnon et al., 2020; Nese et al., 2023). Educators and stakeholders can ensure that effective measures are taken, such as the PBIS approach to ensure that there is no academic loss among students (Pas et al., 2019; Petrasek et al., 2022; Smith & Katsiyannis, 2004). Students can lose instructional time due to disciplinary problems, and they are often suspended or expelled (Bastable et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2020; Gagnon et al., 2020). When students are expelled from school, they tend to be associated with increased aggravated assault and crime types within the community (Bastable et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2020; Gagnon et al., 2020; Gerlinger & Hipp, 2020; Gottfredson et al., 2021).

There are a number of educators who did not get to complete the curriculum not because of learning difficulties but due to disciplinary problems (James et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2018). Students need to display appropriate behavior to ensure that learning takes place and no one loses instructional time due to behavioral problems (Gage et al., 2020; Gagnon et al., 2020; Pas et al., 2019; Petrasek et al., 2022). Appropriate student behavior is needed in schools for strong academic achievement (Pas et al., 2019; Petrasek et al., 2022). When there are appropriate behavior displays in a school and in a classroom, effective teaching and learning can take place (Bastable et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2020; Gagnon et al., 2020). It is important to ensure that each school keeps discipline under control because this will ensure that there is a positive school

climate (Bastable et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2020; Gagnon et al., 2020; Gerlinger & Hipp, 2020; Gottfredson et al., 2021). When there is a positive school climate and culture, learning is more likely to take place than if the school climate and culture were a negative one (Bastable et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2020; Gagnon et al., 2020; Gerlinger & Hipp, 2020; Gottfredson et al., 2021).

Theoretical Context

The theoretical context for this study will rely on the guiding theories of Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. The theory provides the core concepts for exploring behavioral and academic improvement. It is the idea that behaviors can be learned through modeling, imitation, and observation (Bandura, 1977). Research indicates that schools that adopt the PBIS framework notice improvements in academic engagement and improvements in school safety (Bastable et al., 2021; Bradshaw et al., 2010, Fluke & Peterson, 2013; Gage et al., 2020; Gagnon et al., 2020). This research will extend the current literature by describing the impact that PBIS has on students' academic achievement and major disciplinary infractions. The study will also describe the implementation process of PBIS by educators in elementary schools. The theoretical framework asserts that the effects of PBIS will be based on the implementation process. Therefore, this research will present the process of implementing the PBIS framework in the school.

<div align="center">

Problem Statement

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The problem is that students in elementary schools with no behavior intervention system in place normally perform poorly in academics. There is a copious amount of literature on the use of PBIS in schools. However, there is a gap in the literature on the impact of positive behavior and intervention support on students' academic performance and behavior in elementary schools (Kittelman et al., 2019). Although there are many schools that implement the

PBIS framework to reduce behavior problems and poor academic performances in the classroom environment, schools continue to experience poor academic performance and behavior problems (Gagnon et al., 2020). Previous research studies indicate that the effectiveness of behavioral and academic intervention plans can be undermined due to poor implementation of the intervention approach (Kim et al., 2018). To determine and understand the effectiveness of the PBIS approach, it is critical to gain an understanding of teachers' and other educators' perceptions of the impact of the PBIS framework, as well as their perceptions of implementing the PBIS framework with fidelity.

There are various studies that have been conducted on PBIS and its effectiveness of PBIS when implemented with fidelity (Noltemeyer et al., 2019). These studies have shown different results. For example, in the study that was conducted by Pas et al. (2019), the results showed that there was a reduction in suspension rate when the PBIS framework was implemented with fidelity. The purpose of the PBIS framework is to support students once it is implemented with fidelity (Noltemeyer et al., 2019; Pas et al., 2019). The PBIS approach will need to be implemented with fidelity and will need to have full support from staff in order to see positive results.

<center>**Purpose Statement**</center>

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand the lived experiences of elementary teachers related to PBIS in an elementary school in a mid-Atlantic state. The rationale for this study will be developed since there was no evidence of effectiveness in improving students' academic performance and behavioral problems. At this stage in the research, positive behavior and intervention support will be generally defined as an evidence-based framework that is used to identify, teach, model, practice, and acknowledge positive

behavior that is consistent with the expectations in a school environment (Kim et al., 2018; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019).

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is to widen the evidence and to add to the existing data on PBIS. While there is a wealth of literature on PBIS, there is a need for additional research on the effectiveness of PBIS on academic performance and behavior. The findings from this study will be to add to the literature and identify the effects of PBIS on academic performance and behavior in elementary schools. This study will also serve as additional research data for school leaders who may be hesitant to adopt the PBIS framework to address discipline and academic problems in their building. The results from this study may be used by administrators and other stakeholders to identify and implement effective strategies that can be used to help improve academic performance and improved behaviors.

Theoretical

This study will be focused on Bandura's (1977) theory. Bandura's social learning theory will be used to explore the impact of PBIS on elementary school students' behaviors and academic outcomes and how it is implemented in the teaching and learning environment. The social learning theory can reveal new creative and innovative methods of teaching which will benefit educators and students in the teaching and learning process, and it can help with modeling positive behaviors in the classroom (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Bradshaw et al., 2011; Schultz & Schultz, 2016). PBIS utilizes the theoretical framework of social learning theory and provides effective ways to encourage observing, imitating, and modeling positive behaviors in the classroom (Bandura & Walters, 1977; Bastable et al., 2021; Bradshaw et al., 2010; Schultz & Schultz, 2016).

Empirical

Many schools across the United States are now faced with critical behavioral problems (Lassen et al., 2006; McKellar, 2017; Oswald et al., 2006; Sugai & Horner, 2006). Previous research has investigated the effect of school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports on discipline in schools (Gage et al., 2020; Oswald et al., 2005; Safran & Oswald, 2003; Smith & Katsiyannis, 2004). However, there is only a little empirical research on the effects of PBIS on academic performance and behavior, including the process of implementing PBIS with fidelity (Bastable et al., 2021; Bradshaw & Pas, 2011; Gagnon et al., 2020). School administrators can use the results from this research to add to their existing school-wide behavioral plan or to adopt and implement with fidelity the PBIS framework in their school.

Practical

The practical significance of this research study will be gaining an understanding of the implementation process of Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports (PBIS) and its effects on student behavior and academic performance. Once the PBIS approach is implemented with fidelity and the students have an understanding of the approach, then students and teachers will start to benefit from the interventions. The teachers can benefit because they will have more time focusing on instruction and less time to focus on dealing with behavior problems. The students can benefit by having more structured instruction time in the classroom, which will then increase their opportunities to improve academically. Administrators can use the data to analyze the effects and the impact of implementing PBIS in schools. PBIS is beneficial in the learning

environment as it provides educators with the opportunity to implement positive rewards in the education system (Bradshaw & Pas, 2011; Gage et al., 2020; Sugai & Horner, 2006).

Research Questions

The qualitative research case study addresses the following questions:

Central Research Question

How effective is the implementation of the PBIS approach in elementary schools in 3rd through 5th grade?

Sub-Question One

What is the impact of the PBIS approach on 3rd through 5th grade students' academic performance levels with PBIS as an intervention tool in the classroom?

Sub-Question Two

What is the impact of the PBIS approach on students' behaviors in grades 3 through 5?

Sub-Question Three

How do teachers of 3rd through 5th grade use PBIS as an intervention tool?

Definitions

1. *Academic Achievement* – Academic achievement is an educational goal that is achieved over a certain period of time. It can be measured by informal and informal assessments and may differ among individuals (Pitts, 2017).
2. *Behavior* – Behavior is the manner in which a person acts or conducts him/herself, especially towards others (Pitts, 2017).

3. *Intervention* – Intervention is a situation or circumstance where someone or something becomes involved so that it or they may address particular issues or problems in an attempt to influence the outcome (Pitts, 2017).

4. *Student Growth* – Student growth is a measurement of a student or students from a beginning point to an endpoint or set goal that can be measured using data or informal assessments to determine if there was or was not growth (Pitts, 2017).

Summary

Based on research, students who struggle with behavioral issues also struggle academically (Gage et al., 2020). The problem is that there are many students who are failing academically due to a lack of behavioral intervention plans in the learning environment. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to gain an understanding of the effects that PBIS has on students' academic performance and behavior. Based on research data, PBIS can improve students' behavior which will, in turn, improve students' engagement and learning outcome/academic achievement (Bastable et al., 2021; Bradshaw & Pas, 2011; Gagnon et al., 2020). Having effective classroom management and preventative disciplinary measures will create a classroom environment for supporting teaching and learning. PBIS will emphasize that classroom management and preventative school discipline must be integrated and must work together along with effective academic instruction (Gage et al., 2020; Sugai & Horner, 2006). This has to be done in order to create a positive and safe school climate to maximize students' success.

This chapter focuses on the background information, problem, purpose, the theoretical background, and significance of the intended research. The problem statement and the purpose of the study is addressed, and definition of key terms are included in this chapter. The chapter also

include the central research question and the sub-questions. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand the lived experiences of elementary teachers related to PBIS in an elementary school in a mid-Atlantic state.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

A systematic review of the literature was conducted to determine the impact of positive behavior and intervention support on students' behaviors and academic achievements. This chapter offers a review of existing literature related to the topic of study. In the first section, the constructivism theory will be discussed. Next, a synthesis of recent literature regarding positive behavior interventions and supports and how the framework can improve students' behaviors and academic achievements will be discussed. Lastly, the literature surrounding positive behavior interventions and supports as a framework to improve students' behaviors and academic achievements will be discussed

Theoretical Framework

This research has a theoretical framework based on Bandura's (1977) work on social learning theory. The theory assists in understanding the problem of poor behavior and poor academic performance among students as well as provides insights on intervention tools for improving students' behavior and academic performances. The theory provided the core concepts for exploring behavioral and academic improvement. There are three core concepts of Bandura's social learning theory, observing, imitating, and modeling (Bandura & Walters, 1977). The PBIS framework will be examined from the viewpoint of social learning and how this can be implemented in the teaching and learning environment.

Social learning theory was first introduced by Albert Bandura in 1971. It is the idea that behaviors can be learned through modeling, imitation, and observation (Bandura, 1977). The social learning theory places emphasis on the importance of imitating the positive behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of other individuals; attention span, memory, motivation, and

cognitive factors (Bandura, 1969). Social learning theory emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling (Bandura, 1977). Bandura's social learning theory was first focused on casual analysis of hypothesized inner determinants but then it later shifted to a detailed examination of external influences on responsiveness (Bandura & Walters, 1977). The Bandura's theory is sometimes referred to as the "Social Cognitive Theory" (Schunk, 2020).

Schunk (2020) stated that social learning theory is people learning from their social environments. Schunk (2020) also stated that "learning is an information processing activity in which knowledge is cognitively represented as symbolic representations that are guides for action" (p.163). Learning takes place through an active manner of performance, listening, modeling, and observing and students learn best (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). According to Schultz and Schultz 2016, Bandura had the idea that direct reinforcement is not appropriate for all learning types or behaviors. Due to his belief, Bandura emphasized that individuals gain new knowledge and behaviors through observation and modeling the actions and behaviors of other people (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). Individuals are more likely to adopt a modeled behavior if the behavior they observed results in outcomes they valued (Bandura & Walters, 1977; Schultz & Schultz, 2016).

Social learning theory will be beneficial in this study as it can be used to encourage and teach desirable behaviors in the classroom. This can be done through the use of positive reinforcement and rewards. The social learning theory can reveal new creative and innovative methods of teaching which will benefit educators and students in the teaching and learning process (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). Educators and other stakeholders will be able to use the knowledge of students' thought processing and use them in the classroom in various ways which can increase students' engagement. With the social learning theory, bridging the gap between

behavioral and cognitive learning will be more successful because the theory creates students with strong self-efficacy. Social learning theory is closely related to a behavior intervention approach system because they both focused on teaching individuals with desired behaviors through the process of modeling.

Having a good understanding of social learning theory can help to guide in exploring the process of change in students' behaviors and academic performance. Bandura's (1977) social learning theory is helpful in understanding the challenges in this situation.

Related Literature

The purpose of the literature review is to present an analysis and synthesis of research related to a topic and to understand the research topic. This literature review was conducted to gain an understanding of current research related to behavior, including behavior in school, and through this research the positive effects of positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS).

Behavior and Discipline in School

It is suggested that schools aim to have a climate that is very positive and encourage high behavioral expectations among all students. It is very important for all schools to ensure that there is good behavior and discipline among all students as this will create a safe learning environment (Kim et at., 2018; Okilwa et al., 2017; Scribner & Warnick, 2021). When students display poor behavior and poor discipline in the school environment there will be an adverse effect on the teaching and the learning process, and this may lead to safety problems in school (Kim et al., 2018; Okilwa et al., 2017; Scribner & Warnick, 2021). In a study conducted by Scribner & Warnick (2021), the researchers discussed how students normally get bullied and are often in group fights that cause schools to go on lockdown to ensure that the other students are safe. Okilwa et al. (2017) mentioned in their research that teachers spend instructional time to

solve poor behaviors such as verbal fights when they should be teaching a class, and this affects the learning process because instructional time is lost.

Researchers suggested that it is imperative that educators and all other stakeholders ensure that there are specified disciplinary measures implemented in the school system to mitigate behaviors that are unacceptable in school (Kim et al., 2018; Okilwa et al., 2017; Scribner & Warnick, 2021). Most recent evidence (Scribner & Warnick, 2021), suggests that disciplinary measures such as students being suspended in school should be implemented to possibly drive fear in students so they may not make good choices. Implementing specific disciplinary measures and actions such as verbal warnings, written reprimands, and suspensions in the school system will create a classroom that is safe and conducive to learning (Kim et al., 2018; Okilwa et al., 2017; Scribner & Warnick, 2021). The implementation of disciplinary measures will help to minimize any behavioral problems in the classroom that may arise. Okilwa et al. (2017), discussed that when there is good behavior in a school environment it will prevent interruption of valuable teaching and learning time, and therefore, schools need to ensure that they have detailed disciplinary steps implemented to address infelicitous behaviors that interfere with students' learning or the learning of others. Scribner & Warnick (2021), mentioned in their study that when students have behaviors that are unacceptable such as not following class and school rules they tend to do poorly, and they tend to have lower academic outcomes.

Studies have shown that students with poor behavior tend to get lower scores compared to their peers who have good discipline and good behavior (Kim et al., 2018; Okilwa et al., 2017; Scribner & Warnick, 2021). To ensure that there is no academic learning loss, or to reduce learning loss, educators and other stakeholders should ensure that effective measures such as teaching students how to handle disruptive behaviors are in place to help students with mitigating

behavioral problems (Kim et al., 2018; Okilwa et al., 2017). Disciplinary and behavioral problems in the classroom can cause students to lose instructional time, so students will need to display behaviors that are appropriate to ensure that learning takes place and there is no regression (Okilwa et al., 2017; Scribner & Warnick, 2021).

In a study conducted by Kim et al. (2018), the authors argued that for there to be effective teaching and learning in the classroom, students must display appropriate behavior, this will also help to create a positive school culture and school climate. In a study conducted by Scribner & Warnick (2021), it was determined that students who were taught acceptable behavior such as how to de-escalate problems had higher academic performance than the students who were not taught how to de-escalate unacceptable behaviors. It was also determined in a study conducted by Kim et al. (2018) that where there is a positive school climate and a positive school culture, students will have a higher performance outcome when compared with students who are in a school that does not have a positive climate or a positive school culture.

History of School Discipline

Poor behaviors displayed by students in schools are not new in the education system. Teachers have been reporting inappropriate behaviors since the beginning of the public school system (Allman & Slate, 2011). The inappropriate behaviors were addressed with the use of corporal punishment, verbal reprimands, in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, verbal reprimands, and in some cases fines (Allman & Slate, 2011; Kinsler, 2011; Monahan et al., 2014). Although there were different ways that teachers and other educators deal with poor and unacceptable behaviors, corporal punishment was the most commonly used form of punishment to mitigate behavioral problems in schools (Kinsler, 2011; Monahan et al., 2014).

According to Heekes et al. (2022), corporal punishment is a form of traditional violence against children that is commonly used around the world. Teachers were able to hit students with rulers and switches when they were not paying attention, displayed poor behaviors, and academic problems in the classroom (Allman & Slate, 2011; Heekes et al., 2022; Kinsler, 2011; Monahan et al., 2014). Corporal punishment persists because of the strong belief and ties to religion, more specific to Christianity (Gershoff, 2010). In the past, parents, religious leaders, educators, and government officials believed that corporal punishment was righteous and efficient and it could restore order in homes, and the classroom environment (Allman & Slate, 2011; Gershoff, 2010; Heekes et al., 2022; Kinsler, 2011; Monahan et al., 2014).

The Negative Effects of Corporal Punishment

Although corporal punishment has been used in many school systems, and is still being used in some schools, it does more harm than good (Gudyanga et al., 2014). Researchers stated that many students did not complete their primary education because of factors linked to the use of corporal punishment (Gershoff, 2010; Gudyanga et al., 2014; Heekes et al., 2022; Kinsler, 2011; Middleton, 2008). Students who were exposed to corporal punishment are three times more likely to assault their siblings and other students in the classroom environment (Turner & Finkelhor (1996). Children who are exposed to corporal punishment learn to use force to achieve desired results (Gershoff, 2010; Heekes et al., 2022; Middleton, 2008; Turner & Finkelhor, 1996). Children learn by modeling and imitating, when students see that parents and teachers aggression are effective at attaining the goal of the aggressor, the students are more likely to imitate the aggressive behavior in the future (Allman & Slate, 2011; Bandura & Walters, 1977; Gershoff, 2010; Gudyanga et al., 2014; Heekes et al., 2022; Kinsler, 2011; Middleton, 2008; Turner & Finkelhor, 1996).

According to Gershoff (2010), social learning theory suggests that students who are exposed to corporal punishment will make hostile decisions about others and will behave poorly during social interactions. Researchers argued that corporal punishment is the use of physical force and therefore does not promote reasoning of actions so children do not learn how to internalize reasons for inappropriate behavior and will not have a reason to behave in an appropriate manner (Allman & Slate, 2011; Bandura & Walters, 1977; Gershoff, 2010; Gudyanga et al., 2014; Heekes et al., 2022; Kinsler, 2011; Middleton, 2008; Turner & Finkelhor, 1996). Corporal punishment increases the risk of physical abuse and administrators, teachers and other educators should use other methods to curtail behavioral problems instead of a method that can cause physical harm (Allman & Slate, 2011; Gershoff, 2010; Gudyanga et al., 2014; Heekes et al., 2022; Kinsler, 2011; Middleton, 2008). Researchers recommend the use of evidence-based tiered framework such as a positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS) approach to mitigate behavioral problems because it is not a physical abuse approach but rather one that will promote a more positive and rewarding results and it will be beneficial to teachers, students, parents, administrators, and other stakeholders in the school system (Kim et at., 2018; Noltemeyer, 2019; Petrasek et al., 2022; Sugai, & Horner, 2006;).

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

For the purpose of this study, PBIS is an evidence-based framework that is used to identify, teach, model, practice, and acknowledge positive behavior that is consistent with the expectations in a school environment (Kim et at., 2018; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019; Petrasek et al., 2022). PBIS became popular in 1977 after the reauthorization of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The approach was developed mainly to positively impact behavioral and academic outcomes in schools through the use of data to make informed

decisions in regard to the use of intervention methods (Sugai & Simonsen, 2008; Kim et at., 2018; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019; Petrasek et al., 2022). Many students struggle in schools due to a variety of factors at play (Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019; Petrasek et al, 2022). However, there are various ways and strategies that schools can use to manage a classroom. The majority of the time, punishment does not solve the core issues in schools so that is where PBIS comes in (Kim et at., 2018; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019) There are ongoing challenges that a number of school face to ensure that the school environment is safe and orderly for all students including teaching and learning are disrupted by the problem behavior (Sugai, & Horner, 2006; Kim et at., 2018; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019).

There are various schools that have struggled with ways to identify and implement an effective behavioral plan that can be used in all areas including academic performance and reducing in-school and out-of-school suspensions (Petrasek et al, 2022). For example, in Bastable et al. (2021) study, the researchers mentioned that when schools use an effective behavioral plan such as PBIS, they will notice higher academic performance, a reduction in suspension and detention, an increase in attendance, and even an increase in parental involvement. Some schools may have students whose behaviors are extremely poor, and this can be very frustrating for both educators and parents as this affects students who are displaying the appropriate behaviors during instructional time (Kim et at., 2018; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019). It is imperative that educators and all other stakeholders ensure that all students are safe in schools as this will help mitigate learning loss and can help improve desired behaviors in the classrooms (Kim et at., 2018; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019; Petrasek et al, 2022; Sugai, & Horner, 2006). There are many different approaches that educators and other stakeholders can use to control behavioral problems (Petrasek et al., 2022).

One of the most common approaches that is used to control behavioral problems in the teaching and learning environment is the PBIS framework (Kim et at., 2018; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019; Petrasek et al., 2022). It was determined that schools that have adopted the PBIS approach have seen positive outcomes related to the implementation of PBIS in the classrooms (Kim et at., 2018; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019). When schools use approaches that are positive for students, schools will benefit tremendously (Kim et at., 2018; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019). The schools will notice that there is growth socially, emotionally, and also academically (Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019). This improvement will allow schools to focus on the positive qualities of the students which schools can build on to help improve students' self-esteem and their academic achievement (Kim et at., 2018; Petrasek et al, 2022). With the proper deployment of PBIS, students will be more willing to take risks, they will want to aim at performing to the best of their abilities, and they will also feel more comfortable and empowered (Kim et at., 2018; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019; Petrasek et al, 2022).

History of PBIS

The origin of school-wide positive behavior support (SWPBS), otherwise known as positive behavioral intervention support (PBIS), was implemented in the early 1970s (Solakoglu & Yuksek, 2020). The PBIS approach was introduced with the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1971 (Solakoglu & Yuksek, 2020; Sugai & Horner, 2020; Wienen et al., 2019). The PBIS was implemented as a proactive approach because many schools were having problems with students' behaviors and they had difficulties mitigating the poor behaviors of students (Wienen et al., 2019). PBIS was implemented because schools wanted to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their system and deal with the behavior of students with special needs (Solakoglu & Yuksek, 2020; Wienen et al., 2019). In response to the need for

an effective behavioral intervention for students with behavioral problems, researchers at the University of Oregon started a number of research (Kim et at., 2018; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019; Solakoglu & Yuksek, 2020; Sugai & Horner, 2020; Wienen et al., 2019). Research showed that there was a great need toward a research-based decision making school-wide system to mitigate behavioral problems (Kim et at., 2018; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019; Petrasek et al., 2022; Sugai & Simonsen, 2008).

With the onset of ensuring that all students, including students with disabilities, behavior, discipline, and social and emotional needs were addressed, schools adopted and implemented PBIS (Solakoglu & Yuksek, 2020; Sugai & Horner, 2020; Wienen et al., 2019). Although PBIS was first used in the reauthorization of the IDEA, the procedures, ideas, and frameworks that makeup PBIS have been researched, discussed, and implemented since the early 1960s and 1970s (Wienen et al., 2019). The implementation of PBIS was also to enhance the ways in which schools choose, organize, administer, and evaluate behavioral strategies to meet the needs of all students (Solakoglu & Yuksek, 2020; Sugai & Horner, 2020; Wienen et al., 2019).

Strengths and Weaknesses of PBIS

When schools implement the PBIS framework effectively, they will gain a lot of benefits, especially when it is used with fidelity (Bastable et al., 2021; Sugai & Horner, 2020). For example, Bastable et al. (2021) stated that schools had seen an increase in academic performance and a reduction in suspension rate since they implemented PBIS. Research indicates that there is an increase in instructional time, students' engagement, and their interaction in the classroom and schoolwide with the use of the PBIS framework (Bastable et al., 2021; Sugai & Horner, 2020; Wienen et al., 2019). Students in one grade level where PBIS is implemented in the school had a 10% increase in their academic performance compared to students in the same grade level

who are in a school where PBIS was not implemented (James et al., 2018). By implementing

PBIS, schools will notice that the school climate and school culture would be positive (Bastable

et al., 2021; Sugai & Horner, 2020; Wienen et al., 2019.

It was determined in research studies that schools where PBIS is implemented foster

supportive academics and students learn desirable behaviors such as learning how to de-escalate

an argument (Bastable et al., 2021; James et al., 2018). Researchers in a study conducted by

Petrasek et al. (2022), mentioned that students reported feeling safe and motivated to complete

activities and participate in non-academic activities because they feel that the school is positive.

Based on results from the studies previously done, the results show that there was a rise in

students' academic outcomes and students will feel safe and more comfortable going to school

(Bastable et. al., 2021; James et al., 2018).

Although there are positive benefits in adopting the PBIS framework. there are some

challenges in using the PBIS framework as well (Bastable et. al., 2021; James et al., 2018;

Petrasek et al., 2022). Based on previous studies, schools noticed a rise in students' frustration

levels, and students complained, based on survey results that they worked hard to be rewarded

but were never rewarded and they do not feel motivated because they feel like they will never be

rewarded no matter how hard they work (Bastable et al., 2021; Sugai & Horner, 2020; Wienen et

al., 2019). James et al. (2018), agreed that students tend to give up and may lose interest in

working on their behaviors as they disclosed in surveys that only the 'good kids' are rewarded.

Some educators and other stakeholders may have difficulties implementing the PBIS framework

in the classroom because they may not be well knowledgeable about it (Sugai & Horner, 2020;

Wienen et al., 2019). It was determined by Bastable et. al., (2021) that educators complained that

they had challenges such as losing instructional time to use to educate themselves on how to

effectively implement PBIS. In addition, in a study conducted by Petrasek et al. (2022), the researchers argued that educators experienced frustration because they are unable to finish the lessons that they have for the day because they have to make time for the use of PBIS.

Implementation of PBIS

Effectively implementing PBIS is critical because it have the ability to provide schools with an approach that can assist with curtailing behavioral problems which will in turn improve the climate and learning outcome of the school (Bradshaw et al., 2015; Bruhn et al., 2022; Estrapala et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2018; Grasley-Boy et al., 2021; Kelm et al., 2014; Kittelman et al., 2019). One crucial piece of the PBIS approach is the implementation process including the data collection process, data-based decision making, promoting effective communication among parents, providing formative and summative evaluation, and a determination of the effects of an intervention plan or instruction (Bradshaw et al., 2015; McDaniel et al., 2015; Sterrett et al., 2020). To effectively implement PBIS in the learning environment, strong leadership guiding the way will be required (Kittelman et al., 2019). There have been various studies in regard to implementing PBIS successfully (Bradshaw et al., 2015; Gage et al., 2018; Kelm et al., 2014). The main reason for using PBIS is to create and sustain a positive school environment and implement effective systems to mitigate behavioral problems (Bradshaw et al., 2015; Kittelman et al., 2019).

According to Bradshaw et al. (2015), the best approach to PBIS in the learning environment is to take baby steps toward improving student's behavior. It is critical to move slowly when implementing PBIS in schools (Kittelman et al., 2019). Bradshaw et al. (2015) also stress that all stakeholders must work together for a positive outcome. The authors also state that all stakeholders involved in the process must understand their role in the implementation process

(Bradshaw et al., 2015). Proactive strategies that are designed to improve behavior should be considered when implementing PBIS (Alonzo-Vaughn et al., 2015; Bradshaw et al., 2015; Bruhn et al., 2022; Estrapala et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2018; Grasley-Boy et al., 2021; Kelm et al., 2014; Kittelman et al., 2019).

PBIS System

For a successful and effective implementation of PBIS, there must be a sound system in place that consists of three different tiers (Bruhn et al., 2022; Estrapala et al., 2021; Grasley-Boy et al., 2021). The first tier of PBIS sets the foundation for the entire system, and it is designed to address school-wide culture and climate through teaching, modeling, and acknowledging positive, social, and behavioral skills (Bruhn et al., 2022; Eiraldi et al., 2019). Tier 1 should have a PBIS team that includes various staff members, and the team should know and understand the needs of the school (Bradshaw et al., 2015).

Tier 1 phase involves explicit instruction of approximately five desired behaviors that are expected in the learning environment (McDaniel et al., 2015; Sterrett et al., 2020). After the expected desired are taught, modeled, and practice with fidelity, students who displayed or exceed the expected behaviors earn reinforcement including tokens and or positive praise for the desired behaviors (McDaniel et al., 2015; Sterrett et al., 2020). During the tier 1 phase, members of the team should know the data and the data should be used to drive the PBIS initiative's effectiveness (Bradshaw et al., 2015; Gage et al., 2018). When collecting data in the tier 1 phase, the PBIS team must look for trends, such as what particular behavior, if any, is causing widespread behavioral problems across the different classroom environments (Eiraldi et al., 2019; Gage et al., 2018). Tier 1 PBIS team members must identify undesirable behaviors among classrooms and create a reward system that will benefit teachers and students while motivating

students to improve their behaviors (Bruhn et al., 2022; Estrapala et al., 2021; Grasley-Boy et al., 2021). If the PBIS tier 1 is implemented with fidelity, approximately 80% of the school should the desired behavioral needs met with just the tier 1 support (Bradshaw et al., 2015; Bruhn et al., 2022; Estrapala et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2018; Grasley-Boy et al., 2021; McDaniel et al., 2015; Sterrett et al., 2020).

Tier 1 behavioral supports are behavioral strategies that students will have access to (Bruhn et al., 2022; Eiraldi et al., 2019). These supports set the essence for the type of behavior to be followed in the school environment (Estrapala et al., 2021; Grasley-Boy et al., 2021). In order for the practices in tier 1 to work effectively, there must be consistent team meetings, data collection, review, and analysis of data (Bruhn et al., 2022; Estrapala et al., 2021; Grasley-Boy et al., 2021). The PBIS team must also explain the expectations regularly and consistently recognize appropriate behaviors by students (Bradshaw et al., 2015; Gage et al., 2018). During the tier 1 phase, the PBIS team can used data such as discipline referrals and office referrals to identify students who need more targeted interventions such as the tier 2 phase (Bradshaw et al., 2015; Bruhn et al., 2022; Estrapala et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2018; Grasley-Boy et al., 2021; McDaniel et al., 2015; Sterrett et al., 2020).

The second tier of PBIS is geared toward targeting students in need of additional support, students who are not making adequate progress after tier 1 is implemented with fidelity (Alonzo-Vaughn et al., 2015; Gage et al., 2020; Nese et al., 2023). Tier 2 intervention is usually apply to approximately 10% to 20% of the entire school population and this phase include self-regulation strategies, check-in, small group social skills (Bruhn et al., 2022; McDaniel et al., 2015; Sterrett et al., 2020). The interventions done during the tier 2 phase are highly efficient and they are normally done with a small group of students exhibiting similar problems (McDaniel et al.,

2015). The monitoring and documentation of progress is done more frequently in the tier 2 phase than in the tier 1 phase (Bruhn et al., 2022; Estrapala et al., 2021; McDaniel et al., 2015; Sterrett et al., 2020).

According to Nese et al. (2023), the role of the tier 2 team is to ensure that the systems and practices implemented in the tier 2 stage should be regularly monitored and reviewed to assess the need for continuation or fade the support for students receiving tier 2 support. Tier 2 behavioral support stresses more on frequent and intensive data collection, and it includes a more tailored intervention process (Kittleman et al., 2021). Tier 2 practices begin with a strong foundation of tier 1, and it includes intensified active adult supervision, increased focus on the possible function of behavioral problems, and academic support (Kittleman et al., 2021; Nese et al., 2023). Tier 2 interventions are done in small groups, and they include practices such as social skills and academic support (Gage et al., 2020; Griffiths et al., 2019; Kittleman et al., 2021).

During tier 2, which is a small group of approximately 10-12 students who fail to progress on the tier 1 and who are in need of support. The students in Tier 2 are considered at risk students, these students are at risk of developing serious behavioral problems (Alonzo-Vaughn et al., 2015; Gage et al., 2020; Griffiths et al., 2019; Nese et al., 2023). Students in tier 2 are exposed to proactive approach that are geared towards reducing the development of undesired behaviors (Alonzo-Vaughn et al., 2015; Gage et al., 2020; Griffiths et al., 2019; Kittleman et al., 2021; Nese et al., 2023). The students in tier 2 are given the opportunity to learn social and emotional self-regulation skills and receive academic support (Alonzo-Vaughn et al., 2015; Gage et al., 2020; Griffiths et al., 2019; Kittleman et al., 2021; Nese et al., 2023).

The monitoring of the tier 2 intervention progress should be monitored using the PBIS system as the documentation of progress will serve as the baseline information where teachers

and educators can track whether there is improvement or a decline in behavioral patterns (Alonzo-Vaughn et al., 2015; Estrapala et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2020; Sugai & Horner, 2020). It is recommended by researchers that the student's daily and weekly progress are documented as this is a way to check on patterns and serves as data if there is a need to make changes (Estrapala et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2020). During the tier 2 phase, the team should allow at least 6 weeks for the intervention before making any decisions or to determine if the plan is working or if there need to be some changes to the plan to increase the effectiveness of the plan (Gage et al., 2020; McDaniel et al., 2015; Nese et al., 2023; Sterrett et al., 2020; Sugai & Horner, 2020)

The last tier of PBIS is the most intense, and it is geared toward targeting students who were unresponsive to tier 1 and tier 2 interventions (Alonzo-Vaughn et al., 2015; Gage et al., 2020; Nese et al., 2023). Approximately 5% of the school's entire population may require the tier 3 intervention support because these students display extreme behavioral problems over time (McDaniel et al., 2015). Tier 3 is the most intensive one because of the individualized approach to developing and implementing the interventions, and all the procedures that the PBIS team needs to follow to ensure that students and all stakeholders involved will benefit (Alonzo-Vaughn et al., 2015; Gage et al., 2020).

During the tier 3 stage, the PBIS team normally rely on data to determine and develop individualize plan for students which include academic and behavioral goals (Alonzo-Vaughn et al., 2015; Gage et al., 2020; Kittleman et al., 2021; Nese et al., 2023). The tier 3 support team gathers data from various people including parents, other teachers, school counselors, school psychologist, and other students through the use of direct observations, interviews and other data collection methods (McDaniel et al., 2015; Sterrett et al., 2020). The interventions in the tier 3 phase are time consuming, require a lot of resources, and is labor- intensive (McDaniel et al.,

2015). Therefore, schools should ensure that tier 1 and tier 2 interventions are implemented with

fidelity to ensure resources are used appropriately (Gage et al., 2020; Kittleman et al., 2021;

McDaniel et al., 2015; Nese et al., 2023; Sterrett et al., 2020).

Figure 1

The PBIS Tier System
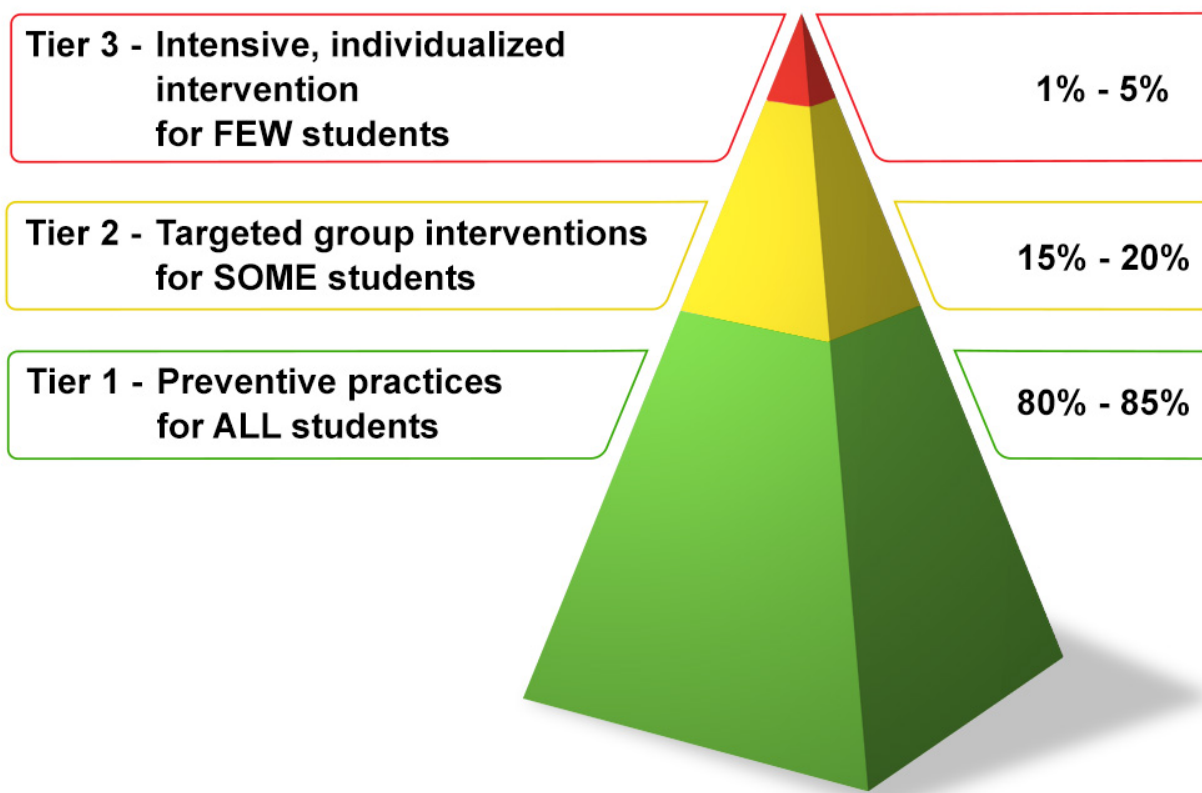
Note: This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND

Why Schools Should Implement PBIS

Positive behavior interventions and support is a framework for creating a safe and positive

school environment (Algozzine & Algozzine, 2007; McIntosh et al., 2021). Schools should

implement the PBIS approach with fidelity because both students and educators benefit

(Bradshaw et al., 2012; Waasdorp et al., 2012). According to Ross et al., 2012 and Meng et al.,

2016, the implementation of PBIS establishes a healthy school culture and climate. With the

implementation of the PBIS approach, schools will engage the whole school to create a culture

and establish a climate where students, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders feel welcome,

safe and secure (Algozzine & Algozzine, 2007; Bradshaw et al., 2012; McIntosh et al., 2021;

McIntosh et al., 2021; Waasdorp et al., 2012). When schools implement PBIS, teachers feel more

connected to their students, they feel like they have accomplished their task, they feel less

exhausted and overall, there is a reduction in teacher burnout (Algozzine & Algozzine, 2007;

Bradshaw et al., 2012; McIntosh et al., 2021; Waasdorp et al., 2012).

Another reason why schools should implement PBIS in schools is it reduces radical

inequities in discipline (Bradshaw et al., 2012; McIntosh et al., 2021; McIntosh et al., 2021;

Meng et al., 2016; Ross et al., 2012; Waasdorp et al., 2012). Teachers and other educators spend

a lot of time working on positive equitable outcomes for all students and this is the root of their

PBIS approach implementation process (Bradshaw et al., 2012; Meng et al., 2016; Ross et al.,

2012). Schools that place emphasis on aligning the values and experiences of students with the

expectations of the schools create consistency and reduce assumptions of expected behaviors

(Bradshaw et al., 2012; McIntosh et al., 2021; McIntosh et al., 2021; Meng et al., 2016; Ross et

al., 2012; Waasdorp et al., 2012). Therefore, with the use of equity within a PBIS approach,

schools can decrease racial disparities in disciplinary practices significantly (Algozzine &

Algozzine, 2007; Bradshaw et al., 2012; McIntosh et al., 2021; McIntosh et al., 2021; Meng et

al., 2016; Ross et al., 2012; Waasdorp et al., 2012).

PBIS sets the tone for a classroom that is safe, healthy, and conducive for learning. With

the use of PBIS, teachers get an extra time to spend time with their students, getting to know

them and build a positive and healthy connection daily (Bradshaw et al., 2012; Waasdorp et al.,

2012). Schools should adopt the PBIS approach because it lends itself to an increase in

instructional time (Bradshaw et al., 2012; McIntosh et al., 2021; Waasdorp et al., 2012). Students who know that their teachers are taking time out to know them and care for them will spend more time in the teaching and learning environment (Algozzine & Algozzine, 2007; Bradshaw et al., 2012; Meng et al., 2016; Ross et al., 2012; Waasdorp et al., 2012). Teachers will have more time to provide effective instruction because students are spending more time in school and this will improve on the climate of the school (Algozzine & Algozzine, 2007; Bradshaw et al., 2012; McIntosh et al., 2021; McIntosh et al., 2021; Meng et al., 2016; Ross et al., 2012; Waasdorp et al., 2012).

School Climate

School climate refers to the quality and the character of the environment of the school, it also refers to the social and educational environment and whether the environment creates a positive setting for learning and academic outcome (James et. al, 2019). According to Caridale et al. (2020), school climate is a vital element for increasing academic achievement which will in turn improve the school environment. School climate impacts students, parents, administrators, members of the community, academic performance, and attendance (James et. al, 2019; Närhi et al. (2017). It was determined by James et. al. (2019) and Närhi et al. (2017) that many students also experienced negative impacts based on poor school climate and school culture. It was also determined that students also are afraid of going to school, some students complained that they feel very anxious when they have to go to school (James et. al., 2019; Närhi et al., 2017). The study also mentioned that some students complained that they do not do well because they spend too much of their time worrying that something bad such as a fight is going to happen instead of focusing on their work (James et. al., 2019; Närhi et al., 2017).

It is very important that all schools have a positive school climate as this will increase students' interaction and engagement (Petrasek et al., 2022). In the study conducted by Närhi et al. (2017), the researchers mentioned that students who are in schools with a positive school climate do better academically compared to students who are in schools with a poor school climate. Petrasek et al. (2022), agreed that there will be an increase in students' academic achievement and their interaction in school when there is a positive school climate.

Because having a positive school climate is beneficial to schools, researchers suggest that schools should aim to ensure that their school climate is one that is positive (Horner et al., 2004). Learning will take place in a school with a positive climate. It was determined in the study that was conducted by James et al., (2019) that, schools with positive school climate, their students have high academic outcomes. It was also determined from the study that educators place their emphasis on educating students and the positive aspects of the learning environment (James et al., 2019). If a school is struggling with having a positive school climate, that school should consider adopting PBIS (Horner et al., 2004; James et al., 2019; Petrasek et al., 2022).

Researchers agree that adopting a behavioral intervention framework has positive impact on the climate of a school (James et al., 2018). School in the United States are encouraged to implement PBIS in the learning environment to improve behavioral climate and school climate (Horner et al., 2004; James et al., 2018). Administrators and other school leaders should ensure that the school environment is safe, welcoming, and conducive to learning because this will create a change in school culture and behavior within the schools (Caridale et al., 2020; Horner et al., 2004; James et al., 2018). School leaders must also ensure that the vision and mission of the school are clearly communicated to students and that the visions and goals are supported by all stakeholders in and outside of the school environment (Caridale et al., 2020).

Impact of School Climate on Academic Achievement

School climate originated from the belief that school climate is believed to be linked to educational outcome (Mayer et al., 2021; McMahon et al., 2020; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008; Wang & Gegol, 2016). School climate has a significant impact on academic performance and achievement. The school climate affects academic performance, parental involvement, attendance, student engagement, teacher-student relationship, teacher-teacher relationship, and teacher perception (Caridale et al., 2020; Horner et al., 2004; James et al., 2018). It was determined in a research conducted by Sugai et al. (2002) that school leaders can use the climate of the school to promote change in academic achievement, improve behavioral problems, and promote change in school improvement. When administrators implement effective strategies to improve their school climate, they are also encouraging changes that will positively affect teacher and student perception, behavior, and academic performance (Sugai et al., 2002). James et al. (2018) stated that one way in which school leaders can use the climate of the school to promote change in academic performance and school improvement is by working collaboratively with teachers to implement strategies in the school environment to effect change (James et al., 2018).

Educational research has demonstrated that having a positive school climate is associated with academic outcome. Researchers suggested that in order for schools to have a positive climate the school principal must first understand the school climate before implementing any change (MacNeil et al., 2009). School principals stated that focusing on developing a positive school climate as a learning environment is fundamental to improved student academic achievement (Daily et al., 2019; Dulay & Karadağ, 2017; Reynolds et al., 2017; Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008). School administrators who take time to examine the dimension of the

school climate that affect the culture of the school promote student achievement (Daily et al., 2019; Dulay & Karadağ, 2017; MacNeil et al., 2009). Researchers also stated that when there is a positive school climate it improves the student motivation and achievement which in turn helps close the achievement gap (Daily et al., 2019; Dulay & Karadağ, 2017; Mayer et al., 2021; McMahon et al., 2020). When there is a positive school climate there will also be an increase in school completion, prevents school dropout, and the college readiness rates will increase (Mayer et al., 2021; McMahon et al., 2020; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008; Wang & Gegol, 2016).

Another impact that school climate has on academic achievement is on student engagement. Having a positive school climate increases student participation and classroom engagement which results in improved academic achievement (Daily et al., 2019; MacNeil et al., 2009). According to Uline and Tschannen-Moran, 2008, students who attend schools with a positive school climate are more engaged in the teaching and learning environment and they perform better than students who attend schools with a negative school climate. When schools have a positive climate, they have teachers who are more motivated (Daily et al., 2019; Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008). Teachers who are highly motivated have a greater success in student performance and academic achievement (Dulay & Karadağ, 2017). When teachers are highly motivated because of a positive school climate, there will be a decrease of teacher turnover and an increase in teacher satisfaction (Daily et al., 2019; Dulay & Karadağ, 2017; MacNeil et al., 2009; Uline &Tschannen-Moran, 2008).

School administrators who are having difficulties improving student performance and student academic outcomes should place emphasis on improving the school's culture by building a positive relationship between themselves, the students, the parents, and the teachers (Daily et al., 2019; Dulay & Karadağ, 2017; MacNeil et al., 2009; MacNeil et al., 2009). School

administrators should examine the current climate of the school, make positive changes to improve on the current climate, build relationship with teachers, parents, and students, then focus on learning in order to improve the school's academic performance (Daily et al., 2019; Dulay & Karadağ, 2017; MacNeil et al., 2009; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008; Reynolds et al., 2017; Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008).

Impact of School Climate on Student Behavior

School climate can be negative or positive. When a school climate is categorized as a negative one, it is generally linked to everything from reduction in graduation rates, reduction in academic performance, reduction in attendance, increase in violence, and increase in bullying and other poor behavior choices (Bradshaw et al., 2021; Hernandez & Seem, 2004). The researchers in the study conducted by Närhi et al. (2017) indicated that there are a lot of negative impacts for both educators and students when there is a disruption in the classroom environment. Some of the negative impacts on educators that the researchers mentioned in the study are teachers do not feel safe to go to school, they fear for their lives, and teachers lose passion for what they once loved because they do not have the drive to go to work (James et al., 2018; Närhi et al.,2017; Petrasek et al., 2022). Also, in another study that was conducted by Petrasek et al. (2022) the authors mentioned that teachers faced negative impacts when there is a disruption in schools, such as teachers being reactive instead of being proactive.

There is a relationship between school climate and behavioral problems. When there is a negative school climate it facilitates opportunities for violence, bullying, and other poor behavior choices (Bradshaw et al., 2021; Hernandez & Seem, 2004; James et al., 2018; Närhi et al.,2017; Petrasek et al., 2022). Having a negative school climate is also associated with psychosocial and behavioral problems as it relates to students having low self-esteem, depression problems, and

suicidal thoughts (Bradshaw et al., 2021; Hernandez & Seem, 2004; James et al., 2018). Students with special needs are also affected when there is a negative school climate as it is tied to anxiety problems and feelings of not being cared for by other students and educators (Hernandez & Seem, 2004; James et al., 2018; Petrasek et al., 2022).

On the other hand, when there is a positive school climate, teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders will feel safe (Williams et al., 2018). When students feel as if they are safe and cared for there is a greater chance for belonging and connectedness to the school (Aldridge et al., 2018). Students who feel as if they belong to the school are less likely to engage in undesired behavior and are less likely to drop-out of school (Aldridge et al., 2018). According to Huang & Anyon (2020), when students have a positive perception of the school climate and a positive attitude towards the school, they tend to have a lower suspension rate and very low disciplinary actions. School climate is a critical role in the education system and therefore suggested to be a positive one (Aldridge et al., 2018; Huang & Anyon, 2020; Williams et al., 2018).

School Safety Culture

According to Cobbina et al. (2020), school safety can be critically considered as the emotional and physical quality of being secured that is provided by the leadership team that protects students, educators, and all other stakeholders from bullying, harassment, and other school violence. Vallinkoski & Koirikivi (2020) stated that school safety can be narrowly defined as the absence of mental, physical, mental or moral harms or threats to students, teachers, and other stakeholders, or as a connection between individuals, execution of procedures that build safety daily. Researchers stated that school violence has a negative effect on climate, which negatively impacts the teaching and learning environment (Cobbina et al. 2020; McMahon

et al., 2020). School safety and security has become a critical issue that concerns both educational policy and research (Vallinkoski & Koirikivi, 2020). Vallinkoski and Koirikivi (2020) discovered that there are a number of safety and security problems that many schools have encountered, both locally and internationally and they are increasing and becoming more complex, and leaders and other stakeholders need to heighten their attention in order to create and maintain safety in schools.

According to Bradshaw et al. (2014), school safety can be considered as part of the general school climate and culture. School safety can be developed systematically if school leaders and other stakeholders are able to differentiate the comprehensive experience of safety and the specific safety from the security procedures that are design to eliminate or mitigate danger in violent situation (Vallinkoski & Koirikivi (2020). One major way to develop school safety is school leaders should develop and implement a curriculum-based safety for education for students in the teaching and learning environment (Vallinkoski & Koirikivi, 2020; Olcay et al., 2021). The safety culture plays an important role in reducing injuries and violence in many education institutions. In order for students to know and learn how to be safe and identify violent behaviors and act appropriately, they need to be introduced to learning activities that will educate them on how to do so (Olcay et al., 2021; Pollack & Sundermann, 2001).

Safety and Prevention Strategies

The recent school shootings have taught us that school safety is not just about a single method of control, nor is it about a single factor such as a mental health problem or a dysfunctional home. We now realize that there is a need for a wide-range of effort and support to control school-wide violence and other safety problems. Safety prevention strategies not only mitigate violence and undesired behaviors but also other positive results. According to Olcay et

al. (2021), when school leaders implement safety prevention strategies, they will notice improved academic outcome, better staff morale, improved school climate that is more conducive to learning, more efficient use of human and financial resources, and reduced disciplinary referrals and suspensions.

Afkinich and Klumpner (2018) argued that school violence negatively affects the emotion and physical well-being of individuals whether they experienced, witnessed, or perpetrated it. The authors stated that school violence can be mitigated through the development of intervention plans such as engaging students in positive activities and opportunities at schools and involving them in decision-making and prosocial activities (Afkinich and Klumpner, 2018). Olcay et al. (2021) agreed that if schools do not have safety prevention strategies, they will see a decline in academic performance and an increase in violence in school. The authors suggested that schools implement effective safety prevention strategies such as parental involvement and effective communication among all stakeholders (Olcay et al., 2021).

Another prevention strategy that schools can used to reduce violence in is implementing a threat assessment approach especially with students who are high-risk to commit violence in school. Threat assessment is an approach that a group of stakeholders work collaboratively to identify, evaluate and address potential threats in schools (Afkinich and Klumpner, 2018; Cornell et al., 2021; Mayer et al., 2021; Olcay et al., 2021). The members of the threat assessment team review all incidents of poor behavior among students, parents and at times staff then develop a plan to address the behaviors (Afkinich and Klumpner, 2018; Cornell et al., 2021; Mayer et al., 2021; Olcay et al., 2021). According to Cornell (2020), school administrators who embody threat assessment into their school safety policy can reduce violent behaviors, reduce bullying, and increase teacher perception while also being unobtrusive. School leaders and other stakeholders

use threat assessment to abate violent behaviors and tension among individuals in a multi-disciplinary approach that include educators and other stakeholders to reduce violent behaviors (Afkinich and Klumpner, 2018; Cornell et al., 2021; Mayer et al., 2021; Olcay et al., 2021).

Student Achievement

Student achievement has to do with the quality of the academic content a student gains in a specific timeframe (Mbaluka et al., 2021). In a study conducted by Han & Maloney (2021), the authors described academic achievement as the quality of academic skills and content that students acquired in a given period of time. Academic achievement is beneficial to everyone as stated by Mbaluka et al. (2021). The authors further explained that academic achievement is pivotal for success and growth. Students who are successful academically tend to be more successful in life and are more likely to gain sustainable jobs (Denervaud et al., 2019). There tend to be a positive school culture and school climate when students are doing well academically, and when students are excelling academically, there tends to be a strong and positive school community (Denervaud et al., 2019). When students know that they are attending schools with a positive and strong community, their desire to do well academically will increase (Li et. al, 2019; Longobardi et al., 2022).

Researchers determined that schools with students who are excelling academically tend to be more focused, and they tend to have good attendance rates, which are elements of building a positive school culture and a positive school climate (Denervaud et al., 2019; Li et. al., 2019; Longobardi et al., 2022). Research also shows that with a positive school climate and school culture, students are likely to learn better because they perceive the school environment as a positive one (Longobardi et al., 2022; Şahin & Çoban, 2020).

Students' academic performance can be negatively impacted by poor behavioral choices (James et al. (2019; Mbaluka et al., 2021). Researchers in a study conducted by James et al. (2019) indicated that students who are labeled as bullied tend to have lower scores on tests compared to students in the same age groups who are considered students with model behavior. In the study conducted by Kim et al. (2018), it was determined that students in an elementary school with no behavioral problems have students scoring above average on assessments, while in a study conducted by Mbaluka et al. (2021), the student in an elementary school with poor behavioral problems score below average on assessment.

There is a stronger school community when students are excelling academically and behaviorally and this will create a peace of mind for both students and teachers in the learning environment as teacher and students will feel safe and teachers will have a peace of mind and a smoother instructional time (James et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2018; Mbaluka et al., 2021). The stronger the school community, the more inspired the students will be to excel in all areas (James et al., 2019; Mbaluka et al., 2021). Research determined that schools with students who are excelling have a positive culture and those schools aim to have all students performing at an excelling rate because when students place emphasis on academic performance there is less time for misbehavior (James et al., 2019; Mbaluka et al., 2021)

Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy is the beliefs of teachers regarding their potential to handle workload and the level of confidence that they have in their ability to promote student academic success (Jenlink, 2020; Protheroe, 2008; Tschannen-Morgan & Hoy, 2007;). Teacher efficacy Teacher efficacy has a lot to do with effectively implementing PBIS in the classroom (Lauermann, and Berger, (2021; Jenlink, 2020). Lauermann, and Berger (2021) determined that the openness to

change, and teachers who believe strongly in their ability to effect change will be willing to be on board with changes and implementation of strategies that will be beneficial to students These teachers will be willing to try new strategies and methods in the classroom to make changes in the teaching and learning environment (Jenlink, 2020; Lauermann, and Berger, 2021; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Teacher efficacy has been proven to related to critical and meaningful outcome including instructional practices, teacher persistence, enthusiasm, teacher commitment, student academic outcome, student motivation, student beliefs and self-efficacy (Jenlink, 2020; Kleinsasser, 2014; Lauermann, & Berger, 2021; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 1998). Teachers who have high levels of efficacy are more likely to use creative and innovative strategies for teaching and implementing classroom management strategies in the learning environment (Kleinsasser, 2014; Tschannen-Moran, 1998). These teachers are also seen as individuals who are persistent and always willing to offer assistance in making a change in the education system (Jenlink, 2020; Kleinsasser, 2014; Lauermann & Berger, 2021; Tschannen-Moran, 1998).

It was determined by Reineke et al. (2013), that administrators need to know and have a full understanding of the teachers' abilities to effectively carry out their tasks and their obligations. Though administrators may have tasked teachers to implement PBIS in the classrooms, it is very important to know what challenges such as lack of knowledge related to the professional duty relating to effectively implementing PBIS because teachers are the key elements in the success of PBIS (Jenlink, 2020; Kleinsasser, 2014; Lauermann, & Berger, 2021). Schools want to ensure that they have teachers of high efficacy in their schools as these teachers tend to place emphasis on monitoring their students, and they tend to maintain student

engagement in creative ways (Jenlink, 2020; Lauermann, & Berger, 2021). Teachers with high self-efficacy drive and motivate positive school culture and school climate, as they tend to focus on effective instructional practices, and students' academic success (Jenlink, 2020; Lauermann, & Berger, 2021; Reineke et al., 2013).

Summary

Research has suggested that students who struggle behaviorally normally struggle academically (Bruhn et al., 2022; Eiraldi et al., 2019). Positive behavior intervention and support system places importance on designing a classroom environment that is good for learning and resolving disciplinary problems (Kim et at., 2018; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019; Petrasek et al., 2022). Further, researchers have explored factors contributing to the effective implementation as well as the effectiveness of PBIS. Researchers have also examined the practical applicability of the social learning theory, which recognizes the vital role of social learning in improving students' behavior and academic achievement. Using the social learning theory in understanding this topic, the literature discussed the development of PBIS, the effects of positive behavior intervention, strengths, and weaknesses of PBIS, academic achievement, school climate and culture, and teacher efficacy. Bandura's social learning theory (1977) drove the theoretical framework of this study.

Current research supports the critical role of positive behavior in academic achievement and improved student behavior in elementary schools. The focus of PBIS is a proactive rather than a reactive action. School leaders should put strategies in place to mitigate behavioral problems before the problem escalate as it is more effective that way (Bruhn et al., 2022; Jenlink, 2020; Kim et al., 2018; When PBIS is adopted, implemented, and used consistently, it will result in a positive impact on student's performance and behavior (Kim et at., 2018; Palmer &

Noltemeyer, 2019; Petrasek et al., 2022). Relevant literature is presented in this study to

conceptualize and justify PBIS framework.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

This qualitative case study focuses on the lived experiences of elementary teachers related to PBIS in an elementary school in a mid-Atlantic state more specifically, this study examines and discusses the lived experiences of elementary school teachers related to a reward system for improving academic achievement and student behavior. This study will build on the existing literature regarding lived experiences of elementary school teachers of implementing the PBIS framework. The intention was to learn about practices that may be replicated in other elementary schools. The research is qualitative and utilizes a case-study methodology. Individual interviews, focus group, and documents review were conducted at one Maryland elementary school, purposefully selected because it had implemented the PBIS framework and successively increased student achievement. Three types of data were collected to understand the school's PBIS practices and the support level for the program. Classroom teachers were interviewed, a focus group was interviewed, and school documents were reviewed. An analysis and synthesis of data were done, and the trustworthiness of the study is explained.

Research Design

According to Heale and Twycross (2018), a case study is an intensive investigation of a person or a group of people where the researcher examines quality data. If a researcher wants to learn the "how" and the "why," then the researcher should use a case study (Yin, 2018). Qualitative case study is suitable for this study because it will allow data collection through various means and provide the ability to see the relationship between PBIS and students'academic performance and behavior (Gerring, 2004; Heale &Twycross, 2018; Yin, 2018). Case studies are prevalent in the social sciences and are used in several organizations for

many reasons (Gerring, 2004). Conducting case study research will allow the researcher to focus in-depth on a "case" and to keep a real-world and holistic perspective (Yin, 2018). There are different types of case studies, explanatory case studies, exploratory case studies, and descriptive case studies, and they all have different ways of collecting and analyzing factual data. Each case study has its procedure, advantages, and disadvantages (Yin, 2018). Case studies include single and multiple-case studies, and some can be limited to quantitative evidence (Yin, 2018). Five important components must be included in a case study research design. They are the case study's questions, its propositions, if any, its case or cases, the logic linking the data to the propositions, and the criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin, 2018). The data collection used in case studies includes documents, archival records, interviews, observations, and artifacts (Gerring, 2004).

Research Questions

The qualitative research case study addresses the following questions:

Central Research Question

How effective is the implementation of the PBIS approach in elementary schools in 3rd through 5th grade?

Sub-Question One

What is the impact of the PBIS approach on 3rd through 5th grade students' academic performance levels with PBIS as an intervention tool in the classroom?

Sub-Question Two

What is the impact of the PBIS approach on students' behaviors in elementary schools?

Sub-Question Three

How do teachers of 3rd through 5th grade use PBIS as an intervention tool?

Setting and Participants

The section of the study will outline the participants and the site for the study. The site and the participants were selected to meet the specifications of the study. The site was a purposeful selected elementary school and the participants were screen then selected based on willingness to participate in the research study.

Site

The research site was the Pinne City County Public School District in Pinne, Maryland. Pinne is the pseudonym that is used in this study. The Pinne City County Public School District is the second largest school district in the state of Maryland and is located in the city of Pinne, Maryland. The Pinne City Public School District comprises 198 schools, 5 early childhood centers, 120 elementary schools, 12 K-8 schools, 24 traditional middle schools, 24 high schools, 4 specials, and 9 public charter schools (Facts & Figures, 2023). The student body is made up of Asian, Caucasian, Multiracial, African American, and Hispanic (Facts & Figures, 2023). The majority of the Hispanic and African American students are considered from a low economic background, with most of the Hispanic students being English Language Learners (Facts & Figures, 2023).

The Pinne Heights Elementary School is the specific school in the Pinne City Public School District that will be utilized. Pinne Heights Elementary School serves a total of 720 students from K-6th Grade. The elementary school demographics are 90% Hispanic, 8% African American, and 2% Caucasian (Facts & Figures, 2023). A total of 75% of the school population is of low economic background (Facts & Figures, 2023). Approximately 95% of the students are qualified for free and reduced lunch (Facts & Figures, 2023). The school principal is in charge of the school and is responsible for delegating tasks to the three assistant principals, who then

delegate the tasks to classroom teachers and other staff members. The teachers report to the assistant principals who are assigned to their grade level, the assistant principals report to the principal, and the principal reports to the instructional director at the district level. This particular elementary school was chosen because the students are experiencing behavioral and academic challenges based on results of state assessment (Facts & Figures, 2023).

Participants

The study's sample consisted of 10 educators, including general education classroom teachers, special education teachers, paraeducators, instructional lead teachers, and resource teachers who teach in a Title 1 elementary school in the area of Pinne City's County region. All participants teach intermediate classes including 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades, or have taught intermediate classes with all students from low economic status. These grades were chosen because the teachers in the intermediate classes all work with each grade level. All teachers in this study have a bachelor's degrees or higher and experience teaching in both rural and urban areas.

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Researcher Positionality

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As a qualitative researcher, I identify myself as a social constructivist. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), social constructivists are people who aim to get an understanding of the world in which they live and work. During the research study, I got to know and understand the participants. I identify all problems and find solutions to those problems. The problems were discussed, and solutions to fix them, such as low academic performance due to behavioral issues. Social and communication skills were promoted, especially in the focus group sessions. I tried my best to more constructive and less biased. The three philosophical assumptions guiding my study are ontological, epistemological, and axiological.

Interpretive Framework

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), philosophical assumptions are often applied within interpretative frameworks that are used in qualitative studies. Having an understanding of the philosophical assumptions behind qualitative research starts with an assessment of where it fits within the overall process of research, noting its importance as an element of research, and considering writing it into a study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I identify myself as a social constructivist. A social constructivist is a person who aims to understand the world around them and always seeks to find the meaning of why things are the way they are (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I want to have a better understanding of the world around me, and I believe it is my responsibility to find a solution to the problem of poor academic performance and poor behavior, or to find answers as to why the problem exists. I believe with this framework I will try my best to be unbiased as much as possible because it gives me the opportunity to see my own biases in research. I will receive and interpret information in a constructivist manner; being able to interpret information in a constructivist manner requires proficient listening skills (Yin, 2018), which I believe I have.

Philosophical Assumptions

There are a variety of methodologies that are used in qualitative research that usually begin with a frame that is guided by philosophical assumptions. Philosophical assumptions are based on multiple realities and perspectives (Creswell & Poth 2018). Philosophical assumptions can provide the enlightenment that leads some into confusion and others to conviction. It questions theory and thought systems to teach individuals how to support their positions and interpretations. The three essential philosophical assumptions that were addressed in this study are ontological, epistemological, and axiological.

Ontological Assumption

Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that the ontological assumption relates to reality and the use of multiple forms of evidence. I ensured that the different perspectives as themes develop in the findings are reported in the study. The actual words of participants and their different perspectives will be reported in the study.

Epistemological Assumption

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the epistemological assumptions have to do with the researcher getting as close as possible to the participants being studied. The epistemological researcher must be free from bias and must provide subjective data. It is very important that studies are done in the "field" in which the participants live and work. The epistemological assumption is developed through personal experience and perceptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The epistemological philosophical assumption is relevant for case studies where an overall understanding of a phenomenon in real-world is required (Yin, 2018). I conducted a study on PBIS in students' education, and I visited the schools and the area where the teachers work to interview some of the teachers. I build rapport with all participants to get as close to them as possible and make them feel comfortable participating in the study. The immediate proximity of the participants and researcher provided insights into the realities of the learning environments.

Axiological Assumption

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), researchers bring value to a study. The axiological assumption involves actively reporting values and biases based on data from the field of study. I value every step of the research process and took nothing for granted. The participants knew that their time and themselves are valued. The participants in the study were informed. They understood the value of the study being done, the reason the study is being done, and how

valuable the results will be, but most of all, how valuable they are in the study. The participants were informed that if they choose not to participate in the study, then the study cannot move forward.

Researcher's Role

I have been in the field of education for eighteen years. I am currently teaching as a special education teacher and have been in this position for approximately two years. I worked with teachers teaching in the same school district as I am. I remained professionally disconnected from the participants and the site as much as possible. I strived to overcome my biases that arise, and I have little to no assumptions about the study that may influence how I conducted the data analysis.

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Procedures

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First, I sought approval from Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the proposed study. After I received an approval from IRB, I requested permission from the school county. Once permission was given by the county, I emailed the principals of the school where the study was conducted. After the school's principal gave the approval, I email the principal the recruitment letter requesting it to be sent to potential participants. Participants were screened on their willingness to participate in the study. All participants were informed of the specifics of the study. Participants were given consent forms to sign, and all documentation is kept securely and will be kept for approximately three years. The data collection methods were individual interviews of participants, focus groups, and document reports/reviews. The interviews and focus group data were transcribed and organized into various categories. The document reports were also organized into categories. Open and axial coding were used for the data. I used the three data collection methods in the study to achieve triangulation.

Permissions

I obtained permission from Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). After I received IRB approval (see Appendix A) I obtained permission to conduct this study from the school county (see Appendix B) then from the principal (see Appendix C). The requested permission was sent via email (see Appendix D). I had a conversation with the principal to discuss and explain the details of the study. After permission was granted by the principal, I requested signed consent forms from the participants. I met with the participants (via Zoom) and informed them about the study, then had them sign the consent forms (see Appendix E).

Recruitment Plan

After receipt of approval to conduct the study, a recruitment letter was disseminated via email to prospective participants (see Appendix D). The sample pool consists of 10 elementary classroom teachers, special education teachers, resource teachers, and ILTs. All participants teach students in grades 3-5, or have taught students in grades 3-5. There were participants from each of the selected grades. Permission to conduct the study was requested from the schools' principal via email (see Appendix C). Participants were contacted, and they were informed about the study. Participants were given written consent forms for them to sign and they signed that they agreed that they would be recorded. (see Appendix E).

Data Collection Plan

Data collection is the process of gathering, measuring, and analyzing accurate data from various relevant sources (Barrett & Twycross, 2018). There are multiple data collection methods in qualitative research, including interviews, observation, and review of documents. According to Gill et al. (2008), using various data collection methods is essential in qualitative research because it ensures accuracy and facilitates data analysis. Creswell (2018) explains that although

new forms of qualitative data are prominent in the literature, all forms of data might still be grounded into four groups: documents, interviews, observations, and audiovisual materials. Various data collection methods will be used to gain vital information in understanding why participants exposed to PBIS have higher academic achievement than participants not exposed to PBIS. The data collection for the proposed study came from individual interviews of participants, focus groups, and document reports/reviews from one purposefully selected Title 1 elementary school. According to Yin (2018), one data source does not have an advantage over another, and each source reinforces the others.

Individual Interviews (Data Collection Approach #1)

The first data collection strategy that was used in this study was individual interviews. Using interviews in a research study is very effective and insightful because they provide explanations and personal views (Yin, 2018). According to Kraft et al. (2021), interviews are most effective for qualitative studies because they help the researcher to explain better and understand the participants' opinions, behaviors, and experiences. According to Heath et al. (2018), conducting interviews in a research study allows the researcher to build rapport with the participants and make the participants feel more comfortable sharing more information with the researcher. The interview section began with my introducing myself to the participants, then explaining the reason for the research study. The participants were provided with all information they needed, such as contact information and a list of activities included in the research. The interview consisted of open-ended questions and follow-up questions that were needed for clarity or to gain a full understanding of the participants' experiences. The interviews were audio recorded to ensure the accuracy of the information. According to Yin (2018), audio recordings

precisely rend any interviews rather than handwritten notes. The privacy of the participants was protected through the use of pseudonyms.

Individual Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself and tell me more about you. SQ3

2. What is your why for becoming a teacher? SQ3

3. Please tell me about your experiences teaching here at this school. SQ3

4. In your opinion, what is the main reason the school prioritizes implementing PBIS? RQ

5. What kind of professional development is offered at the school to support the successful implementation of the PBIS approach? SQ3

6. Who developed the PBIS rules and expectations and how are they taught? RQ

7. How long has PBIS been implemented in this school? RQ

8. How has the implementation of PBIS affected the school climate? SQ2

9. How does the implementation of PBIS affect your daily instruction? SQ1

10. How has the implementation of PBIS affected student behavior in your classroom? SQ2

11. How does the implementation of PBIS affect your personal life? SQ3

12. If you had the opportunity to change anything about how PBIS has been implemented in your school, what would it be and why? SQ3

13. What are some of the challenges you have faced since the implementation of PBIS? SQ3

14. What are some of the advantages of implementing PBIS in your classroom? SQ3

Questions one through three are introductory questions allowed the participants to feel comfortable and get prepared for the interview. Questions four through five relate to the participants' opinions and perceptions of the site. Questions six through nine relate to the implementation of the PBIS approach in the school. Questions ten through twelve relate to the

climate and the culture of the school. Questions thirteen and fourteen were meant to canvas participants on their experiences of using the PBIS approach. I had experts in the field of education review the interview questions. The questions aim to answer the research question and the research sub-questions.

Interview Data Analysis

To carefully and correctly analyze the data from the research study, the first step was organizing the data using a descriptive framework approach. The use of a descriptive framework gives trust in a case study's main results (Yin, 2018). The recorded interviews were transcribed. Then, member checking was used to ensure accuracy. The information was coded using the *Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Saldaña (2021) asserts that coding is an effective way to analyze qualitative data. After the coding was completed, the information was then organized into themes, and then the data were analyzed according to the emerging themes. The findings are presented in Chapter 4 in the form of a narrative summary with tables and visuals to support the interpretation of the study.

Focus Groups (Data Collection Method #2)

The focus group used the same set of participants as those completing the individual interviews, who had volunteered to participate in the research study who work at an elementary school that uses the PBIS framework. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a focus group allows participants to interact with others who have a similar experience with the phenomenon. The focus group met for approximately one hour following the conclusion of the individual interviews. I provided a consent form for the participants to sign (see Appendix D). I used guiding questions that reflect the research questions. All questions were open-ended. I recorded the focus group.

Focus Group Questions

1. Where and how are the school rules posted? SQ1

2. What rewards systems are in place for students who display good behavior? RQ

3. How do teachers keep track of positive and poor behaviors? SQ2

4. How often are students redirected, and how are they redirected? SQ3

5. Are students reminded of the rules and expectations when on the playground? SQ3

Focus group questions one and two will allow participants to address the impact of the PBIS

approach. Focus group questions three to five are designed to allow participants to think

profoundly about how the PBIS approach is implemented and used in the school.

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan

The discussions were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were submitted to

participants for verification of accuracy (member checking), then coded using the *Coding*

Manual for Qualitative Researchers. According to Yin (2018), the use of coding materials can

guide and help researchers in coding and categorizing research data. After the coding was

completed, I organized the data into themes, and then the data were analyzed according to the

emerging themes. The findings are presented in Chapter 4 in the form of a narrative summary

with tables and visuals to support the interpretation of the study. All observation notes will be

secured and kept in storage for approximately three years.

Documents/Reports Review (Data Collection Method #3)

The final step in the data collection process was the review of documents/reports. Yin

(2018) states that documentation provides specific and precise qualitative information. I

requested information on school documents and reports, such as academic data, including test

scores and information from report cards. Disciplinary data such as in-school and out-of-school

suspension due to behavior problems, office referrals, and any other critical disciplinary records that the school had were also be requested. This data information provided by the participants was reviewed to gather information to make a comparison. I checked to see if the students who were introduced to positive behavior intervention support were making educational gains compared to the academic performance of the same students before they were introduced to positive behavior intervention supports in the learning environment.

Documents/Reports Review Data Analysis

The documents information was sorted into groups to create categories; for example, disciplinary artifacts such as behavioral referrals, including in-school and out-of-school suspension, and academic data, including report cards and test results. These data were analyzed and coded to develop common categories using the *Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Saldaña, 2021). Once the coding was completed, the information was organized into themes, and then the data were analyzed according to the emerging themes. The findings are presented in Chapter 4, in the form of a narrative summary with tables and visuals to support the interpretation of the study. No identifiable information was used when presenting the findings.

Data Synthesis

After coding was completed across all data collection methods (individual interviews, focus group, and document reviews), I put them into categories of themes. I then divide the large categories into smaller categories to form common themes and subthemes (Saldaña (2021). After all themes and subthemes were developed, I ensured all themes were in alignment with the study. I then defined each theme and subtheme and ensured that they were in simple form. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), researchers should ensure that themes used in research studies are

simple and concise. The final step in the synthesis process was a narrative of the results which is presented in Chapter Four.

Trustworthiness

Researchers of qualitative studies make ethical considerations during the research process. Researchers must anticipate ethical issues that may arise during the research study and put a plan in place to address these issues. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), ethical issues in qualitative studies can happen before the study, during the data collection process, during the data analysis process, during the reporting process, and during the publication process. According to Yin (2018), researchers should use multiple sources of evidence to support trustworthiness and credibility. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the important aspects of trustworthiness include dependability, confirmability, transferability, and credibility.

Credibility

The credibility of any research has to do with the accuracy of the study's findings (Stahl & King, 2020). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the credibility of a research study provides information and an explanation of the study's validity. The use of open-ended interview questions in this study confirms the credibility of the study. According to Heath et al. (2018), conducting interviews in a research study allows the researcher to get primary information to help validate the study. Trustworthiness of the validity and understanding of the study were presented with factual data. The use of triangulation, member-checking, and peer debriefing were used in this study to achieve credibility.

Transferability

According to Finfgeld-Connett (2010), transferability is the extent to which the results of qualitative studies can be transferred to other settings with other participants. For transferability,

in my study I reported the number of participants. I provided a detailed description of the site and the limitations to the study. I reported all, if any, restrictions on the participants who contributed data. The data collection methods were reported, including the length of the data collection process, the data types used, and the results.

Dependability

A study's dependability is constant with the data findings and the study repeat (Creswell & Poth, 2018). There was adequate amount of procedural detail on how to collect, analyze, and synthesize the data so that the study may be replicated. In order to ensure that this research is dependable, I provided a detailed report of the research design and implementation, including a description of what was planned and what happened in the research study. The data are available for outside review and auditing.

Confirmability

The confirmability of qualitative data is solid when data is checked and rechecked throughout the data collection process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To meet the expectations of confirmability for this study, all data, including recordings, transcripts, notes, observations, and email correspondence, are available for auditing purposes upon request. Peer review and expert review were done after the data collection process.

Ethical Considerations

I ensured that I sought approval from IRB and the school's principal before I started to collect data for the study. Once the study was approved by the school and Liberty University's IRB, I began the research process. All participants were provided with a consent form for them to complete. I educated participants that their rights would be protected through pseudonyms and advise them that their responses would be kept confidential. I informed participants that they

could withdraw from the research study at any time, and there would be no penalty. All data are stored in a password-protected file. The data are also saved on a protected backup drive. The backup drive is stored in a locked cabinet. All data will be kept for three years and destroyed after three years.

Summary

This qualitative case study was used to answer the research questions. The study was conducted using individual interviews, focus groups, and observation of documents. The interviews and focus group were recorded to ensure accuracy and then transcribed to ensure accuracy further. The data were organized into various categories for analysis. The data were analyzed and coded to develop coherent themes. The chapter ends with trustworthiness and ethical consideration to ensure that the study is credible, transferable, confirmable, and dependable.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand the lived experiences of elementary teachers related to PBIS in an elementary school in a mid-Atlantic state. The problem is that students in elementary schools with no behavior intervention system in place normally perform poorly in academics (Kim et al., 2018; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019). This study employs a qualitative case study design to have a better understanding of participants' lived experiences. This chapter describes the findings of the research study including the participants' demographics, narrative themes and subthemes, and the research questions responses. This chapter concludes with a summary of this section.

Participants

The participants in this study were protected with the use of pseudonyms. There was a total of 10 participants who were purposefully selected who would be suitable for this research. The participants' diverse demographics are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Teacher Participants

Teacher Participant	Gender	Years Taught	Highest Degree Earned	Position
Annette	Female	11	Master's +30	Specialist
Bobbi	Female	1-2	Bachelor's	Classroom Teacher
Britney	Female	12	Master's	Classroom Teacher
Cathy	Female	11	Master's	Classroom Teacher
Cunnie	Female	17	Master's	Classroom Teacher
David	Male	20	Doctorate	Specialist

Grace	Female	25-26	Master's +30	Specialist
Mike	Male	29	Master's	Specialist
Sam	Male	6	Bachelor's	Classroom Teacher
Tameka	Female	14	Master's	Classroom Teacher

Annette

Annette is a 40 year old female teacher. She has been working as a specialist for 11 years. She shared that she was the Special Education chairperson for several years. She shared that she did not choose teaching, teaching chose her. She believes that PBIS is a great approach but wishes there was an alternative to PBIS that can be used with students with special needs.

Bobbi

Bobbi is a new classroom teacher. This year is her second year teaching. She has a Bachelor's degree. She shared that the teaching opportunity was given to her although she always wanted to be a teacher. She stated that her high school biology teacher was the one who influenced her to become a teacher.

Britney

Britney is a female teacher who has been teaching for 12 years. Britney was first a substitute teacher before she became certified as an elementary teacher. She shared that teaching was just a job for her at first, but then she started enjoying teaching and that was the main reason she went ahead and got a teaching certificate.

Cathy

Cathy is a female teacher who has 11 years of teaching experience. She shared that she knew she wanted to be a teacher since she was a child. She said she changed location because it was easier for her to get a teaching job from where she was living before.

Cunnie

Cunnie is a female teacher with 17 years of teaching experience. Cunnie has a master's degree and she shared that she really enjoys teaching. Cunnie wanted to be a nurse at first but then she followed her friends and went to a college for teachers. Cunnie shared that she has experience working in the United States and internationally.

David

David is male teacher with a total of 20 years teaching in both elementary school and in university. He has a doctoral degree and enjoys teaching. David shared that he enjoys using PBIS in the classroom because it is beneficial to him and the students.

Grace

Grace is a female teacher with over 20 years of teaching experience. Grace said she had never thought of being a teacher until her mom told her to try teaching since there was no degree offered in biology at the university where she was accepted.

Mike

Mike is a male teacher with over 20 years of teaching experience. He shared that he was working with the government and was given the opportunity to train teenagers and he loved it and so he changed his career. He shares that he wants to teach and like working with children because he values education.

Sam

Sam is a male teacher with a total of 6 years of teaching experience. Sam shared that he has experience teaching internationally and in the United States. Sam shared that he loves teaching in the states because he has learn so much especially with PBIS. He shared that PBIS has helped him with his classroom management.

Tameka

Tameka is a female teacher with 14 years of teaching experience. Tameka shared that she went into teaching because she needed a career that was stable and one where there is room for growth. Tameka shared that she loves working with children because she gets to see siblings and she love teaching the entire family.

Results

This section of Chapter Four will present the study's findings and results. The themes and subthemes are generated from the individual interview and the focus group data. The data are presented in the figure below, then narratively for the remainder of this section.

Figure 2

Themes and Sub-themes
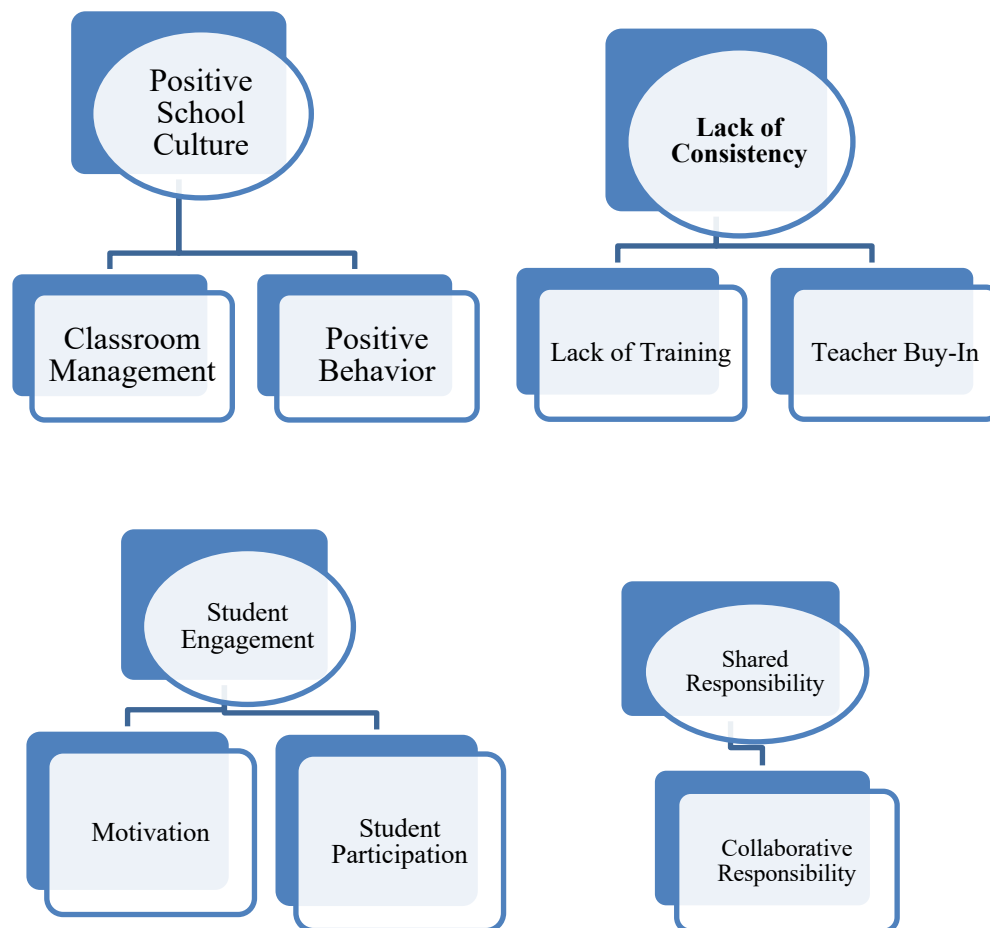
Table 2

Codes for Theme 1

Theme	Code
Positive School Climate	Yield Positive Results
	Positive Behavior
	Positive Influence
	Improved Attendance
	Increase Participation
	Good Classroom Management
	Improved Academic Scores
	Reduced Office Referrals

Positive School Climate

Positive behavior intervention support helps to create a positive school climate. A total of three out of ten participants talked about the school climate being a positive one. When talking about the implementation of PBIS and school climate, Cunnie said, "Well, I think it improve school climate because there are students who want to get reward, they want to have the party and be a part of the party. I can tell you about my students, they want to join the celebration so they do their best. I also inform the parents so they can help.

Cathy also mentioned in her discussion about the school climate that "Ahh, the kids are really excited when they get to have like their monthly rewards and they also do an attendance with it which makes the school climate a positive one. So, all the classes may get a dress down

day or a pizza party. That's always been a part of the initiative and the kids are always excited to do the extra things."

David discussed how the implementation of PBIS has made a tremendous change to the school environment. David said, "I think in general it (PBIS) has been a positive influence and it is seen in the attendance. We used to have a big attendance problem and now we give incentive and it is like a domino effect because when they are here we can actually teach them. And also, with their behavior….the influence of PBIS has made the students very good."

The review of documents including office referrals and in school suspension showed that during the first week of school the 5th grade students had a total of four in school suspension and after students began receiving their rewards for displaying acceptable behaviors those numbers reduced to one by the 4th week.

Positive Behavior

The PBIS approach yields positive results in the school learning environment. Three of the participants in the individual interviews talked about how the use of PBIS has improved students behavior. David asserted, "students who are exposed to the PBIS framework normally display positive behavior for the most part. It general, it has a positive influence on the student behavior and it is seen even in their attendance. We used to have a big attendance problem and now we give incentive for behavior and it is like a domino effect because when they are here we can actually teach them and also with their behavior…the influence of PBIS has made the students very good."

During the discussion on how PBIS has impacted student behavior in the teaching and learning environment, Bobbi shared that, "as a new teacher who is still learning about how to

teach and managing the students, PBIS have been like a savior to me, it promotes positive work ethics for my students and therefore it helps with my classroom management."

Sam stated that the use of the PBIS framework in his classroom has been very helpful with the students behavior and his classroom management. In the discussion on how the implementation of PBIS affected student behavior in the classroom environment, Sam stated that, "I think it increases the student participation. So, by doing that you have a better behavior in the classroom. You have less talking, less distraction and the behavior improved."

Brittney discussed how she encourages and eliminate behavioral problems in her teaching and learning environment. Brittney shared that, "okay so, I say to the students, we need to be supportive of each other. We are not going to be laughing. I have a supportive classroom and if they are having trouble let the teachers know or other teacher and we have a guidance counselor and we have a therapist also. So, classroom atmosphere is very important as it pertains to PBIS so that comes a lot from the teacher and the student behavior improves."

While reviewing the documents on in school suspension and also on the points taken away from the students because they were displaying undesirable behaviors, the records show that in one 4th grade class 17 out of 33 students had two to five points taken away on the ClassDojo app. However, by the end of the month, only 8 of those 17 students had one to two points taken away because of unacceptable behaviors.

Classroom Management

Having good classroom management was discussed by three of the participants in the individual interview as a part of having a positive school climate. Sam stated that, "I think PBIS increases and improves school climate by having good classroom management because it

increases the student participation. So, by doing that you have better behavior in the classroom. You have less talking, less distraction and the behavior improved."

Britney agreed that the use of the PBIS approach has helped her with her classroom management, she shared that, "I do what works best for me and I have never had complaints concerning classroom management I just had an informal observation just a couple of days ago. It was on learning environment and everything went well."

In a discussion of how classroom management is dealt with in the classroom during a focus group session, Brittney shared how she dealt with classroom management; she shared, "I talk about the engagement and I ask myself why are they doing this? Is it the lesson? I do as a whole class and sometime take a walk around the school inside the building. I point out who is doing a great job or I may ask a question, what is your team doing? And this helps me with having a good classroom management."

David added that he does this a little different in his classroom based on what is happening at the moment. He shared that, "it depends on class, group, activity. Sometimes depending on activity, you have to redirect them more. I like to mix it up. I would sometimes praise them instead of redirecting them. Sometimes if a student is doing a really good job I praise that student and that usually works. I say, 'you are doing a great job,' they look up and emulate the behavior because they want to get praise. Anytime as necessary."

The reduction of behavior infractions from the document review revealed that teachers are using various methods and reward system to encourage positive behaviors. In one third grade class, all students were given treats and extra points on the ClassDojo app for displaying positive behavior. The students in the class were given the opportunity to have a dress-down and they were rewarded with a pizza party.

Table 3

Codes for Theme 2

Theme	Code
Lack of Consistency	Lack of Training
	In the Beginning of School Year
	No Direct Professional Development
	Lack of Support
	Lack Consistency
	Missing Office Referrals from One Classroom
	Test Scores Not Updated in Some Classes

Lack of Consistency

Teachers agree that for successful implementation and fidelity there must be consistency. It is obvious that the implementation of PBIS in the school lack consistency. A total of four out of ten participants specifically emphasized lack of consistency as a challenge of PBIS implementation. When speaking about the implementation of PBIS, Grace stated that, "some of the challenges that we have faced with the implementation of PBIS is lack of consistency, definitely dealing with fidelity and making sure that everyone is on the same page helps and that gives us time to really put this in place.

Cunnie shared some of the challenges she has faced with implementing the PBIS framework. Cunnie stated that "the challenges, maybe some parents are not cooperative, ahh, some children really don't want to cooperate. They really insisted on what they wanted, there is no follow-up in the home. What else? Yeah, I think sometimes consistency. I am not consistent

with the ahh. If I see that students are doing good, I just praised them, but I should have done more so they would bear in mind that they are going to strive and on their best behavior."

David talked about some of the challenges he has faced with the implementation of PBIS, not being consistent is one of them. David shared, "it (PBIS) covers the whole school and for some students the effect can wear off because I see some kinds in 2nd or 3rd grade really striving and then they get to 5th grade and I am like who are you. How to keep them excited about PBIS (Another challenge is consistency; we are not consistent with what we do. We do not really follow up. We start off good, but when it gets to say January, February, it's like PBIS does not exist."

Tameka also shared lack of consistency when implementing the PBIS as a challenge. When talking about the challenges she faced with implementing the PBIS framework, she shared that, "ahhm I guess in the way of fostering a school community and trying to implement without the proper training and support, and lack of consistency, yeah, we are not consistent with it at all."

Lack of Training

Challenges of the lack of training on how to successfully implement the PBIS framework with fidelity were exposed due to the individual interview. Five of the participants in the one-on-one interviews shared their experiences of implementing the PBIS framework without proper training. In a discussion on the types of professional development offered to assist teachers with the implementation of the PBIS framework, the participants had different views.

Cunnie shared that "So, during collaborative planning that happens once a week. There are times when we teachers share our problems inside the classroom, which one of them is the behavior of the students. So, teachers and also admin would share some ideas on how we could

monitor or how we can inform parents about their behavior and how to improve their behavior inside the classroom through the use of points system, or class dojo, or behavior chart or even sometimes giving a treat.

David also agreed that there is a lack of training on PBIS approach by sharing that "I really don't think there is a direct professional development for that. I think it is embedded in our weekly collaboratively meeting because we talk about teaching strategies and different challenges in the classroom. I don't think we have PD specifically for that."

When asked what kind of professional development is offered to help teachers, Grace shared, "Unfortunately not enough, the teachers kind of get a small introduction to it and then it is just told at the last minute to do certain things and I think that's where the disconnect comes in. I think teachers have expectations of rewards and consequences, and when they're a little bit disheartened cause when the advent doesn't allow some kind of consequences, everybody has to participate which doesn't always sit well with others, because it was like, what's the point of doing this.

Annette added to the question of what kind of professional development is offered to support with the implementation of PBIS. She shared that, "usually, at the beginning of the school year there usually are some workshop to support PBIS. I was on the PBIS team a few times. They are in charge of implementing PBIS and coming up with rewards and activities. Having a committee on PBIS specifically help with successful implementation of although there were not enough workshops offered."

Mike was asked to talk about professional development offered at the school and he shared, "that part I don't know, as far as I know there were PBIS meetings and I think it was voluntary. There was a core group of people who belong into PBIS but I don't remember it being

School wide PBIS meeting. There were a couple of staff meeting where they talk about the expectation of classroom behavior, that's all I can remember."

Lack of Teacher Buy-In

A lack of teacher buy-in was exposed as a consistency and a barrier. Three of the participants in the one-on-one interviews talked specifically about how they would get more teacher buy-in for the PBIS initiative. Additionally, the records of the point system used for keeping records of positive and negative behavior show some teachers just giving one type of reward instead of the various rewards proposed by the school, which shows a resistance to buy-in.

Cathy stated, "I think that I would maybe try to get like more staff involved early in the process so that the buy-in would be, like the buy-in would happen sooner. Because sometimes they can feel like things are overwhelming, sometimes they can feel like this is another thing they have to do and they don't want to. Participants also shared that they feel like implementing the PBIS approach is added task and some participants are not willing to implement with fidelity. Bobbi shared, "I am a new teacher and I do not have a lot of experience, but I would say that it has been rewarding but overwhelming especially with a Hispanic population. I feel like this is added work."

Mike stated, "I think the element that was most difficult for me in the PBIS implementation was the buy-in. I just believe it is too much work and I realize that I can get away from doing the PBIS so I did. No one was watching me; they were not checking on me to see if I was doing it so I just never did it because it was just too much work for me. I don't know, now that we're talking about it, maybe I would have had more people were involved, more

people buy-in to this approach, I wish more people knew about it and had some kind of buy-in into it cause like I said, I didn't have to go to the meeting so I just did not do anything."

Tameka talked about making changes to the implementation of PBIS, stating that she would not make it mandatory in the school system. Tameka stated, "when leaders come to you and tell you that you have to do something and there is no way around it, it is like a big block in-front of you. You know, you have to know how you want to approach adults. You cannot go to adults and tell them they have to. If you want teachers to buy-in to anything that you want to be successful, I think you should approach them in a positive way. Oh, and another thing, if you really want good buy-in for the implementation of PBIS, call the company and have them send someone to train us."

Table 4

Codes for Theme 3

Theme	Codes
Student Engagement	Daily Instruction and Learning Environment
	Engage Student
	Encourage Student Engagement
	Motivated
	Engaged They Model Positive Behavior
	Increased Test Scores

Student Engagement

Cultivating and sustaining student engagement is essential for academic performance and positive behavior in the teaching and learning environment. Four participants expressed how important it is to engage student in the learning environment. When discussing how PBIS affect

daily instruction and student behavior in the classroom, Tameka stated, "when students are not engaged they tend to display undesirable behaviors and then they lose points and when they lose their points they get upset and most of the time they tend to disrupt the class and cause others to get their points taken away. So, with the use of PBIS, it encourages student engagement as well and therefore it encourages the students to display the right behaviors.

Annette also shared that, "Of course, students will always be students but when they are not engaged they tend to model behavior that is not expected of them and not do the right thing but when they are motivated and engage they try their best to model the behavior that is expected of them and do the right thing especially because they know that their parents are able to see what is happening in real time.

Bobbi stated that the use of PBIS have positive impact on her classroom engagement. She stated that it (PBIS) gets students excited to do their work and to follow directions and students try their very best to be engaged and remain engaged especially because they know of they do that they will be rewarded, and believe it or not, it works for some kids, it works.

Grace said, "I would say because I wanted my students to really have some successes, I try my very best to get them engaged in whatever the lesson is and just remind them of what is expected of them. Sometimes just having the ClassDojo app up so they can see their points help them to do what they are supposed to do. It was definitely where I would push for PBIS."

Motivation

Four of the participants in the individual interviews talked specifically about how the use of PBIS in their teaching and learning environment encourage motivation. The responses that included directly eluding to positive impact stemmed from the individual interview questions, the review of documents, and the focus group.

Grace stated that, "my students are motivated because they like the idea of getting incentives and they are on board with the PBIS approach. They are really supportive and encouraging as they always encourage and support their classmates to get on board and try to make sure that they are doing the right thing that they are supposed to do.

Bobbi also agrees that the use of the PBIS approach encourages motivation. Bobbi stated, "it gets students excited and motivated to do their work and follow directions.

Annette also agreed that the use of PBIS approach gets students motivated, she stated that, "PBIS is interwoven throughout my daily instruction. You may be working in the classroom and you and you say, thank you for sharing, I am going to give you a point and the students hear a ding and that in a positive reinforcement that encourage the students to participate in class because they also want to be rewarded."

Cathy shared that, "the implementation of PBIS has affected my student behavior in a positive way. Students are motivated when they see us teachers giving points to other students on the ClassDojo app that we project on the screen for them to see. When they see other students getting points and those points are adding up and those students get a treat or a reward, they want it to so they are motivated to do the right things such as turning in their assignments, staying on task and being good on the playground."

Student Participation

Having students participate in the teaching and learning environment will help to create a positive school climate. When students are participating in class, it limits and help mitigate behavioral issues in the classroom. One way to encourage students participation in the classroom environment is to provide positive rewards for them. Three participants talked about student participation during the individual interviews.

Cathy stated that, "I believe when we give students extra incentive, sometimes you need a little extra push or that little extra reward to get you through the day or through the month or whatever is all students want to go a little further and that positive incentive or reward will help them to do the right thing and participate."

Sam shared that, When I use the PBIS especially the ClassDojo, I noticed that the students participation increased. I have some students who never like to participate, I don't know if they are shy or they just don't want to participate, I now see them participate in class because the last small celebration that I had where I give them treat they did not get any treat because they did not have the amount of points they should have which is 50 points to celebrate and get a treat. So now, they are participating because they don't want to be left out."

Mike shared, I have seen where students, I should say more and more students are participating. I mean they are kids; they want something so they are going to do whatever it takes to get some of the free gifts or treats or whatever you call it. So, I would say, yes, it (PBIS) increase participation because the kinds want something and because the PBIS initiative is offering them something then they will in fact do something to get it. In this case it is coming to school, behaving, doing the work, and just participate and be good."

Table 5

Codes for Theme 4

Theme	Codes
Shared Responsibility	Work Together
	Share Ideas
	Discuss Together
	Share Strategies and Tips That Work
	Work Together on he Playground
	Common Data Tracker Used for Scores and Office Referrals

Shared Responsibility

Another theme that was developed in the data analysis was shared responsibility. This was evident in the individual interviews, focus group, and the review of documents. The participants shared how they would share strategies and ideas in weekly team meetings because there was not enough professional development on the implementation of PBIS. When discussing the type of professional development that is offered to support teachers with the implementation of PBIS,

Cunnie shared that, "So, during collaborative planning that happens once a week. There are times when we teachers share our problems inside the classroom, which one of them is the behavior of the students. So, teachers and also admin would share some ideas om how we could monitor or how we can inform parents about their behavior and how to improve their behavior inside the classroom through the use of points system, or class dojo, or behavior chart or even

sometimes giving a treat." There was one sub-theme within the theme: collaborative relationship.

In the focus group discussion on how teachers keep track of positive and negative behaviors, teachers shared that they work together on each grade level and they can give and take away points from students even if they are not in their homeroom. Tameka shared, "the teachers on the same grade level share the responsibility, so, I teach grade five and the other teachers who teach grade five also have access to my ClassDojo and vice versa. So, what we do is, if I see the student off task or not doing what they are supposed to do, I pull up the app on my phone and take away points and sometimes I even send messages to the parents and let them know, hey, Little Jonny is not doing what he is supposed to do."

Bobbi shared, "we keep track of positive and negative behavior in different ways. Of course, one of the main things we use is this app call ClassDojo, we also use a behavior chart where it rotates with the students. The chart is made by me one week, another teacher one week, and then it goes on like that. We share the responsibility among ourselves on the grade level so no one feels overwhelmed and it is working so far."

Collaborative Relationship

Data from in-school suspension and office referrals show a specific reference of collaborative relationship. The data show that the students who transition from one class to the next carry the same chart with them to the next class and all the classroom teachers use the same documents to tally points at the end of the week. Three of the participants shared that they work together to make sure that students are safe and are modeling the expected behaviors especially when on the playground and when transitioning from one class to the nest.

When talking about rules and expectations on the playground, Brittney shared, "we work together as a team, we circulate to make sure they (students) are safe. We are all in tune to what we need to do."

Cathy explained that the rules are reviewed before they go on the playground and while on the playground one teacher will monitor students for safety and another teacher will monitor to make sure students are following the rules."

David shared that, "we work together and discuss and share ideas to embed in our lessons, and create presentation to talk about rules and expectations. No one person do this, we work together as a team. Because, at the end of the day, we want to make sure that we are all on the same page. I think it is critical for us to work together especially when it comes to the rules and the expectations."

Research Question Responses

The participants provided a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of elementary school teachers related to a reward system for improving academic achievement and student behavior. There was one central research question and three sub-questions used to guide this case study. Data were gathered from participants' statements and review of documents to answer the questions below.

Central Research Question

How effective is the implementation of the PBIS approach in elementary schools in 3rd through 5th grade? The theme, positive school climate and its subthemes were in direct alignment with this research question. The participants expressed that the implementation of PBIS is very effective. Cathy shared that "the kids are really excited when they get to have their monthly reward. The classes may get to dress down, or get a pizza party. That's always been a part of the

initiative and the kids are always excited to do extra things. The kids will do their best to turn in their assignment and also behave so they can get their incentives. The use of PBIS also improve attendance here so the use of PBIS here is very effective. David stated that, "PBIS is effective, because it improves the student academic performance, and attendance and what happen here we can teach them and it also improves the way they behave in the classroom. I can say that I spend less time redirecting the students rather than explaining and actually working on material and the content, and I would say it have influence my instruction."

Sub-Question One

What is the impact of the PBIS approach on 3rd through 5th grade students' academic performance levels with PBIS as an intervention tool in the classroom? The third theme, student participation was directly aligned with this research question. The subthemes associated with students' engagement included student participation and motivation. The review of documents including test scores, in-school and out-of-school suspension reports shows that the use of the PBIS approach reflects that there is growth in academic performance because students were participating more in the teaching and learning environment and they wanted to ensure that they completed all assignments; and they did their best on all assessments given. The students in third grade whose teacher used PBIS daily had an increase in their cycle assessment and also on their IReady tests. The students in 4th and 5th grade also showed an improved test scores on their cycle assessment as well. The grade level with the most improved test scores were in third grade followed by the 4th grade class.

Table 6

Grade 3-5 Assessment Result

Grade	Assessment 1	Assessment 2	Assessment 3
3	56 % below level	50% below level	32% below level
4	65% below level	59% below level	52% below level
5	62% below level	58% below level	55% below level

Sub-Question Two

What is the impact of the PBIS approach on students' behaviors in grades 3 through 5? Participants shared that the use of the PBIS approach has positive and also negative impact on students' behavior. The theme lack of consistency and its subthemes were in alignment with this question. Several participants shared that PBIS had positive impact, but it could have been better if they had more training, teacher buy-in, and the resources to ensure it runs all year. Bobbi shared that the use of PBIS "promotes positive work ethics for my students." David shared that, "Since we have PBIS students notice the colors that we use and the students strive to get the good colors which is blue and that help us monitor their behavior and they tend to have good behavior." While the majority of the participants shared that the PBIS approach had positive impact on students' behavior, one participant disagreed. Tameka shared that, "I would say PBIS didn't positively affect student behavior mainly because PBIS is schoolwide, because once you take the money away, it takes the prize away. It has a negative effect because students who are doing well does not get reward." When discussing the opportunity to make changes to PBIS, participants revealed that they would make sure that incentives were given more than once per year and there would be more trainings than PBIS

offered. Cunnie shared, "because the celebration is done once a year, I would love it if the celebration is done quarterly so that students will know that every quarter they are looking forward toward something to celebrate." The review of documents such as office referral show that there is positive effect when students are exposed to the PBIS framework. The review of test scores and in school suspension record showed that there was a reduction in office referrals and in-school suspension were reduced after the first couple of weeks after students were exposed to the PBIS framework. Teachers in third through fifth grade shared their test scores for their cycle assessment and other assessment data and it was evident that there was an increase in academic performance on their second cycle assessment. There was a reduction in office referrals as seen in the table below.

Table 7

Office Referrals

Grade	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
3	12	8	2
4	8	7	4
5	9	8	6

Sub-Question Three

How do teachers of 3rd through 5th grade use PBIS as an intervention tool? The teachers in third grade through fifth grade used PBIS as an incentive method but in various ways. The theme shared responsibility was aligned with this research question. All the participants shared how they worked with others to make sure that students are safe on the playground and shared how they kept track of students positive and negative behavior.

Cunnie, third grade teacher, stated, "I give stickers, treat, fun-time during Fridays and they (students) can choose what they want to do. I use a behavior chart to keep track of positive and negative points, I explain what the colors mean on behavior chart to the students and to the parents, so they (parents) know how child is doing by looking at colors. Cathy, a fourth grade teacher shared that, "I use ClassDojo, I can give and take points away, I can message parents. I also use a grade system to keep track of how students are behaving. At the end of the week, students get free time on computers, I have a prize-box that they can chose something from." Brittney is a fifth grade teacher, she shared that, "I use ClassDojo to keep track of points and also to message parents to let them know how students are doing in the class. I do not only tell them about the bad things, I also share the good things that students are doing as well. The parents can also join the ClassDojo app and see how their child is doing at school. At the end of the week, I reward students with extra time for approved games on computer, candies, praises, and treats."

Table 8

Teacher Ways of Using PBIS

Teacher	Methods of Keeping Track of Positive and Negative Behavior	Rewards System
Annette	Positive Reinforcement Behavior Chart	Monthly Incentives Such as Pizza
Bobbi	ClassDojo	School Cash Fun Fridays
Britney	ClassDojo	Praises Treat Extra Time on Computer for Approved Games
Cathy	ClassDojo	Free Time on Computer Prize Box
Cunni	Behavior Chart	Stickers, Treat, Fun-Time During Fridays
David	Calendar with Colors	Treasure Chest Candy
Grace	ClassDojo	Monthly Incentives
Mike	ClassDojo	Pizza and Ice-cream Party
Sam	Grade System	Tokens
Tameka	ClassDojo	Pizza Party

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand the lived experiences of elementary teachers related to PBIS in an elementary school in a mid-Atlantic state. The purpose of this chapter was to present the results of the data analysis. This chapter included common themes and sub-themes to help with the descriptive of the lived experiences of teachers who use PBIS. The results from the data were presented in the form of a narrative using organized themes. Verbatim quotes were used including grammatical errors to accurately capture participants' voices. This chapter also has the answers to the research questions, significant findings such as the use of the PBIS approach yielding positive teaching and learning environment, no outliers were found.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand the lived experiences of elementary teachers related to PBIS in an elementary school in a mid-Atlantic state. This chapter begins with a discussion relating to the findings of the study. A connection to implications for policy and practice are included, followed by theoretical and empirical implications. Limitations and delimitations are also included in this chapter. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The data collection provided invaluable insight on the lived experiences of elementary school teachers in regard to PBIS. This section provides a discussion on the study's findings. It has five major subsections including (a) Interpretation of Findings; (b) Implications for Policy or Practice; (c) Theoretical and Empirical Implications; (d) Limitations and Delimitations; and (e) Recommendations for Future Research.

Interpretation of Findings

This section begins with a brief summary of thematic findings resulting from the data collection. The summary includes a brief description of the four main themes emerged from the data collection. The interpretation of the findings is also included in this section.

Summary of Thematic Findings

There were four main themes emerged from the findings. The main themes are: Positive school culture, Lack of Consistency, Student engagement, and Shared responsibility. Each of the main themes is interpreted below.

Positive School Culture. During the study, the participants reported that they have noticed that the use of a positive behavior system has improved the school culture in a positive and rewarding way. Most of the participants discuss that they have experienced both academic and behavior improved when the students are exposed to the PBIS framework. Additionally, some of the participants reported that having a reward system not only improve academic performance and behavior problems but also improve the attendance problem that the school has been struggling with for some time.

The findings correspond with previous literature suggesting that when school leaders and other stakeholders implement a behavior system in the education system they will notice that the school culture will be one that is positive and rewarding (James et. al, 2019; Närhi et al. (2017). The positive school culture impacts students, parents and administrators and the safety of all students. This finding validated the studies conducted by (Horner et al., 2004; James et al., 2019; Petrasek et al., 2022) revealing that students who are exposed to a positive behavior rewards system tend to perform better in academics when compared to students who are not exposed to a positive behavior system. The studies also revealed that when students are performing at a high standard and when they are displaying desirable behaviors the school is considered a school with positive culture (Horner et al., 2004; James et al., 2019; Petrasek et al., 2022).

Lack of Consistency. Many of the participants reported that they experience a lack of consistency. The findings focused on the participants discussing how they did not believe the PBIS approach is being implemented with fidelity. The participants reported that they will be implementing the PBIS approach during the first few months of the school year but after about four months in they do not continue with keeping track of the negative and positive behaviors. The participants also reported that they will give the rewards for the first four months but when

they get to January or around February they do not follow through. The participants discussed the lack of consistency played a role in the PBIS approach was developed stating that it was not implemented with fidelity and therefore they do not believe that they get the desired results.

The findings from the study corroborated Alonzo-Vaughn et al., 2015; Bradshaw et al., 2015; Bruhn et al., 2022; Estrapala et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2018; Grasley-Boy et al., 2021; Kelm et al., 2014; Kittelman et al., 2019 assertion that the implementation of the PBIS framework must be implemented with fidelity and must be done consistently in order to get positive results. The participants discussed that they did not have all the support that they needed from the stakeholders for effective implementation and therefore because of the lack of the consistent help they do not believe the implementation was worth implementing. The findings correspond with the literature of Gage et al., 2018; Grasley-Boy et al., 2021; Kelm et al., 2014 that administrators and other stakeholders should be supportive in the implementation of the PBIS approach for it to be effective.

Student Engagement. Most of the participants shared that they have experience a high level of student engagement during instruction time after the students are exposed to the PBIS framework. The participants stated that students take the time to be proactive by turning in assignments without being reminded constantly. Some of the participants reported that students want to participate in the lesson because they want to be rewarded and they do not want to be the only one who does not get rewarded or be excluded from the rewards ceremony. Participants reported that it is like a win-win because they students are motivated to attend school they are motivated to participate and this definitely help them to learn what is being taught. Student engagement is linked to improved academic performance and limit unacceptable behavior in the classroom environment (Denervaud et al., 2019; Li et. al., 2019; Longobardi et al., 2022).

Shared Responsibility. The use of shared responsibility in the school environment provides effective ways to implement the PBIS framework and to improve the quality of record keeping. Participants shared information that supports the belief that sharing responsibilities among teachers and other educators provide a positive relationship among teachers and students. In addition, the participants shared that when the responsibilities are shared among each other it does not feel like a burden instead it feels like we are all working together to achieve the same goal and we do not feel burnout that way. This finding is in alignment with the study conducted by Bradshaw et al., 2012; McIntosh et al., 2021; McIntosh et al., 2021; Meng et al., 2016; Ross et al., 2012; Waasdorp et al., 2012 that when teachers work together towards a common goal it prevents teacher burnout and the workload becomes bearable which in turn motivate teachers and teacher will be more receptive to added workload.

Implications for Policy or Practice

The findings from this research has implication for policy and practice related to the effective implementation of the PBIS framework and the lived experiences of elementary school teachers relating to PBIS. The policy implications are discussed first along with recommendations then the implications for practice along with recommendation.

Implications for Policy

Based on the findings from this study, there are two recommendations for the school district. The first recommendation is for the policymakers in the school district to provide resources and guidelines to schools on implementing the PBIS framework with fidelity. Principals should be given a chance to be creative and be able to make decisions in regard to changes that may need to be done with the PBIS frameworks as this may yield bigger results. The second recommendation is for the school district to provide support staff to schools to assist

with the implementation of PBIS. From the individual interview questions, some participants shared that it was overwhelming to effectively implement PBIS and still do their daily duties. Providing support staff may help to reduce teacher burnout.

Implications for Practice

There are implications for practice for this research study. These implications should be addressed through recommendations. Data from the individual interviews and the focus group interviews reveal that there is a lack of professional development to support the implementation of the PBIS framework in an effective way. One recommendation is to incorporate mandatory PBIS training in the weekly staff development training. Another recommendation is to have the founders of the PBIS framework educate all educators on how to effectively implement the PBIS in the curriculum. The principal could have a contact person for reaching out and getting answers relating to implementing the PBIS approach and then share the answers to all staff members ensuring that everyone is on the same page.

Principals and other members of the leadership team could conduct monthly meetings to educators parents and members of the community to buy-in to the use of implementing the PBIS framework in the school system. It is recommended that teachers should discuss potential barriers regarding to PBIS to principals and other stakeholders. It may be beneficial if students help with deciding on the treats or incentives that they are given as this may motivate more students which may yield higher results.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

The Bandura's (1977) social learning theory was used as the theoretical framework of this study. This approach was suitable and relevant for understanding the lived experiences of elementary teachers regarding the implementation of the PBIS framework in the teaching and

learning environment. The theory suggests that learning takes place because people observe the consequences of other people's behaviors (Bandura & Walters, 1977; Schunk, 2020). The explicit teaching of behavior skills assists in building positive behavior in the classroom. The foundations for these skills lie on teacher collaboration and effective communication. The findings from this study substantiate the work of Bandura (1977) on utilizing social learning to influence and improve student behavior.

The collective shared experiences of all participants confirmed previous research relating to the use of the PBIS framework to improve academic outcome and student behavior. The findings from this study are in alignment with previous research regarding the use of PBIS improving student behavior and academic outcome (Bastable et al., 2021; Bradshaw et al., 2021; Gage et al., 2020; Gagnon et al., 2020; Gerlinger & Hipp, 2020; Gottfredson et al., 2021; Hernandez & Seem, 2004). All participants shared that they have used PBIS in the classroom to encourage participation and improve academic performance and they have seen improvement in student behavior and in their academic performance.

This research enhances the empirical literature by revealing that the use of PBIS approach in the education system can be linked to positive and improved behavior; and improved academic performance. Participants from the study shared that they have seen a reduction in office referrals and an increase in student participation and engagement in the learning environment. This finding corroborates (Bastable et al., 2021; Bradshaw & Pas, 2011; Gagnon et al., 2020) studies who focused on using the PBIS framework to improve academic performance and student behavior in the education system. The experiences of all participants in this study will provide invaluable information to future researchers that may impact the use of the PBIS framework in the teaching and learning environment. This study also builds on the empirical

literature by shedding light on the effectiveness of the use of the PBIS framework in the teaching and learning environment.

Limitations and Delimitations

The research study had a few limitations. The first limitation of this study is that all participants were from one school with a highly Hispanic population. The second limitation was time. Many of the participants expressed that they wanted to get the focus group session over with but some of the participants wanted to participate right after their duty hours while others expressed that they need at least a half an hour after the end of their duty day. This caused the second focus group to be help on a Saturday. The third limitation was in relation to gender, the majority of the participants were male. The final limitation was participants who expressed interest in the study but later refused to participate in the research study.

This study had two delimitations. The first delimitation was the sample that was recruited. All participants have experience with implementing the PBIS framework for attempting to improve academic and behavior outcome. All the participants also have experience working with students with special needs and worked in the same school district and with the same leadership team. Having the experience working under the same leadership would provide participants opportunity to talk about their experience of working under the same leadership team and therefore provide high levels of information during the focus group interviews. The other delimitation was choosing the site location and the school district. I choose this school district because I live in the same district and the school was chosen because the commute to meet with participants would be manageable. Also, this school was chosen because I know that this school has used PBIS as an approach to improve attendance in school and there was a positive outcome.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of the research study, I have a few recommendations for future research study. A replication of the research study using quantitative research which include educators from more than one school and more than one school district. Although this research focused on the lived experiences of elementary teachers, there could be an investigation on the comparison of teacher experiences who implement the same intervention approach. Research should be done in schools where the use of the PBIS approach has been implemented consistently and with fidelity. Research should be done in schools that are more diverse and in a different geographic area to determine consistency of the research findings.

Conclusion

The purpose of this case study was to understand the lived experiences of elementary school teachers relating to implementing the PBIS framework in a mid-Atlantic school. This study was framed using the Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. Educators including classroom teacher and specialist were interviewed individually and during a focus group. The data were analyzed and synthesized into four main themes: positive school culture, lack of consistency, student engagement, and shared leadership. The most important takeaway from this case study is that elementary school teachers and other educators need the support of administration which include proper professional development in order to implement the PBIS framework with fidelity.

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Appendix A

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

July 11, 2023

Dellphine Sterling
Constance Pearson

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-1825 A CASE STUDY ON THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ELEMENTARY
TEACHERS RELATED TO POSITIVE BEHAVIOR AND INTERVENTION SUPPORTS (PBIS)

Dear Dellphine Sterling, Constance Pearson,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office
for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study
to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods
mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human
participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude,
achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or
auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects
can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB
review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

**Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab
within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB.** Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied
and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information
electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your
protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may
report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to
your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B

PGCPS
Research & Evaluation

August 28, 2023

Dellphine Sterling

Dear Ms. Sterling:

The review of your request to conduct the research entitled, "A CASE STUDY ON THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS RELATED TO POSITIVE BEHAVIOR AND INTERVENTION SUPPORTS (PBIS)" has been completed. Based on the examination, I am pleased to inform you that the Department of Testing, Research and Evaluation (DTRE) has granted authorization for you to proceed with your study.

This approval applies to the 2023-2024 school year. We reserve the right to withdraw approval at any time or decline to extend the approval if the implementation of your study adversely impacts any of the school district's activities. If you are not able to complete your data collection during this period, you must submit a request for an extension through the online tool located on our website. You will be required to submit a status report of your study, any changes to your procedures and methods, and all appropriate consent forms and instruments.

Prior to your data collection activities, you are required to secure written approval of the principals where you plan to recruit your research subjects. The Principal Permission to Conduct Research Study forms must be signed and forwarded to the Office of Research & Evaluation and a copy given to the respective principal. Regarding the recruitment materials please be aware that only approved copies (stamped 'APPROVED') can be distributed to your target subjects or distributed in schools from which you plan to recruit research subjects. The wording of the consent forms must be exactly as the version submitted to our office. Should you change the procedure or materials, any revisions must be approved by this office before being used in this study. Please be aware that participation in your project is on a strictly voluntary basis.

An abstract and one copy of your study's final report should be forwarded to the Department of Testing, Research and Evaluation within one month of successful completion of your study. Do not hesitate to contact the Research and Evaluation office if you have any questions. I wish you success with your study.

Best regards,

Supervisor, Office of Research & Evaluation

Appendix C

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DIVISION of ACCOUNTABILITY
DEPARTMENT of TESTING, RESEARCH and EVALUATION

PGCPS
Research & Evaluation

Principal Permission to Conduct Research Study

Do not write in this box – DTRE use only		
August 28, 2023	**June 30, 2024**	**RE-2324-010**
Authorization Date	Authorization Expiration Date	DRE Application Number

_____**Dellphine Sterling**_____ has received conditional authorization from the Office of Research and Evaluation to conduct the following research study:

"**A CASE STUDY ON THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS RELATED TO**

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR AND INTERVENTION SUPPORTS (PBIS)"

in Prince George's County Public Schools. The researcher would like to conduct the study in:

_____
School

Implementation of this study is contingent upon the researcher securing the **permission** of the principal in the above-listed school in which the study will be conducted.

APPROVED
EXPIRES ON
JUNE 30, 2024
PGCPS – Research Office

DTRE Staff Signature

_____ Approved   _____ Disapproved

Remarks:

_____ _____ _____
Principal Name   Signature   Date

Should you have any questions or concerns about this matter, please call the Research and Evaluation office at (301) 780-6807 **before** granting permission.

Appendix D

Educator Participant Recruitment Letter

Dear Educators,

As a graduate student in the Department School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting a study as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy degree. The purpose of my research is to understand the lived experiences of elementary teachers related to PBIS in an elementary school in a mid-Atlantic state. I am writing to invite you to join my study.

To participate, please contact me at ~~_____~~ or email me at ~~_____~~ for more information to schedule an interview. A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and serving as a teacher, paraeducator, or specialist. Participants will be asked to take part in a one-on-one, audio-recorded, in-person interview and an audio-recorded focus group. It should take approximately 10-15 minutes for the individual interview and approximately 30 minutes to complete the focus group session. No personal, identifying information will be collected.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Participants will receive a $10 Amazon gift card and be entered in a raffle to receive a $200 Visa gift card.

Sincerely,
Dellphine Sterling
Doctoral Candidate
~~_____~~

Appendix E

Educator Consent Form

Title of the Project: A case study on the lived experiences of elementary teachers related to positive behavior and intervention supports (PBIS)
Principal Investigator: Dellphine Sterling, Doctoral Candidate, School of Education, Liberty University

<table><tr><td>Invitation to be Part of a Research Study</td></tr></table>

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

<table><tr><td>What is the study about and why is it being done?</td></tr></table>

The purpose of my research is to understand the lived experiences of elementary teachers related to PBIS in an elementary school in a mid-Atlantic state.

<table><tr><td>What will happen if you take part in this study?</td></tr></table>

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:
1. Participate in an individual, audio-recorded interview that will take no more than 1 hour. This interview will be conducted in person or virtually. Participants will have the opportunity to review their interview transcript for accuracy.
2. Participate in a focus group interview. This interview will be conducted in person or virtually, consists of groups of 3 or 4 other participants (educators etc.), be audio recorded, and take approximately 30 minutes.

<table><tr><td>How could you or others benefit from this study?</td></tr></table>

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Your participation may significantly contribute to education and effective ways to improve academic performance and student behavior.

<table><tr><td>What risks might you experience from being in this study?</td></tr></table>