Relationship Between Teacher Perception of Positive Behavior Interventions Support and the Implementation Process

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER PERCEPTION
OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS SUPPORT
AND THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

by

Janice Marie Hansen

Abstract of a Dissertation
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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between teacher perception of a school’s behavior management program and the implementation process. This study explored perceptions of teachers from three aspects of the Positive Behavior Intervention Support model as they relate to the implementation processes for PBIS. This design is intended to provide strategies for behavior modification to improve and transform inappropriate behaviors through reinforcement of positive behaviors in lieu of punitive strategies to correct disruptive behaviors. The framework for a positive behavior reinforcement system is data driven, identifying specific behaviors that impede learning and formulating an intervention using a tiered system similar to the intervention system used for identified academic weaknesses.

Expectations for increased academic growth have been placed on the academic domain by federal mandates with increasingly unyielding consequences. School personnel are facing more challenges as students come to school having experienced harsh behavior practices at home that will connect with academic difficulties at school. Administrative support in correcting behavioral issues are a concern for educators. Flannery, Sugai, and Anderson (2009) conducted a study where schools with experience implementing PBIS have suggested different strategies for implementing proactive
interventions. Teacher perceptions of these strategies hold the possibility of successful implementation or failed efforts. This study examines if a relationship exists between teacher perception of PBIS and the implementation process, and teacher perception and the role of the administrator in the PBIS implementation process, teacher perception of the role of administrator and the implementation process.

Quantitative data were collected to examine the participants’ perceptions of PBIS that support pro-social behaviors and decrease anti-social behaviors to determine if a relationship exists between their perceptions and their implementation processes. The participants rated their perception of the administrator’s role in PBIS, examining the presence of a relationship between this perception and their implementation process. Teachers’ perceptions of the administrator’s role in PBIS were considered to determine if a relationship exists between the administrator’s role and teachers’ perceptions of PBIS.

The results indicated a positive correlation existed across all variables. Additional research was found that demonstrated the importance of the implementation process, but more importantly, teacher perception drives a successful implementation experience to generate the desired results in academic achievement (Gorgueiro, 2008). This study generated results that may be of interest to administrators considering the implementation of a positive behavior model. The results identified an existence of a positive correlation between all variables that can provide insight for administrators to realize the value of teacher perspective to drive decisions on team leadership roles, involvement of teachers in the planning process, and training with support systems in place.
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DEDICATION

I would like to extend a very heartfelt and special thank you to my husband, Mark. He has encouraged me and supported me throughout this process from the first discussion regarding this endeavor as well as so many others. Without him, I would never have considered this a possibility. With his support, I have accomplished something I never dreamed possible. I would also like to thank my sons, Peter and Nicholas. This accomplishment is in their honor. To my new daughter-in-law, Ariana, I would like to thank her for her support and patience as I discussed each aspect of this process endlessly. Additionally, I would like to thank my mom, Mae Higgins, for her ongoing support. She was very accommodating regarding the time this took away from her care after her stroke.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The academic world is undergoing a dramatic change regarding student expectations. Each child is expected to graduate high school with expertise necessary for college placement and job skills in a globally competitive environment regardless of any excuse, social or personal. President George W. Bush, during his administration, authorized the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) (No Child Left Behind, 2002). This legislation required states to bring all students to a proficient level of performance on learning objectives established by the states’ departments of education on end of year high stakes tests. The deadline for this expectancy is the end of the 2013-14 school year. This legislation requires states to set academic standards that are challenging for all students, mandating that student populations, including all subgroups, make adequate yearly progress (Dee & Jacob, 2011). Schools are being held accountable for determining a path for instruction, promoting and sustaining the academic progress and advances of their students (Barrett, Bradshaw, & Lewis-Palmer, 2008), while addressing behavior difficulties and the growing gap in academic performance (Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008). The challenges stakeholders face include mandates to improve literacy, enhance student character, and ensure all students achieve higher levels of academic achievement with fewer resources. Parallel to the call for increased academic achievement is the need for a more productive behavior management system to allow for increased time spent on academics rather than responding to problematic and disruptive behaviors. Student populations are becoming more heterogeneous and there are fewer family supports, fostering significant behavioral problems and concerns. There are increasing numbers of families who face financial barriers and a greater need for mental
health, social welfare, medical, and vocational assistance (Sugai & Horner, 2008). The increased social and emotional needs of students outside of academic expectations hamper the efforts of public schools in working solely to achieve the academic goals for students.

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

Schools have provided nurturing environments in which children, their families and communities have numerous opportunities to learn academic and life skills. It is the goal of educators to provide students with safe, stable, positive, and nurturing learning atmospheres that support the academic and life skills needed. Leaders in education are continually searching for strategies to empower teachers in developing plans for increased control over their classroom so that the ultimate goal of increased academic achievement can be accomplished (Reinke et al., 2012). School culture and climate is at center stage for supporting this nurturing atmosphere. There has been a magnified need over the past decade for a focus on developing a more positive and community-based system for addressing the behavioral challenges schools face.
For many years classrooms have used punitive programs for classroom management, but with the increased numbers of problem behaviors in schools, a trend has emerged in education where a positive response system is utilized for proactive measures. Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) is a process by which school-wide behavioral expectations are taught along with the core academic curriculum (Sugai & Horner, 2002a). A positive behavior support system represents goals and strategies to assist schools in addressing the needs of students behaviorally, much like academic interventions focus on academic weakness. It is designed to create an environment where school staff is able to bring about positive change for the behavior management process (Bradshaw, Koth, Bevans, Ialongo, & Leaf, 2008). PBIS emphasizes positive lessons taught, modeled and reinforced. The PBIS model is built around the premise of developing lessons for modeling expected behaviors with explanations of why the behaviors are appropriate, along with reinforcement of the positive behavior by the acknowledgment and rewarding of the appropriate behavior. (Reinke et al., 2012). The goal is a universal transference of supporting pro-social behaviors to decrease anti-social behaviors that lead to behavior problems. This allows for schools to shift from reactive or punitive strategies as the primary response to problem behaviors to more proactive and positive approaches that address the entire school as well as individual students (Colvin & Fernandez, 2000).

The PBIS model employs a tiered system, similar to Response to Intervention (RTI), for supporting all students through preventive measures and a tool for identifying those students requiring extra support for behavioral success (Walker et al., 1996). Positive behavior intervention supports were first developed in response to a call through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendment of 1997 (IDEA 97) for the
use of positive behavioral interventions and supports for students with disabilities who became involved in consistent problematic behaviors or those identified as being at risk for experiencing problem behaviors (Sugai et al., 2000). Hawken and O’Neill (2006) report that the basic foundation and concepts connected to PBIS originated out of research and support procedures developed for students with severe disabilities. The onset of preventive approaches to inhibit disruptive behaviors and to encourage appropriate behaviors for students with severe disabilities was to be implemented as an alternative to penal interventions. This strategy has evolved into an intervention strategy for whole schools. With this shift to population-based strategies, the idea of analyzing the source of undesirable behaviors within individual students, and the development of individual interventions, is now used to take on the foundation of social skill instruction as well as behavior modification.

In addition to the numerous social problems families are facing, the students are coming to school lacking the necessary prerequisite social abilities that foster appropriate behaviors. Noncompliance with adult directions and inappropriate social interactions have become the norm, and these students are then at risk for further anti-social behaviors and later life difficulties (Lewis, Sugai, & Colvin, 1998). Researchers have found evidence suggesting that parents and communities actually contribute to problem behavior by failing to provide necessary prerequisite social skills and support and by modeling instead inappropriate social interactions (Lewis et al., 1998).

The concept of positive behavior intervention is supported by a value-based system in which the emphasis is on respect of all people and a culture of mutual respect for all people. PBIS is a continuum of support that aims to teach students acceptable behaviors, which in turn fosters an improved school environment that builds a culture of
improved systems. This affects all areas of a school campus and promotes positive change and growth in students and staff. The primary measurable goal for PBIS is increased student academic performance, and many research studies have been conducted to analyze the relationship between behavior and academic performance. The research shows empirical evidence that PBIS is effective in increasing student performance in academic settings (Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005). Research has been rigorous, as educators are concerned about student social behavior and academic performance.

For the most effective results from PBIS in academic areas and in the overall organizational health of a school, many factors contribute to the whole process. The effects of PBIS can be contingent upon factors which include staff training and perceptions of the strategies that will be modeled, used, and systematically integrated into the culture of a school. The goal of improving student academic and behavior outcomes is to ensure that all students have access to the most effective and accurately implemented instructional and behavioral practices and interventions possible. PBIS is a decision making framework that guides implementation of the best practice and evidence-based behavioral practices for improving behavior outcomes for all students (Sugai & Horner, 2002a). It is based on three guiding beliefs: prevention, theoretically sound and evidence based practice, and systems implementation (Sugai et al., 2000). The interaction of staff members with students supports the practices that complete the direct teaching of the behavior expectations, ongoing reinforcement of expected behaviors, and a system of assessment and analysis of those behaviors through data collection. This practice leads to the prevention of inappropriate behaviors, allowing the staff and students to experience improved academic and behavior outcomes.
Success stories in education receive a great deal of attention. Many schools struggle with shrinking budgets, populations that require more social and academic guidance, teacher and student frustration, and behavior issues. Instructional time is lost when behavior concerns take the time and energy out of a learning environment. So many schools have realized that an organized, balanced, and structured behavior management plan is necessary to move their education programs to the expectations established to meet student needs. As behavior referrals increase, schools are analyzing strategies for behavior management. The plans for harsh feedback to undesirable behaviors are not teaching the behaviors that are desired; therefore, many school districts are adopting a more positive and proactive method. The concern about problematic and disruptive student behavior, declining academics and their relationships in schools have produced a tremendous amount of preventions and research-based practices to improve social competence, academic performances, and school climate (Luiselli et al., 2005). Declining academics along with disruptive behaviors have caused strong recommendations for a movement towards preventive and proactive approaches to address problem behaviors by educators and researchers prior to this systemic approach being popular (Sugai & Horner, 2002b).

The difficulty schools experience in addressing rule-breaking behavior is due to a number of reasons. The growing diversity of students in ethnicity, contexts (single vs. two parent homes, education levels, socio-economic status, etc.) presents a diverse set of circumstances in which teachers must confront disruptive behaviors. School climates that reflect a controlling environment can increase resistance to rules. Academic expectations have increased by the public through a higher demand for accountability and achievement. Stakeholders are more interested in academic performance than basic
school environment. The most influential factor on rule-breaking behavior is that behavioral issues are far more severe and complex than in the past. Schools are under pressure to promote and sustain increased academic gains of their students (Barrett et al., 2008), while addressing and correcting the behavior concerns of all students in the drive towards closing a persistent achievement gap across all student populations.

Effective implementation and adjustments in programming for behavior management practices requires training and support systems. It cannot be accomplished without careful and purposeful development of systems within a school that support a shift in practices in that have been in place over extended periods of time (Handler et al., 2007). A collection of systematic strategies to enhance the reduction in problem behaviors in students can enhance the individuals’ quality of life and reduce or prevent problem behaviors (Carr et al., 2002). Strategies and plans for systematic change must be analyzed and implemented to ensure the success of the change. The stakeholders involved may be the key to creating the difference between success and failure of any system. Lack of knowledge and understanding of the overarching vision may hamper the efforts for change. Available supports and resources for successful implementation and continued endurance of the structure of positive reinforcement need to be readily available for school personnel for continuous use and execution (George & Kincaid, 2008). Evidence is abundant, suggesting that all students can make academic gains when PBIS is dedicated to the school climate and culture (Freeman et al., 2006). Numerous studies have been conducted to establish the success of behavior interventions on academic success, but a much smaller number of studies have been accomplished on teacher perceptions and perspectives of PBIS team members and users in the schools.
Currently, research is being expanded to address school-wide and systematic models of PBIS implementation.

Statement of the Problem

In a study conducted by Flannery et al., (2009), schools that have experience in the implementation process for PBIS have provided suggestions for implementation and training to enhance the overall success and understanding of PBIS. It has been determined that children who experience harsh behavior management practices at home often have difficulties at school. In response to this, educators have embraced the concept of putting in place more positive proactive interventions. This coincides with the call for help from educators and their attitudes regarding a systematic direct intervention method. Garnering administrative and faculty support can directly affect the success of the program. Implementing PBIS and changing the disciplinary climate and culture can be challenging for most districts. Buy-in from staff is critical to its success. Employing classroom management is considered to be necessary for instruction and learning to occur, yet what is considered effective classroom management focuses on managing groups of students as a whole group and is geared towards more preventative measures instead of reactive measures (Emmer & Stough, 2001). In the climate of the call for education reform, PBIS becomes the vehicle for changing a school’s disciplinary culture.

This study investigated the relationship between teacher perception of Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS) and the implementation process, the relationship between teacher perception of PBIS and the role of administration on the implementation process, and teacher perception of PBIS and the role of administration. The role of administration in the PBIS practices includes the training and support systems available to stakeholders. In the quest for schools to ensure their students are completely trained to
face the challenges of the adult world in which they find themselves after high school, an equally important quest is to empower teachers with the knowledge and information regarding the expectations of a positive reinforcement support system for behavior management. This system encompasses more than acknowledging desired behaviors. Teachers are the faces of any curriculum. This is true in academic, social, emotional, and behavioral practices. Therefore, it is imperative to measure their perception of PBIS due to their attitude influencing the students’ perceptions and eventually the success or failure of the effort (Gorgueiro, 2008).

The PBIS leadership team and school administrators may rely on research to identify the overall success of a positive behavior support system and pursue program implementation without an emphasis on proper training for personnel. The understanding by administration of teacher perception regarding the concept of procedural behavior management systems with specific goals and interventions for individuals, classes, and schools can be informational to determine policies and procedures. Defining the absolute perception of teachers and staff regarding PBIS is a critical component to experiencing a successful implementation that produces the desired results (Gorgueiro, 2008).

The purpose of determining teacher perception is to avoid negative presentation to students thereby sideling the process. Negative perception by teachers can easily transfer to students, and administration must be aware of possibilities of problematic issues. If this study indicates that negative teacher perception impacts the success of the school’s positive behavior intervention system, then administrators and team leaders can collaborate with the staff to review the perception from the entire school. A repositioning of the program may be beneficial to creating a design to maximize goals and to benefit the growth of the students.
Thompson and Webber (2010) indicate there are limited strategies available to empower schools to analyze data that explores teacher perception and student outcome of school expectations. There is a need for a vehicle to develop goals for individuals and school-wide systems to expedite behavioral advances. The elements of discovery of the teacher perspective include their ratings of the training and administrative support for the PBIS concept past initial implementation. Following the recommendations of the PBIS model as written in the Implementation Blueprint released in 2010 by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education, a leadership team is in place to develop the program highlights, create the desired outcomes and goals, build the data collection and analysis systems, and act as a resource and support system for the school staff (OSEP, 2010). These measures may be accomplished, but there is little data available to determine if teachers perceive the effectiveness and influence of the administrative system in place. Teacher awareness of the process and their attitude toward administrative involvement may or may not affect the general effectiveness of the attempts at intervention and pursuit of the overall goals. The need for planning by the implementation teams is outlined in the blueprint publications, and a critical component to the success of PBIS is school personnel having access to available support and resources for successful implementation and ongoing long-term sustainability (George & Kincaid, 2008).

Research Questions

For this study, the following questions were investigated:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between teacher perception of PBIS and the implementation process?
RQ2: Is there a relationship between teacher perception of the administrator’s role in PBIS and the implementation process?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between teacher perception of PBIS and the administrator’s role in PBIS?

Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses for this study were as follows:

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between teacher perception of PBIS and the implementation process.

H2: There is a statistically significant relationship between teacher perception of the administrator’s role in PBIS and the implementation process.

H3: There is a statistically significant relationship between teacher perception of PBIS and the role of the administrator in PBIS.

Definition of Terms

The following terms that are used in this study; the definitions provide an association between the terms and the research conducted.

*Adequate yearly progress* is the measure by which schools, districts, and states are held accountable for student performance under Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002).

*Administrator’s role* refers to the administration of a school, which includes principals, vice/assistant principals, discipline teams, and director of services. This role indicates leadership position in a school or district in which PBIS is being implemented (Bohanon-Edmonson, Flannery, Eber, & Sugai, 2004).

*Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)* is a field of psychology that attempts to identify relationships between the environment in which a particular behavior exists and the
cause of an external factor on that behavior rather than an internal process (Johnston, Foxx, Jacobson, Green, & Mulick, 2006).

*Challenging behavior* describes any behavior that will systematically interfere with the educational process and the safe environment of a school (Sugai & Horner, 2002a).

*Fidelity of implementation* is the delivery of instruction in the way it was designed to be delivered (Gresham, MacMillan, Beebe-Frankenberger, & Bocian, 2000).

*Implementation process* is the systematic plan used when executing into action or practice of a new plan or program. Implementation is the action that follows the planning process (OSEP, 2010). For the purpose of this study, it is in reference to the positive behavior intervention support system being introduced and used within a school district or campus.

*No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* is the legislation authorized by President George W. Bush in 2001 that addresses accountability in public schools. This legislation requires states to implement accountability systems that cover all students regardless of disabilities. It mandates annual state assessments that determine student proficiency in reading and mathematics, to ensure that all groups of students reach proficiency over 12 years. The results are broken down by subgroups of race, ethnicity, disability, and limited English proficiency (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002).

*Office Discipline Referral (ODR)* is a written document that is provided to school administrators documenting improper behavior and is submitted for action in response to unacceptable behavior. It is commonly used as an indicator of student behavior problems and a source of data for behavioral occurrences (McIntosh & Frank, 2010).
Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) describes a systematic approach to establish strategies to redesign a school environment to support individuals in reducing problem behaviors whereby teachers modify environments and teaching socially acceptable skills and behaviors (Sugai et al., 2000)

School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) is designed to review and evaluate critical features of school-wide effective behavior supports that are implemented over a period of a school year. It is administered by an external coach through a collection of artifacts and interviews (Horner et al., 2004).

Teacher perception: For the purpose of this study, this term refers to the level of understanding of, appreciation for, and judgment of PBIS.

Tiers denotes the levels and intensity of interventions prescribed to students based on results produced from universal screening in the Response to Intervention (RTI) process (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2012)

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a process where the extent to which students respond to an adjustment in instruction is measured. The components of RTI are the application of research-based instruction and interventions in a general education setting, the monitoring and measurement of student progress in response to those interventions and instructions, and the use of these measures to direct instruction and make educationally sound decisions (Walker et al., 1996)

Assumptions

One assumption of this study is that all respondents honestly completed the survey questionnaire and returned it in a timely manner as requested. It is also assumed that the researcher has correct information regarding PBIS schools.
It is assumed that teachers and staff members have received adequate training to implement PBIS with at least a minimal level of fidelity to promote the success of PBIS.

Delimitations

Delimitations were levied on this study, as it included only public schools in Mississippi. The schools must be participating in some form of a positive behavior intervention support system in order for the teachers to complete the survey. The effectiveness of PBIS was delimited in this study; the variables were measured based upon teacher perceptions of specific aspects of the implementation process and the administrator’s role in that context. This study examined PBIS at various stages of the implementation process.

Justification

The trend to implement PBIS in schools is increasing with each school year (Cregor, 2008). Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the impact PBIS can produce in reducing negative behaviors, which in turn increases academic performance. There have been only a few research studies examining the effects of PBIS based upon teacher buy-in, administrative support, and the professional support with training and technical support for teachers. This research can drive external coaches in developing strategies to encourage teacher buy-in, enabling the possibility of increased academic success. Another trend in education is the collection and analysis of student performance data. This holds true in the PBIS model. A major component of the program is data-based decisions for behavior modification. Lohrmann, Forman, Martin, and Palmieri (2008) interviewed school technical assistants to gain perspectives regarding factors that influence school personnels’ resistance toward implementation of PBIS strategies. Several strategies were identified that were perceived by the
participants to be helpful in overcoming those barriers (Bambara, Nonnemacher, & Kern, 2009).

This study can provide school administrators insight on true teacher perceptions regarding PBIS. All too often administrators see an overall success rate and assume the staff has total or an acceptable amount of buy-in; therefore, it is working from all aspects. Colvin and Fernandez (2000) piloted a study at Clear Lake Elementary School and found that the teachers believed the one component that lead to the success of the positive behavior support model was the formation of a productive and cooperative leadership team. Administrators are promised results from lots of packaged programs and implement these programs through the guidance of a professional consult and trainer. These sessions are presented from the vision and goals of the program with little to no regard for the sustainability of the staff’s implementation and continued use.

According to Flannery et al., (2009), slightly fewer than half of the respondents indicated that they had plans to implement or were in fact implementing strategies to acknowledge or positively reinforce student behaviors that reflected the school-wide expectations. This study should shed some light on the attitudes from teachers regarding the program and amount of training and support they are provided through the leadership teams and administrators.

**Summary**

Educators are faced each day with challenges that include academic performance, behavior issues, and social issues that affect the daily functions of a classroom. Gone are the days when the teacher followed the scope and sequence of a proprietary program. As teachers and schools navigate through the shift to an accountability model that is more rigorous and demanding, the need for more positive behavior modification systems
is ever increasing. These behavior modification systems are embedded in the curriculum at schools with the goal and mission to increase student achievement. Many research studies have been conducted to provide explanations and justifications to support the theory that fewer behavior interruptions can produce higher academic achievement for the problematic student as well as the classroom as a whole. The trend to follow a reward-based system in lieu of a punitive approach to a behavior matrix is growing.

This study examined teacher perceptions of the positive behavior intervention support concept to determine if there is a relationship between the perceptions and the implementation process for their classroom and school. Through the data collected, an analysis of the teachers’ perceptions of their administrator’s role in PBIS was also conducted to determine if a relationship exists that affects the implementation of the program.

This study involved a range of school districts currently using the positive behavior intervention supports at different levels of implementation. Each district possesses a plan of implementation and training that meets the needs of the students who are enrolled at their schools. There are no other factors such as socio-economic status, size of district, or the ratings as earned through the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The success of any program is highly dependent upon the degree to which the program and its implementation process is supported by the participants. In education, many programs are promises of immediate success; therefore many packages are approved by school districts where the focus is solely on the outcome. The process is lost and the essential elements are forgotten. Students are the priority in education, yet they are not the participants in the packages presented, bought and used. The teacher is the primary participant in curriculum. It is by the teacher that all programs are executed.

This study examined the existence of a relationship between teacher perception of PBIS and the implementation process. It also analyzed the presence of a relationship between teacher perception of the administrator’s role and the implementation process. To inform this study, several areas of pertinent research were synthesized and are reviewed throughout this chapter. In the first section, a synopsis and description of PBIS is provided, along with the integrated elements of PBIS. This section concludes with a brief history of the conceptual development of positive behavioral support systems used in education. The second section contains information regarding the implementation process, followed by a discussion of the tools and implements used for evaluation of fidelity of implementation. Then, literature regarding training supports and professional development is presented. Lastly, the role of district and campus administration is discussed. The outcomes, both desired and achieved, associated with PBIS are reviewed. Embedded in the review is an examination of literature that reflects the change necessary for education institutions to employ this strategy. Throughout this review of published
literature, several researchers identify best practices within PBIS and school-wide and district initiatives.

Theoretical Framework

Increased student performance in academics drives instruction. This teaching is developed through standards-based instruction for all students to achieve success. Parallel to the drive for effective instruction is the need for effective classroom management techniques. There is an increased need for systematic behavioral modification strategies to allow those students who experience behavioral challenges to function within a classroom. These intervention models are usually designed for whole group management. Best practices in behavior management systems are becoming comparable to best practices in instructional approaches. PBIS offers a systematic approach to behavioral modification through data analysis and goal setting to best meet students’ needs.

To accommodate success in the PBIS implementation process, knowledge of teacher perception is critical. The theory that drives this study is the relationship between teacher perception and the role of administration to the overall success of the implementation model. Following guidelines as recommended by the developers of PBIS and analyzing academic outcomes does not answer the question regarding the perception of teachers on a shift in behavior management policies from a punitive-based system to a goal-based and reward system to adjust and modify student behavior.

Description of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS)

Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) is best described by George Sugai and Robert Horner (2008), two of the leaders in the field, as a system that can be characterized as a whole-school approach emphasizing effective systematic and
individualized behavior interventions for achieving social and learning outcomes, while preventing problem behaviors. They also indicate that the teaching and learning environment must be created to model, teach, and support appropriate behaviors to ultimately prevent the incidence of rule-breaking behaviors (Sugai & Horner, 2008). It can be theorized as a framework in which predictable problem behaviors are identified by school personnel; the staff then determines feasible strategies to provide interventions to reduce and reform these behaviors. Along with the strategies, a purposeful system of data collection and analysis is used to effectively evaluate the desired outcomes with plans for redirecting or improving the strategies. The collection and analysis of data is critical to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies (Scott, Rosenberg, & Borgmeier, 2010). PBIS is a broad set of research-based strategies to develop a school environment that prompts positive behavioral expectations that emulate respect for all students. The behaviors are expected and supported by society as applicable to all students and citizens in school and social situations (Rosen, 2005). The behavioral expectations are taught directly and unequivocally to all students throughout a school year, thus creating a culture of high expectations. The students are acutely aware of what behaviors are expected of them at all times. In a PBIS environment, students are often recognized for achieving the appropriate behaviors.

PBIS was developed from the theories rooted in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). ABA has a foundation in behaviorism based upon the work of behavior theorists such as Albert Bandura and B. F. Skinner (Johnston et al., 2006). Todd and Morris (1995) reveal that Skinner was a behaviorist who developed the theory of operant and classical conditioning. His theory is founded upon extrinsic factors, such as positive rewards and punitive responses. This research relates that the frequency of a behavior
increases due to positive reinforcement of favorable stimuli. Skinner’s (1974) theory of operant conditioning, which expanded the classic stimulus-response model to include antecedent events and reinforcing consequences, has played a foundational role in modern behavioral psychology. Modern behavioral psychology can be described as the systematic extension of Skinner’s principles of operant conditioning to problems and issues of social significance (Baer, Wolf, & Risley, 1968). ABA contributes to the theory of positive behavior support by allowing the theoretical outline for changes in behavior. This leads to the foundation of PBIS where positive behavior supports solicit favorable response through academic or social performance, serving as the basis of responsive behaviors to a controlled stimulus. PBIS mimics Bandura’s (1971) social learning theory, in which he indicates that people learn from one another through observing then imitating the modeled behaviors. The combination of these two theories allow principles of positive behavior support systems to be used to expose students to desired personal, social, and academic outcomes.

PBIS is an integration of inclusive systems for improvement among all stakeholders across all school contexts. It is an expansion from classroom behavior management to an environmental and cultural change affecting students and staff (Bradshaw & Elise, 2011). According to Oscher, Bear, Sprague, and Doyle (2010) positive behavior frameworks contain a goal to decrease problem behaviors that occur in schools and classrooms and should develop assimilated support systems for all stakeholders in settings that include communities, schools, classrooms, and families. They also state the evidence is clear in which a system of school-wide positive behavior supports can prevent many problems that typically arise in school settings (Osher et al., 2010). The overarching goal is to respond to a diminishing social culture by empowering
the students to become a more positive and responsible society through the instruction of socially accepted behaviors. McIntosh, Filter, Bennett, Ryan, and Sugai, (2010) contend the main goal of implementing a positive behavior intervention system is to change the current school environment, allowing for students to be exposed to a greater number of proactive factors and to reduce their exposure to common risk factors. PBIS systems vary from school to school, but coherently include practices, processes, procedures, and evidence-based interventions that offer a framework for accomplishing efficient and effective approaches to prevent those behaviors prior to the negative behaviors affecting the climate and culture of the schools (Sugai & Horner, 2008).

PBIS is based upon a three tier process as an integral part of Response to Intervention (RTI). RTI is defined as the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions to meet the students’ needs with consistent progress monitoring to make decisions regarding changes in instruction and/or achievement of set goals based on the students’ responses to interventions (Batsche et al., 2006). The three tiers include a universal goal for all students to have access to a quality curriculum and instruction. This is considered Tier 1. Tier 1 includes all students with behavioral expectations defined and taught and a reward system established. This universal level is designed to meet the needs of 80-90% of all students through combined preventative and proactive measures (Sugai & Horner, 2009). This goal is to reduce the number of new problem behaviors that might occur during typical daily functioning.

Tier 2 includes goals for a targeted group, comprising individuals identified through data as needing additional support and who would benefit from evidence-based interventions. This level of interventions targets the group of students at risk of displaying challenging behavioral problems. These interventions are quickly accessed,
highly efficient, flexible, and are designed to bring about swift improvement (Hawken & Horner, 2003). PBIS theorizes that 10-15% of students require Tier 2 level interventions to be successful in schools. This tier involves school support personnel that include school psychologists, counselors, and other behavioral specialists. Progress monitoring is aggressive to identify at-risk students (Crone, Horner, & Hawken, 2006).

Tier 3 establishes goals and interventions for individual students who display behaviors that require additional attention (Sandomierski, Kincaid, & Algozzine, 2007). At Tier 3, an in-depth analysis of data is conducted and additional individualized plans for supporting the desired outcomes are developed. This level is provided to students who experience highly intensive behavioral problems. All interventions are personalized to meet the behavioral and social needs of each student at this level of mediation. PBIS predicts that 1-5% of students require this level of behavioral interventions and guidance (Sugai & Horner, 2009).

Anderson-Ketchmark and Alvarez (2010) specify the differences between RTI and PBIS with the comparison of both as being represented by a three-tiered model as just discussed, but RTI addresses both academic and behavioral interventions. PBIS delivers a continuum of services that can be provided to address behaviors on a framework of prevention and intervention (Anderson-Ketchmark & Alvarez, 2010). PBIS is also considered to be a service delivery model where the goal is focused on school culture and climate. It is sometimes confused with RTI, which is structured on an early identification and intervention process for identifying students with specific learning disabilities (Bradley, Danielson, & Hallahan, 2002).

The framework of PBIS serves as the foundation of the system that allows for schools to build their programs around the elements that can allow for fidelity of
implementation. Throughout the literature there are various core elements of a framework for a successful PBIS policy representing the needs of a school. Sugai and Horner (2009) in their outline of the theory emphasize the following elements:

1. Data collection for decision making that will determine the context of behaviors and measures to monitor progress towards goals
2. Measurable outcomes supported and evaluated by the data that are determined from information by the organizational team
3. Practices with evidences of effectiveness in achieving the desired outcomes and adaptability to the implementation
4. Systems of organizational supports that efficiently and effectively support application of the practice for accurate and sustained implementation which included data-based adaptations.

McIntosh et al. (2010) identified the three core features of PBIS as the integration of practices, data, and systems to achieve desired outcomes; the application of these integrated practices and procedures across all environments within a school setting; and a continuum of behavioral supports for all students in whichever realm the data indicates a need. Osher et al. (2010) condenses the processes of PBIS into three main concepts which are standard in the framework. These three themes are prevention, multi-tiered support, and data-based decision making.

In 2010, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) released an implementation blueprint that outlines the key elements necessary for successful implementation. This blueprint outlines the importance of the key elements as identified by Sugai and Horner (2009) and stresses the importance of using a framework approach for intervention practices based on empirical evidence of successful implementation of
PBIS. It is the goal of the blueprint to provide schools with research-based supports that will serve as the catalyst for prompting and promoting the accurate, durable, and expanded use of this framework for all students at the individual, classroom, school-wide, and societal levels. Early literature offered five core themes of PBIS, which include a focus on the social and academic success through the culture of the whole school, an emphasis on prevention of problem behaviors, directly teaching behavioral expectations to all students, use of a three-tiered model for a continuum of support for all students, and data collection and analysis for decision making purposes (Freeman et al., 2006). This early research documents the importance of school culture and the organizational health of a campus being a catalyst for academic growth and success. Bradshaw et al. (2008) conducted research over a three year period on the impact of PBIS in 37 randomized elementary schools with longitudinal analyses on data from over 2,000 staff members. The results indicated that changes in the organizational health of a school are important indicators that the PBIS prevention model could in fact be a mediator of the positive effects of PBIS on academic performance (Bradshaw et al., 2008).

PBIS is identified as a collaborative effort to develop behavioral interventions. PBIS allows the collaborative opportunities for a school to build a vision and culture by a collective commission to focus on outcomes, practices, structures, and data to direct the development and growth of a school-wide, specialized, and individual program with consistent support (Horner, Sugai, Todd, & Lewis-Palmer, 2005). School culture has been identified in recent research as a vehicle for creating a school learning environment in which the academic achievement of students grows at greater levels. In a study done by MacNeil, Prater, and Bush (2009) in schools in Texas, significant differences were found between schools rated Exemplary and Recognized (as measured by the State of
Texas Accountability Rating System) using the Organizational Health Inventory (OHI). The school ratings were compared on the 10 dimensions of school climate using the OHI. The study indicated that students enrolled in schools with healthy learning environments scored higher on standardized tests than schools rated as Recognized and Acceptable. (MacNeil et al., 2009).

The framework of PBIS has specific defining characteristics. According to a number of researchers, the most important is student outcomes, as they serve as the foundation for practice selection, data collection, and intervention evaluations. They include academic and social results, individual and small group performance, and are evaluated on their educational and social value and importance (McIntosh et al., 2010; McIntosh et al., 2008). Another strong characteristic of PBIS is the adoption of research and evidence-based practices that are organized to support all students across all school systems, which include school-wide, non-classroom activities, classroom behaviors, and individual student routines. These practices are based upon the needs of the school population, along with the mission and vision for student achievement (Eber, Sugai, Smith, & Scott, 2002).

A critical element of the characteristics of PBIS and RTI process is the establishment of a continuum of behavior support practices and systems. According to Sugai and Horner (2009), these practices must be integrated with procedures that follow the elements of PBIS. These procedures include the universal screening, monitoring of collected data, decision making based on data, and analysis of student outcomes. Fidelity of implementation and embedded and continuous professional development ensure systems-based competence for relevant participation. This characteristic, according to Sugai et al., (2010), is directed by policy, leadership and appropriate funding.
Throughout the research, the effective use of relevant data is a critical characteristic and element of PBIS. Student behavioral data that is analyzed must comply with the established goals by leadership teams. The data should be collected, analyzed, and reviewed often to expedite decision making for policies and interventions that support the fulfillment of policies and goals (Sugai & Horner, 2002a).

Luiselli et al., (2005) investigated the effects of a positive behavior support system used as a whole school system to determine the relationship between discipline problems and academic outcomes in an urban elementary school. PBIS was designed and implemented. The data was collected over multiple school years to research the sustainability of a positive behavior support system. The target data was any change in disciplinary data/referrals and results from standardized academic testing. This study was accomplished in the earlier years of the positive behavior trend that has grown incredibly since the study was finished. Additional studies are able to provide evidence and descriptions of success and of PBIS in a variety of settings, but especially in the reduction of punitive disciplinary outcomes (Anderson & Kincaid, 2005; Barrett et al., 2008; Sugai & Horner, 2009).

The Implementation Process

Review of literature associated with PBIS influencing the decrease in problematic behaviors and increasing academic performance is abundant (Horner et al., 2009, Nelson, Martella, & Garland, 1998; Simonsen et al., 2008). These studies on the effectiveness of PBIS analyze the effectiveness of the program itself with limited focus on the implementation process and reasons for negative growth in a change in behaviors. The trend of positive behavior intervention programs is continually on the increase as the immediate need is identified (Kincaid, Childs, Blase, & Wallace, 2007). Aligning the
goal of creating change by adjusting and modifying school expectations to influence social behaviors and academic increases is seemingly well-received by the schools due to the popularity of the concept. The components and implementation process of PBIS are clear, and the evaluation instruments have been developed and tested, allowing a systematic method and framework.

It is recommended by Sugai and Horner (2002b) that at least 80% of the school faculty and staff are in support of PBIS prior to any implementation to allow the likelihood of its success. Muscott et al., (2004b) state that school-wide support from both faculty and school staff is identified as a critical component in the implementation process. It is clear in their research that without faculty and administrative buy-in the attempt is certain to fail. This support system is fulfilled through a leadership team that serves as the vehicle for implementation efforts. Establishing a leadership team must be accomplished prior to initiating any PBIS activities (George & Kincaid, 2008). This leadership team must include stakeholders with broad representation from members of special education, regular education, families, community mental health professionals, and the administration. By grouping representation of all stakeholders, the team holds the ability to characterize any concern with problematic behaviors and teaching pro-social behaviors to the students (OSEP 2004).

The leadership team, along with stakeholders, should receive training and consultation with any professionals involved, including district coaches and any others involved with behavioral support expertise (Handler et al., 2007). The overarching goal of the leadership team is to deliver training relating to all aspects of the PBIS model, which include assessing, developing, implementing, managing, evaluating, and regrouping throughout the data collection process to provide the needed interventions to
all students (OSEP, 2004). Handler et al. (2007) report in their research that a commitment from the team members should be genuine, with the understanding of the time commitment accompanying leadership team membership. It is reported that the team effectively spends 40-50 hours for planning and development of the PBIS system the first year alone. It is also reported that after the first year of implementation a minimum of two hours per month is needed to meet, plan, reflect on, and assess the implementation process and practices (Handler et al., 2007).

Sugai and Horner (2002a) suggests this leadership team establish a one to three year timeline of activities that include measurable goals and outcomes based upon data provided by staff to determine the school’s needs. This action plan must be developed with an implementation timeline to include training for staff with ongoing resources for support and an element for collecting and analyzing data to reinforce the established goals. Compliance with established components of the PBIS framework is necessary to increase the fidelity of implementation for a successful goal (Sugai & Horner, 2002b).

Horner et al., (2005) recommend six critical conditions in the implementation process for the probability of a successful experience. Lohrmann et al., (2008) indicate the necessity of understanding staff perspective of these factors when developing the program. The factors include a team-based approach and school personnel that present a reflection of the school climate and work together to establish a strong leadership role. Organization and a commitment to the use of data to drive decision making is necessary for an effective leadership team. Training of the leadership team is essential for a strong staff understanding of the overall concept. The implementation process is a critical component to the success of PBIS, as it is the most effective and meaningful development and training of the leadership team (Sugai & Horner, 2002b). The team
should comprise a group of staff members who are respected by colleagues and are able to effectively communicate the foundational concepts of PBIS to the school staff.

According to Lewis, Barrett, Sugai, and Horner (2010), there are two types of leadership coaches that offer technical and direct assistance to school teams. External coaches are specialists with behavioral expertise and support the administrative and teaching staff. Internal coaches are recommended to serve as the liaison between the PBIS initiative and school personnel. These coaches should have a content knowledge of effective instruction, behavior and classroom management strategies that motivate students, use of data analysis systems, and a working knowledge of ABA methodology (Lewis et al., 2010). The coaches should have been through sufficient training to be able to successfully develop and implement PBIS systems and practices (Scott and Martinek, 2006). For effective coaching capacity, George and Kincaid (2008) suggest the following characteristics of both coaches: They should have the freedom to move across campuses, have an in-depth understanding of PBIS theories and practices, have the ability to effectively facilitate teams, serve as facilitator and work as an active member of all teams, be the main contact and connection between staff and administrators, report all data and information, and collect all assessment data. These duties can be split between the internal and external coaches. The leadership team can control which duties each coach has to serve the school campus and the district level efforts (Handler et al., 2007).

One of the significant components for the overall PBIS programming efforts is the collection and analysis of data. The leadership team must be cognizant of the importance of data when developing the action plan. It is a responsibility of the leadership team to devise a plan for collection and analysis of student behavioral data on a continual basis so that the predetermined goals can be modified as necessary. A
summarization process can disseminate relevant data for the teams to analyze and serve to promote data-based decision making (Sugai & Horner, 2002b).

The use of data can easily predict the success or failure of PBIS action plans (Horner, Sugai, & Todd, 2001). Before the plan for desired outcomes can be fully established, the source and purpose of collected data should be determined. According to Sugai and Horner (2002), the most valid form of information regarding behaviors is the office discipline referral (ODR). This form serves as the illustration of the involvement of three stakeholders surrounding a behavior. It is an interaction between the student who exhibits the behavior, the staff member who is the witness of the occurrence, and an administrator who evaluates and acts upon the circumstance. The administrators serve as influential stakeholders in the process of the reaction to the behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2002a).

According to the Office of Special Education Programs Blueprint for Implementation (2004), the ODR is the foundation for the PBIS data collection process. It also serves as a critical tool in managing student behavior through the appropriate interventions established for those individual students. Clonan, McDougal, and Clark (2007) report that ODRs serve as constant barometers of student behaviors that drive the development and monitoring of interventions that are useful and effective. Those students who are unresponsive to universal interventions will have a history of repeated ODRs, which serves as an indicator for the leadership teams which interventions are appropriate in transitioning inappropriate behaviors to the goals that have been established. Horner et al. (2001) state that regularly collected data that is reviewed and analyzed intermittently will create problems for the overall success of PBIS. Data analysis should be an efficient glimpse into student performance on a scheduled basis to
identify growth and weakness. According to Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, and Vincent (2004) school-wide information systems are able to deliver an analysis of school-wide as well as individual student behavior to allow for directed decisions to enhance the development of individualized, targeted, and effective positive behavior support systems. The data can provide information for leadership teams to implement school-wide strategies based on the time of day, location, and frequency of the occurrence. Using the data can also allow staff to implement pre-implementation strategies leading to preventive discipline programs. Data analysis allows for academic and behavior monitoring. The PBIS model uses data to provide students with a climate and opportunity to succeed both academically and behaviorally (Anderson, 2002).

Sugai and Horner (2006) indicate in all of their research their findings that PBIS efforts will be successful and viable, sustainable, and will grow into successful platforms for behavioral reforms when the professional development activities are direct, ongoing, and inclusive of all staff members. This training must be held on more than professional development meetings held sporadically throughout the school year. Handler et al. (2007) state that training and technical support are critical for the successful implementation of the positive support practices by individual schools, administrators, and leadership teams.

A thorough implementation process should go through five phases of development and execution. Lewis, et al., (2010) designate these phases as exploration, installation, initial implementation, full implementation, and sustaining. Through each of these phases, they recommend that all professional development sessions be connected to these phases. Another component of implementation recommended by Horner et al. (2005) is the designation of time and personnel for the implementation process to be
adequately and effectively planned. One of the most significant factors is the allocation of funds to support the programing efforts for student buy-in, staff development activities and training. This is a component that is recognized by Horner et al. (2005) as important but not defining.

Tools for Implementation Evaluation

The PBIS model is designed to meet the needs of a community of learners to overcome social and behavioral disabilities that impede academic growth. With the needs of the student population at the heart of its development, all frameworks for improvement must be measured to determine the level of effectiveness. There are a number of tools used to assess the effectiveness of the PBIS framework. The main tool used most commonly is the School Evaluation Tool (SET).

SET is used to evaluate the fidelity of implementation of PBIS framework. It serves as an evaluation system to determine if the PBIS framework is deemed successful based on data gathered through multiple sources. These sources include a comprehensive review of data, products associated with the PBIS system, interviews with staff and students, and evaluator observations. The SET was designed to serve as a research-validated implement to assess the features of a school-wide positive behavior intervention system across an academic school year (Todd et al., 2012). In the Implementation Manual (Todd et al., 2012) the SET is used for several determinations. They include determining the extent to which PBIS is already in effect in schools, if training and technical assistance efforts directed the fidelity of implementation, and if the procedures used with PBIS are affecting a positive change in safety and social culture, thus reducing violent behavior in schools. The evaluation instrument contains questions that evaluate critical areas. These areas include (a) expectations defined, (b) behavioral expectations,
(c) continuing efforts, (d) the procedure for designing and revising procedures, and (e) the comparison of year to year endeavors in the capacity of PBIS. SET results are handled to assess features that are in place, to determine annual goals for school-wide effective behavior support, to evaluate ongoing efforts toward school-wide behavior support, to design and revise procedures as needed, and to compare efforts toward school-wide effective behavior support from year to year. (Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, and Horner, 2001)

It is suggested by Sadler and Sugai (2009) that a score of 80% or higher on the Total Teaching Expectations portion of this implement will indicate that the school is successfully sustaining PBIS. The components of the evaluation address specific features that affect the overall programming that include a definition of three to five school-wide expectations for appropriate behavior, the active and concurrent teaching of those expectations, and how teachers and staff monitor and recognize students for conforming to and practicing the behavioral expectations. There must be an element of correcting the problem behaviors that includes behavioral consequences. Data collection and the active, supportive role of an administrator are included in the evaluations. Support for PBIS at the district level should be in the forms of training, establishing policies that endorse the safety of schools and staff, and the effective gathering and reporting of difficult behavior patterns (Horner et al., 2004).

The multiple sources of information that an evaluator needs to use are the discipline handbook, school improvement goals, a developed action plan for meeting the school-wide behavior goals, and any instructional materials used to teach social skills. An implementation timeline is needed for the evaluation process as well. Behavioral incident summaries or reports that include ODRs, and suspension/expulsion reports, and
any other information related to behavior concerns are included as well (Sugai et al., 2001).

Upon the completion of all programing products, observations, and interviews the information is scored on a 0-2 scale. Results are indicated as a percent implemented on each of the seven critical features and range from 0% to 100%. Schools scoring 80% or higher on both the Average of Features and Taught Features are considered to be implementing an effective school-wide system (Muscott et al., 2004b).

Horner et al. (2004) conducted a study with the SET, using primarily elementary and some middle schools. A number of analyses with differing sample sizes were conducted to test reliability and validity of the SET. These results indicated effective internal consistency, test re-test reliability, and interobserver agreement.

Researchers utilized the SET to measure the implementation level of PBIS in a school district in Oregon. The school district consisted of approximately 12,000 students in 10 elementary schools, three middle schools, two high schools, and one comprehensive middle school and high school alternative program. The SET scores were collected over five years, and the schools increased the overall scores from 79% to 86% (Sadler & Sugai, 2009).

In another study in the state of Maryland, researchers looked at PBIS implementation in 37 elementary schools. SET was used to measure implementation effectiveness. Of the 37 schools, 21 received training and 16 did not over a five year period. After year two of the study, 18 out of 21 trained schools met the 80% implementation standard on the SET, while only three of the untrained schools met the 80% implementation standard. In the report, most of the untrained schools steadily
scored in the 30%-50% range for implementation success on the SET. (Bradshaw et al., 2008)

Training and Support Systems

According to Algozzine et al. (2010), to achieve a high quality level of implementation, the process must begin with professional development and a concentrated level of support. Training from outside sources tends to lead staff members toward a short-term level of motivation. Experts leading the training are believed by PBIS experts Sugai and Horner (2006) to assume the staff will be motivated and supported to readily participate in a new program with accuracy and fidelity for a long term. This type of training does not prove to be successful long term because the training does not guide and support the staff with information and resources that are needed for sustainability of the established goals for the students involved (OSEP, 2004).

Lindsey (2008) conducted a qualitative study to analyze the complications associated with the process of introducing new ideas and procedures. The study concerned the ideas of innovation diffusion to PBIS by examining characteristics known to impact adoption of a new idea for common use and implementation. It was determined through the interviews that effective training was an advantage in the application of the new policies. Given the success of the training efforts, the study also indicated a negative component regarding the amount of time necessary to effectively implement the policies of PBIS in addition to the instructional responsibilities. Ninety percent of those sampled indicated they participated in summer training for the analysis of data to determine secondary and tertiary level interventions. In the course of interviews, it was found the majority felt that teacher-directed behavior management for problem behaviors was more
advantageous for the student than the office referral systems used in the past (Lindsey, 2008).

Bambara et al., (2009) investigated the perceived barriers and enablers to implementing and sustaining positive behavior supports across five groups of stakeholders. It was discovered through this study that specific factors covering themes that included ongoing professional development and administrative leadership support, aided or impeded the process of implementation and continued practice. The training efforts and administrative support developed the school culture in the beliefs and support for PBIS. Many staff members felt that the school cultures were unsupportive, causing implementation efforts to be extremely difficult due to the lack of commitment by staff members to participate in the training and agree to implement the program. Bambara et al. (2009) discovered the school personnel rejected the idea of positive support due to several factors, including their beliefs regarding punitive consequences. LaVigna and Donnellan (2000) are careful to distinguish the difference between discipline and punishment. They specify the difference as discipline as pertinent to the whole picture of expectations and requirements that is established with or for students, and punishment as the penalty imposed upon a student that can be considered harsh.

As the need for examination into the source of student behaviors and a specific response and intervention agenda to provide a transformation of student discipline practices, school culture has become an integral part of the PBIS implementation process. School culture encompasses the norms, ritual and behaviors, values and beliefs that are the foundational makeup of a school (Peterson, 2002). When the school culture is determined to be a negative factor towards growth, implementation of PBIS may be affected. At that time, a shift to analyze student-student relationships, student-teacher
relationships, and teacher-teacher relationships can identify cultural patterns that may be related to student discipline issues (Bal, Thorius, & Kozleski, 2012). Through an examination of these cultural patterns and concerns, a school is able to identify problems and forge solutions to reform school culture. Through the examinations of these cultural histories, institutional traditions, and putting into action reformation, the school will utilize critical factors in identifying types of behaviors and developing strategies for a successful shift to a positive school culture (Kozleski & Huber, 2010).

Bambara et al., (2009) also discovered the attitude of untrained staff became frustrated as they perceived the PBIS team members not addressing an unacceptable behavior, rather turning it around to recognize something the student should be doing as a responsible student. This led to the implication of team members as not doing their job, just sugar coating the situation. These same teachers indicated the importance of educating the school staff and community of stakeholders as to the principles of a PBIS. This includes the goal of teaching and modeling the desired behaviors. The majority of the staff members in this qualitative study suggested that general school training regarding the environmental influences of inappropriate behaviors and prevention strategies for the students would clarify the program goals and components. The administrators indicated that revealing the process of success to the staff would allow them to focus on the purpose of PBIS (Bambara et al., 2009).

In another aspect of the Bambara et al. (2009) research, the lack of experience in data analysis, a limited number of trained team members, and a specific need for specialized training past the initial period of implementation indicated a weakness of implementation. Sugai and Horner (2006) recommend a three to five year
implementation time frame. In Bambara et al.’s study, the respondents indicated a need for ongoing training past the first week of school.

Freeman et al. (2006) recommend that prior to implementation, the key elements must be fully understood by the planning team members. This is considered an investigative phase. Most importantly, the planning team must understand the core features to allow for fidelity of implementation across the continuum. The bottom line goal is measurable student outcomes. The development of plans for teaching teachers how to analyze school data, teaching and rewarding the desired behaviors, and supporting the staff’s efforts on a paradigm of change in behavior management procedures is a critical task during the exploration phase.

LaVigna and Donnellan (2000) affirm that the practice of solving problematic behaviors can be easily achieved through positive strategies rather than punitive measures, which employs negative consequences for inappropriate behaviors. It is believed that alternatives to punishment should include interventions that comprise recognition and/or rewards for the practice of appropriate behaviors along with consequences for inappropriate conduct. It is important for the success of any positive behavior recognition effort that educators be reminded of the difference between discipline and punishment. It would be beneficial for teachers to model discipline and provide understanding to allow students to develop the skills necessary for decision making in response to the positive behaviors being taught.

Lewis et al. (2010) suggest training should be offered beyond the walls of the school. Community stakeholders including parents and community leaders should be apprised of the district’s plans for the application of the behavior modification process. This will allow for the community to be aware of the mission the school district is using
to develop citizenship of the future. It will also allow for stronger community relations and a larger community role in the model.

Teacher Perception

Adults enter the education world as a vocation based upon a love for children. It can easily be said that entering the teaching profession is no longer based upon a desire for summer vacations. Our society has produced a generation of children who need positive adult presence in their lives. The emotional status of a child can sometimes depend on a teacher for support, guidance, and accountability. The social well-being of children is critical to school and life success. A child has one chance to be a child and experience the developmental years in a foundational process that affects the entire life episode. Educators can be much more effective in the role of guidance counselor if they understand the concept of attachment. Attachment is ingrained to parents and family. Our schools are serving the role as a primary safe haven in today’s world of social unrest at an alarming rate. Students’ attachment to family and school is associated to higher academic achievement. Secure attachment is linked to successful models of emotional regulation, social skills, and the ease with which students will take academic risks. This includes their sense of belonging and perception of their membership in the social order of the school. For students who experience behavior problems, the sense of attachment can influence their behavior. The role of PBIS in these scenarios could possibly make a huge difference. Attachment is a term depicting the relationship that empowers a student. Bergin and Bergin (2009) indicate that attachments to the school experience directly affect student success in school.

Teachers’ perspectives about behavior are critical in implementing behavior management policies. Tillery, Varjas, Meyers, and Collins (2010) conducted a study
analyzing teacher perspectives of intervention strategies and behavior in an elementary school. They discovered that teachers focused on individual student behaviors rather than school-wide plans. It is interesting to note that in this study the teachers characterized behavior as a developmental perspective and an internal pathology that is classified as a disorder. It was determined through this qualitative study that teachers considered themselves as having strong impacts on student behavior and even indicated the use of positive reinforcement strategies, but were unfamiliar with the foundations of RTI and PBIS even though the training sessions had been offered and attended (Tillery et al., 2010).

The literature presents a gap in research regarding teacher perspective on the framework of PBIS. Kincaid et al. (2007) conducted a study and found a high number of barriers to success including buy-in, consistency of programming, district support, and training. Lohrmann et al., (2008) investigated what might cause school staff resistance and found that a collection of social contextual variables and personal beliefs impeded staff buy-in. These beliefs included lack of perceived need for PBIS, encroachment on personal autonomy and control of individual and classroom behavior management policies. Riding the wave of education reform, teachers have built a habit of resistance to another change in the process of educating children. So many initiatives are presented with urgency for implementation; many teachers never conceptualize another new program as a vehicle for academic gains by their students. Handler et al. (2007) found that a staff must have a working understanding of the core principles of PBIS and experience ongoing, effective communication among all team members involved. Chitiyo and Wheeler (2009) directed a study where teachers indicated they were not supportive of PBIS due to the overwhelming time requirements, lack of training to fully
understand the whole picture, and nominal resources. It was also noted that a lack of administrative support and family collaboration for the program contributed to the barriers for successful implementation. Some additional barriers expressed were lack of adequate expertise in teaching behaviors and the task of collecting and interpreting data to formulate sound decisions on policies and practices (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2009). In the study by Lohrmann et al. (2008), similar arguments were prevalent in explaining barriers to success. It is interesting to find that the disenfranchisement of participating staff members by the skeptics and philosophical differences in staff opinions regarding the program caused significant resistance to overall buy-in.

Following the guidelines as outlined in the implementation blueprint (OSEP, 2004), at least 80% of staff must agree to and participate in the PBIS implementation process to be deemed successful. The occurrence of less than 80% participation is not an absolute indication of failure, however Handler et al. (2007) found that schools can be successful if a dedicated and committed administrator produces positive outcomes for PBIS models even with less than 80% buy-in. It is also indicated by Handler et al. that a successful program that has a substantial amount of obstacles imposed by participants can build energy for a movement against the resistance and gain buy-in as outcomes are observed. It is clearly stressed that barriers and impediments to successful implementation and participation by staff must be addressed by administration. It is recommended by Chitiyo and Wheeler (2009) to overcome the barriers by providing professional development and training activities to promote the opportunities for dialogue and improved teacher perception that will increase buy-in and support from teachers.

Flannery et al. (2009) instigated a study regarding lessons learned in implementing PBIS in a high school setting. The results were focused on the complex
nature of a high school setting. The results on teacher buy-in can be analyzed throughout any size campus with any age students. It was found that factors inhibiting and enhancing implementation were similar to elementary and middle school studies. These factors included staff buy-in, administrative support, and the uncertainty of the rules and expectations.

Studies have been conducted and the results indicate the implementation of PBIS has been effective in increasing the organizational health of school (Bradshaw et al., 2008). Bradshaw et al. (2008) found that teachers’ perceptions of the organizational health of their schools were analyzed following the implementation of PBIS. The results indicated that teachers felt the overall school culture and organizational health had improved since implementation. Their indication was a higher level of positive interactions and a stronger sense of commitment to their students and the process of achieving higher academic outcomes. With the indication that teachers have such a positive effect on students, it is equally important to examine the influences on teacher attitudes.

With the attention given to the importance of school culture and climate, fidelity of implementation of PBIS can have a positive effect on school culture and climate through an increased manifestation of positive behaviors. These positive behaviors indicate an increased level of student performance in academics, values, and overall satisfaction with the school community by all stakeholders (Cleary, 2011).

Research has been conducted to investigate teacher self-efficacy, but few studies have analyzed the relationship between PBIS and teacher self-efficacy. It can be assumed that with the successful effects PBIS has on student achievement and the overall organizational health of schools that implementing PBIS can positively affect teacher
self-efficacy. The specific training and instructional strategies for teachers to use in preventing problem behaviors and in developing increased organizational health within a classroom can lead to positive influences on teacher self-efficacy. Nelson (1996) examined PBIS schools and found their teachers held a higher sense of self-efficacy, as they indicated a higher ability to address disruptive behaviors and therefore, were more effective. In that study, data was not collected regarding the fidelity of implementation of PBIS, so the level of the implementation process at which the schools were involved is unknown.

Another study was completed by Ross and Horner (2007), who analyzed the effect of PBIS on teacher self-efficacy. Four middle schools participated in the study, two of which were implementing PBIS with high fidelity and two with low fidelity. The results indicated that implementation efforts were directly linked to teacher self-efficacy. The limitations of this study were the small sample size, all schools were implementing PBIS at some level, and the study therefore did not include schools not participating in the positive behavior model. The group of teachers was contained in a middle school, thus excluding the experience of elementary and high school teachers.

Kelm and McIntosh (2011) organized a study which included two schools implementing PBIS and three schools not implementing PBIS. The study examined the relationship between implementation of PBIS and teacher self-efficacy. The purpose of the study was to analyze the perception of teacher self-efficacy at PBIS and non-PBIS schools. It was determined that there is a significant difference between the self-efficacy of teachers at a PBIS school and those at a non-PBIS campus. This study has implications for teacher perception of PBIS as a whole, but differs in the sense that teacher self-efficacy relates the teacher’s opinions regarding their own ability to produce
higher academic results, and PBIS buy-in is reflective of a teachers’ opinion regarding the quality of the program itself. Following the research concerning PBIS, it can be determined that PBIS produces higher academic results at the lower levels of disruptive behavior, which in turn allows the teacher to spend more time and energy on instructional processes. This leads to an increased level of positive school culture and a more positive instructional environment, which in turn produces increased student academic engagement and achievement (Algozzine & Algozzine, 2007).

Jeffrey, McCurdy, Ewing, and Polis (2009) offer an alternative method to implementing a school-wide PBIS system. If the implementation process begins in the classroom on a class-wide level, then the possibility of a smoother transition to a school-wide PBIS system could possibly engage more teachers, creating a positive response to buy-in efforts. According to Sugai and Horner (2002b), buy-in by staff guides the success of implementation efforts.

The Administrator’s Role

Parallel to the accountability standards for schools, the job description for academic leadership has expanded as well. A building administrator can no longer rely on transactional leadership to manage the academic performance of students and instructional methods of the teachers. A principal is charged with the responsibility of knowing the academic levels of all children and making sure the teachers are teaching to that level to drive them forward. Additionally, a principal must provide the instructional leadership that is transformational to the overall success of students and teachers alike. The role of the building administrator in no longer “an inspector of teacher competence,” but is now a “facilitator of growth” (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 374). To follow the federal guidelines of The No Child Left Behind Act (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002), an
administrator must work with the teachers to develop behavioral interventions that are as accountable as instructional interventions. It is a standard component of a job description for a building administrator to develop the instructional capacity in the teachers that will create a school culture of educational responsibility. According to McKeveit and Braaksma (2008) a supportive administrator is a critical condition and an essential component for successful implementation. To further enable staff buy-in and support, leadership teams must anticipate barriers to the successful implementation process. The building administrator must represent the commitment to the PBIS efforts by actively being involved in all aspects of the PBIS model and embodying the strategies in daily professional activities, such as interacting with students and staff members. Additionally, the PBIS model can reflect school improvement plans established that sometimes present a well-written but failed plan of action. The recommendation to commit to the school-improvement goals is another recommendation by Horner et al. (2005). Furthermore, a written commitment to improve the overall academic endeavor requires an outline for an improvement to the climate of the school, and the PBIS model will serve as a vehicle of the improvement process. Cushing, Horner, and Barrier (2003) found that a part of school climate is the framework of how students and teachers relate to each other, that is, the student social climate, and this is defined as the social rules that direct the prompting, rewarding, or extinction of student behavior.

Principals and school leaders hold the ability to drive support or not in terms of a school-wide initiative. The creation of staff buy-in and support for the PBIS team lies solely with the administrator. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004), in agreement with the creators of PBIS, identified administrative support as a critical element to the success of PBIS and any other school enterprise. Administrators are the
main instrument in choosing a leadership team that can function effectively as PBIS coaches and drive the focus on specific goals (Sadler & Sugai, 2009).

In addition to the principal, the PBIS leadership team is solely responsible for the coordination of the implementation process (Blonigen et al., 2005). Sadler and Sugai (2009) indicate the ability of principals to support an effective implementation of PBIS can be significant. By participating in leadership team meetings, truly possessing buy-in for the program itself, and promoting data-based decision processes in their administrative duties they are delivering a message of support and providing a behavior model for the staff to observe and follow. Providing materials and resources for guidance in the development of a behavioral intervention curriculum will guarantee effective instructional practices and continued, sustained implementation (Sadler & Sugai, 2009).

The developers of PBIS conduct research that specifies the positive impacts that principals can have on the effectiveness of PBIS and its results. According to Sadler and Sugai (2009), PBIS teams have the ability to provide the teachers with several positive factors that affect the success of the program. Those factors include (a) a sense of meaning, in which the teachers believe the work is critical for student success, and (b) a sense of accomplishment and competency, as their confidence was built in their ability to understand how to perform the interventions. In addition, they found that there was a high level of impact, as they were given the leverage to take ownership in the process of the work. The teams were allowed to lead others, thereby offering the same leadership opportunities to teachers within their own classrooms. These results are contiguous with results attained on research on the power of teacher teamwork and collaboration (Sadler & Sugai, 2009).
One of the critical elements of PBIS is the focus on systems change within a school. To effectively shift practices that will support the goals and objectives of a positive behavioral intervention support system requires commitment by administrators, teachers, counselors, and includes clerical staff and custodians. The efforts put forth by school administrators to build capacity through the development of guiding principles, daily operating routines, offering physical, technical, and emotional supports, as well as the leading role of making data-based decisions is a precursor to the success or failure of the programs. The administrator must guide the team in developing operationally defined and measureable goals based on results from the data collected (Sugai, Horner, Fixsen, & Blase, 2010).

To add to the probability of success fully implementing PBIS, the administrators must work hard to cultivate staff buy-in. The risks are offering what can be inferred as an immediate fix with the idea that the intervention strategies must be developed with the students’ needs in mind. Strategies aligned to a strategic plan will keep the course focused and moving ahead. Using a process of teamwork and encouragement of teacher leadership, the staff will be able to make the connections from the policy to practice, and thereby not experience feelings of isolation when attempting to comply with the program guidelines (Kasper, 2005).

For the benefit of teacher buy-in, which should encourage the success of PBIS, the teachers must view the principal as one who involves the teaching staff in decision making for the desired outcomes. The development of school culture evolving around the PBIS framework should be representative of teachers’ opinions and recommendations.
With Flannery et al.’s (2009) findings that fewer than half of their respondents indicated they had plans to implement the positive support strategies, it was found that the main difficulty was a lack of administrative support.

Misconceptions abound through many school faculties. Cregor (2008) found that most of the difficulty experienced comes when there is a lack of consistency in a sustained effort throughout the school year. A task of changing the culture of a school is a mission that requires a pledge of support and endurance from all stakeholders. Along with administration, parents and support organizations within schools hold fundamental roles in the implementation process. A program is deemed successful when a minimum of 80% of teachers support the new goals. Administrative support is also crucial to the success of implementation (Cregor, 2008).

Researchers Lewis et al. (1998) found that an administrator in support of and actively participating in behavioral interventions fosters decreased instances of behavioral issues. Other factors discovered in that study regarding administrators indicated that continuous support of the leadership teams set a precedent for accountability. Faculty meetings and in-service training for the sole purpose of PBIS implementation issues were determined in the study to recommend further implications for research and practice to fulfill the ultimate goal of behavior management, which is to reduce problem behaviors and increase academic achievement (Lewis et al., 1998)

Summary

There is an abundance of literature on the positive effects of a systematic behavior intervention system on academic achievement. Skinner’s (1974) theory of operant conditioning is founded upon the existence of extrinsic influences such as positive rewards increasing a behavior due the favorable stimuli presented to the subject. The
Positive Behavior Intervention Support concept is based upon this theory. This chapter presented examples of research that pertain to this study.

Above all else in education, the people involved are the sources of success or failure. Teacher perception of a shift in behavior modification that condones positive behaviors instead of correcting negative behaviors can influence the success or failure of the program. With the implementation of No Child Left Behind (2002), schools are required to explore strategies that include all students and subgroups in a plan for successful academic experiences. The requirement to individualize instruction in the realm of academics and behavior has prompted a plethora of research on both the foundations and implications of PBIS and the implementation process. From the beginnings of PBIS as a design module for special education students, this concept has spread into the general education world to allow teachers to meet the needs of all students to yield a productive and educated society. The question is how teachers implement the system based upon their perceptions of the program itself. With teachers at the center of the instructional process, their perception is critical. To support the teachers’ efforts, the administrators must support the system as well. The literature regarding the two central factors of teacher and administration’s buy-in was limited.

It could be said that the popularity of a positive behavior support system is relatively new to the education world, but the program has been well established over the course of several decades. The research discovered regarding the positive aspects of a behavior modification program is easily available. The researcher did find studies that offered designs for improvement to the implementation process. With the number of schools adopting the model increasing, the recommendations for improvements to the program will also increase.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter contains information regarding the methods used to examine the proposed research questions. The researcher used data collected to determine if there is a relationship between teacher perceptions of a positive behavior support intervention system and the implementation of that program. In addition, the existence of a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of the role of administration on the implementation efforts put forth by the teachers were examined. The research questions are presented in this section, as well as the demographics of respondents. The instrumentation that was used is explained. The individual sections of the survey are explained. The process and procedures that were used to collect the data are presented. Both the independent and dependent variables are described. The method for discerning the data is discussed in this chapter. The instrument is attached as Appendix A.

Research Design

The design of this study was quantitative in the quest for a correlational analysis. This analysis was conducted upon receipt of the data. For this study, the following research questions were investigated: Is there a relationship between teacher perception of PBIS and the implementation process? Is there a relationship between teacher perception of the administrator’s role in PBIS and the implementation process? Is there a relationship between teacher perception and the administrator’s role in PBIS? The hypotheses for the study were as follows: There is a statistically significant relationship between teacher perceptions of PBIS and the implementation process. Also, there is a statistically significant relationship between teacher perceptions of the administrator’s
role in PBIS and the implementation process. In conjunction with the initial hypotheses, a third hypotheses was developed: There is a statistically significant relationship between teacher perceptions of PBIS and the role of administration.

The two independent variables were teacher perceptions of PBIS and teacher perceptions of the administrator’s role in PBIS. The dependent variable was the resulting effort the teachers put forth implementing the behavior system based upon their perceptions. The implementation process for the program was the named dependent variable, as that was a direct measurable effort. Although the effectiveness of the implementation and sustainability of PBIS were not variables, the success of the program was analyzed from teachers’ perspective. The variables addressed on the survey were the implementation process, teacher perception of the program frameworks, and the administrator’s role in the program. These factors were examined to determine whether there is a significant relationship among the variables upon the implementation of the program. With quantitative data as a factor to determine the success of PBIS, it was appropriate to utilize a similar approach in exploring the relationship between teacher perceptions and the implementation process utilized by those teachers.

A survey was used to collect the information. This survey was directed to teachers in public schools from Kindergarten through the eighth grade. The data was analyzed and presented in appropriate tables with explanations both narrative and graphic.

Participants

The participants in this study were certified public school teachers in a coastal county in the state of Mississippi. The researcher visited the selected schools with the goal of reaching different age groups from Kindergarten to eighth grade students. The
socio-economic status of the schools did not indicate a factor in selection for participation.

Instrumentation

The researcher utilized a self-designed instrument (Appendix A) containing questions that relate to the variables. It is titled Teacher Perceptions of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS). There are demographic questions regarding the experience and length of time at present school of the respondent. The only other demographic information requested is if the respondent currently serves on a PBIS team and the length of time PBIS has been in place at the present school. Each question was designed to initiate reflective thinking and to avoid the opportunity to give opinions. In the first section, questions one through eight are regarding the implementation framework. In the teacher perception segment, questions nine through 19 address the overall perception of PBIS and the effectiveness of this program. In the last section, questions numbered 20 through 25 are in reference to the role of administration in the execution of PBIS. The researcher collected, organized, and analyzed information pertaining to the participants’ perceptions regarding the PBIS framework and the administrator’s role along with the level of training and support provided with the program.

Prior to the survey being offered to participants, a copy of the survey was given to a PBIS leadership team in a school district chosen for the study. This leadership team served as a panel of experts to read the survey and offer face validity. Upon receipt of their recommendations and discussions, a pilot study was conducted with a group of teachers to examine reliability and validity. This group of teachers was staffed at one of the schools chosen for the study. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient test was utilized to test for reliability using current SPSS software. Table 1 below illustrates the
reliability results for the pilot study. Each of the reliability coefficients for the different sections of the survey were >.7 indicating the survey should produce reliable results.

Table 1

*Cronbach’s alpha Results for Pilot Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher perception</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator’s Role</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When developing the instrument, the researcher considered many aspects of the recommended support systems that are designed for a smooth transition in any type of shift in an educational practice. Barriers to any type of change in education were considered as well. The questions were phrased to avoid opportunities for complaints and personal opinions. Each question was phrased based on literature found on the research topic.

**Procedures**

The researcher solicited support for this study by personally contacting the superintendents (Appendix B) working within the National Institute for School Leadership cohorts. Following a verbal request for permission to conduct the survey, the researcher then sent a written request (Appendix C) for permission to conduct the study. Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study (Appendix D), the researcher coordinated with building administrators a schedule for delivery of the surveys to the respective campuses (Appendix E). The surveys were
retained at the school for a period not longer than three days. Surveys were also sent through the United States Postal Service to other schools with copies of the superintendents’ approval attached. Each survey had a note of consent (Appendix F), which explains the purpose of the study and a notice regarding the status of completing the survey as being strictly by choice as a volunteer. The notice included a clause that pledges anonymity. The completed surveys were held at the school office in a container until picked up by or returned by mail to the researcher. The surveys mailed to prospective participants included the same note of consent. The school was provided a postage-paid envelope for the purpose of returning the surveys to the researcher. Validity and reliability testing were performed on the instrument prior to it being made available to the participants in the study for gathering data.

Data Analysis

For this study, the dependent variable was the effort put forth by teachers in the implementation process of PBIS within their classroom and school. The independent variables were the perception of teachers on the behavior model itself and the manner of presentation and implementation by administration. Implementation refers to the initial development and the process by which the behavior management system is executed as a curricular program.

This study was a quantitative analysis using Pearson’s r Correlation. Data were disseminated and processed through SPSS for a statistical analysis to answer the research questions posed. The results are presented in table, graphic, and narrative representations as deemed appropriate.
Summary

This chapter presented the plan for a detailed statistical analysis to answer the research questions regarding the relationship between teacher perception of PBIS and the implementation process practiced by that teacher. The study exposed the existence of a relationship between teacher perception of the administrator’s role in PBIS and the implementation process achieved by the teacher. Using data collected from the questionnaire titled Teacher Perceptions of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS), the researcher was able to consider implications for enhanced practice of the behavior modification and management system and to analyze the success of a positive behavior intervention system using more than a breakdown of an analysis of behaviors exhibited by students. The participants were certified K-12 teachers in public schools in Mississippi that are currently using PBIS at their schools. They understood they were participating in the study on a strictly volunteer and confidential basis.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH RESULTS

Introduction

The data for this study were collected using a 25 question survey. This study was conducted in February 2014. Four public schools in Harrison County, Mississippi participated in the study. The respondents were teachers who worked at elementary and middle schools which employed the PBIS model at some level of implementation. Two hundred twenty-five surveys were delivered, and out of these 51.56% (116) of the teachers answered each question and returned the survey for analysis.

Descriptive Data

Descriptive statistics and frequencies for the data collected are presented in the tables below. Table 2 contains a breakdown of the years of experience of each participant, as well as the number of years the participants have been teaching at the present school. It is interesting to note that the data presented in this section indicates an opposing relationship between the years of experience teaching and the years at the present school. Among the participants, there is a higher percentage of teachers with 20+ years’ experience. The data relative to years of experience and the years at current schools indicate that within the last four years, teachers with 20+ years’ experience have transferred to different campuses. The teachers with the least amount of experience started and have remained at the same school. The shift between campuses or school districts for these teachers with the most years of experience brings to mind the question of the cause of the change. This will be an interesting statistic when this group approaches retirement.
Table 2

Participants’ Length of Time Served

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20+</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years at Present School</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20+</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 is relative to the participants’ direct involvement with PBIS. While these two items were separated on the survey, they are interrelated as to team member being part of the implementation teams. The first item indicates the teachers’ direct relationship to the PBIS team, and the second item indicates the number of years that PBIS has been implemented at the school. It is somewhat interesting to note that a high percentage of teachers who participated in the study are not members of the school-wide
PBIS team. This team consists of individuals directly involved in the decision-making process on each campus for the functioning of the program. The responses indicate that the schools participating in this study are in the formative years of developing a systematic behavior management program.

Table 3

*PBIS Involvement by Teachers and Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PBIS Team Member</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>67.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years PBIS at School</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey was divided into three main sections for the respondents to answer using a Likert scale which ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The first section contained eight questions regarding the implementation process, addressing Research Question One: Is there a relationship between teacher perception of PBIS and the implementation process? The survey questions were designed for the respondent to analyze their role and participation in the overall planning and continuing development of the overall framework. For an overall picture of the implementation, questions were written to elicit their views on participation and ongoing training opportunities in this behavior management system. Most teachers indicated they understood the terms of the
implementation process. For both questions one and two, a mean of 4.34 and 4.5 respectively indicate a feeling of support towards the teaching and training offered by the leadership team. Even with the lowest result of 3.53 for question three, the teachers agree strongly towards the implementation process. Hypothesis One, there is a statistically significant relationship between teacher perceptions of PBIS and the implementation process, was proven to be true. The results for this section are indicated in Table 4 below.

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics: Implementation (n=116)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 A behavioral curriculum has been established that teaches positive expectations and rules based on data.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 As a staff, we have been provided with an outline for teaching behavioral expectations that align with PBIS.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 I have been taught a procedure that will allow me to be objective in the analysis of student behavior.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 My PBIS team leaders keep me updated on data summaries.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5 I am included in decision making based on the data.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6 Based on the data collected, my students’ expectations and goals are adjusted.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q7. I am provided with training and ongoing professional development and support to fully understand PBIS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8. We have ongoing professional development sessions to review PBIS framework and discuss areas of concern.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

The second set of questions were planned for the respondent to express a perspective on different components of PBIS on the effect of classroom issues as well as the overall program itself, addressing Research Question Two: Is there a relationship between teacher perception of the administrator’s role in PBIS and the implementation process? These questions were designed to prompt reflection from the teachers on all aspects of PBIS from the earliest onset to classroom practices. Questions 11, 16, 17, and 18 were reversed, and all three indicated the lowest mean: 2.63, 2.86, 2.41, and 2.99, respectively. These results suggest the perception of teachers as supportive of PBIS in their curriculum for behavior management. Hypothesis Two, there is a statistically significant relationship between teacher perceptions of the administrator’s role in PBIS and the implementation process, was proven to be true. See Table 5.
Table 5

Descriptive Statistics: Teacher Perception (n=116)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q9 PBIS has increased student engagement, thereby reducing disruptions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within the classroom and daily routine.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10 PBIS is an effective tool in promoting positive behaviors in</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11 The framework of PBIS needs to be analyzed and restructured at my</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school; the goals and objectives are not increasing positive behaviors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by my students. *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12 The positive behavior support program is an effective tool for</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>handling disruptive students in my school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13 PBIS has reduced the number of major discipline issues in my</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14 PBIS is necessary as the behavior management system.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15 I give positive reinforcement to all students who follow the rules</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and meet the expectations as taught.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16 My students who misbehave are still misbehaving; they are not</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motivated by the reward system in place.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q17 PBIS has created an environment where inappropriate behaviors are not punished. *</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q18 PBIS is targeting the students who normally behave without any intrinsic motivation. *</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q19 The teachers were included in developing a behavior matrix to align with PBIS standards.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree, * Reversed questions

The last section of the survey was composed of six questions regarding the respondents’ perceptions of the administrator’s role in the implementation and management of PBIS, addressing Research Question Three: Is there a relationship between teacher perception of PBIS and the administrator’s role in PBIS? These questions were posed to analyze the collaborative efforts of the campus leadership towards the PBIS model within the constructs of the program. The highest mean is 4.16 indicating the teachers feel the administration is actively involved in the PBIS model as it applies to their school. The next highest mean is 4.08 for question 22, indicating the teachers feel the administration has put in place the components to fulfill the implementation efforts for PBIS. This study is analyzing data offered by teachers to determine a relationship with PBIS and their administrator’s role in the execution of a behavior intervention system. It should be noted that no other questions regarding the effectiveness of an administrator were asked or implied. Hypothesis Three, there is a
statistically significant relationship between teacher perceptions of PBIS and the administrator’s role in PBIS, was proven to be true. Table 6 displays these results.

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics: Administration (n=116)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q20 The leadership at my school takes an active role in the development and implementation of PBIS.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q21 My administrators have provided tools and strategies for behavior interventions to improve behavior management techniques.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q22 The PBIS leadership team at my school has executed the required components to meet the goals of the school’s vision.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q23 The leadership team has differentiated between classroom-managed behavior and office-managed behaviors.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q24 The PBIS team has established criteria to determine the need for additional training and support.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25 The leadership team was included in developing a behavior matrix to align with PBIS standards.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Inferential Data

The results were analyzed using Pearson’s r Correlation. There were three research questions to investigate. Research Question One asked Is there a relationship
between teacher perception of PBIS and the implementation process? Upon receipt and analysis of the results, it was reported that \( r(116) = .50, p < .001 \), indicating the two variables were positively correlated. Using Cohen’s d estimates, these results as analyzed indicate \( r^2 = .25 \), indicating a moderate effect size. There is an overlap of 25% in the results between teacher perception and the implementation process. For Research Questions Two, Is there a relationship between teacher perception of the administrator’s role in PBIS and the implementation process?, the results are reported as \( r(116) = .69, p < .001 \), indicating the two variables are positively correlated. These results, \( r^2 = .48 \), indicate a moderate effect size. In analyzing Research Question Three, Is there a relationship between teacher perception of PBIS and the role of administration?, the results were similar. The results were discovered as \( r(116) = .66, p < .001 \), reporting a positive correlation. The effect size is \( r^2 = .43 \). This indicates a moderate effect size.

Whereas all three variables were positively correlated, it is interesting to note that the variables concerning the role of administrators are the two highest values.

Ancillary Findings

It was determined that all participating schools were in the first three years of implementing PBIS, so this study was able to survey teachers who all had relatively the same amount of experience with PBIS. As with so many new programs implemented in the education world, there is usually limited buy-in by veteran teachers, as they have seen so many shifts in education trends. This study does not address the outcome of PBIS, therefore, this data is not analyzing the success of the program as related to the number of years it has been practiced, nor from the PBIS team members’ perspectives. The recommendation for these types of studies will be addressed in Chapter V.
The role of administration was the underlying factor of teacher perception of PBIS. As teachers view the role of administration as supporting in an entire shift in behavior management strategies, the perception of teachers tends to be supportive as well. Of the schools surveyed, two had undergone three consecutive administration changes in the past four years.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if there were statistically significant relationships among teacher perception of PBIS and the implementation process, teacher perceptions of the administrator’s role in PBIS and the implementation process, and teacher perceptions of PBIS and the role of administration in PBIS. The areas discussed are an overall summary of the study itself, the conclusions and discussions of findings, the limitations, recommendations for policy and practice for the existing models based on these findings, and recommendations for future research on this subject.

Summary

At the onset of research, it was discovered that many studies have been conducted to examine if a relationship exists between PBIS and student achievement. Results were abundant in determining that in schools where PBIS was in practice, student achievement increased due to a higher level of student engagement and a decreased amount of time spent dealing with behavior issues (Anderson & Kincaid, 2005; Barrett et al., 2008; Horner et al., 2009; Luiselli et al, 2005; MacNeil et al., 2009; Nelson et al., 1998; Simonsen et al., 2008). This study did not examine the success or failure of PBIS to influence student outcomes; rather, it sought to measure the teacher perception of the different components of PBIS on the implementation process. Sugai and Horner (2002b) recommend that faculty and staff support of PBIS is fundamental for the likelihood of success prior to, during, and following the implementation process. Muscott et al. (2004a) reports that school-wide support from both faculty and staff is identified as a
significant component in the implementation process. This study examined whether a relationship exists between the teachers’ perception and the implementation process. In addition, the study examined teacher perception based on the role of the administration in the PBIS model. Leithwood et al. (2004), in agreement with the creators of the PBIS model, identified administrative support as a critical element to the success of PBIS. Based on responses to the survey, teacher perception of the administrator’s role in PBIS was similar to previous findings regarding teacher perception of the administrator’s role in the context of support and leadership in professional development and training events to promote teacher buy-in and improved teacher involvement in policies and procedures (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2009).

Conclusions and Discussion

At the establishment of this research study, the researcher’s initial goal was to determine if teachers would implement a behavior management strategy using positive behavior interventions and modification approaches rather than a traditional punitive system. As previous studies were analyzed, it was apparent that the topic of PBIS raises questions pertaining to the effectiveness of not only the program itself, but the fidelity of the implementation process. Discussion regarding fidelity of implementation provides the opportunity for various hypotheses to be formed. It was discovered through this study that there is a significant relationship between teacher perceptions of the concept and their implementation efforts and between teacher perceptions of the administrator’s role in PBIS and their implementation efforts. It was determined there is a statistically significant relationship between teacher perception of PBIS and the administrator’s role in PBIS.
The survey used to gather the data was divided into three sections. The top portion of the survey collected information to categorize the respondents in terms of their role and length of association with the school. Using the data concerning the respondents’ length of time in service and length of time at present school, it was determined that the majority of teachers with the most extensive experience had transferred to new schools within the last four years. It was also determined that the schools participating were in the early years of PBIS implementation. The longest time frame (two to three years) for involvement with PBIS was in the lower end of the recommended time frame of a three to five year implementation (Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010). These questions were written to offer a clearer picture of the respondents and had no bearing on results found or indication for statistical analysis.

The main section of the survey titled “Implementation”, presented questions to illicit an analysis of respondents’ efforts and perspectives concerning the introduction, training, implementation, and applied practice of PBIS. Embedded within the eight questions were training, ongoing professional development, and involvement of the teachers in data analysis and data-based decision making.

Lindsey (2008) conducted a qualitative study to analyze the impediments and obstacles accompanying the process of introducing new ideas and procedures. Her study indicated that effective training was the advantage in application of new policies and procedures. Bambara et al., (2009) investigated the perceived barriers and enablers to implementing and sustaining positive behavior supports and found that ongoing professional development along with administrative leadership support either aided or impeded the implementation process. These studies supported the results obtained through the current study. Each of the questions provided a strong level of agreement.
that implementation efforts were supportive of teachers and intended for an overarching goal of planning, analyzing, and adjusting the expectations for the students, which would in turn lead to higher academic gains and behavioral modification experiences by students.

Freeman et al. (2006) endorse extensive training for leadership and key team members past the initial introduction and implementation stage to establish sustainability with teachers. Using the high scores from the results of this section of the survey, it is determined that teachers’ implementation efforts are on the positive end in support of the PBIS model. This study did not address the types of interventions or the recommended interventions prescribed to students, just the overall picture of their perspective on the implementation process as provided by the PBIS leadership teams.

The second section of the survey presented questions concerning teacher perception of the PBIS model itself. This shift from punitive behavior management programs to a more proactive, instructional model has not always been perceived as a good change. Tillery et al., (2010) conducted a study to analyze teacher perspectives of behavioral intervention strategies in an elementary school. They found the teachers focused on individual students rather than school-wide behavior plans. These teachers’ survey results indicated their beliefs that they used positive reinforcement strategies, but were unaware of a structured process that RTI and PBIS offered even though they had been trained on the components of both. This section of the study invited teachers to respond to questions posed regarding their perspective of PBIS and its role within their daily classroom experiences. There were four questions that were reversed, and these questions were the low points on the reporting scale. They were intended to prompt low score responses, as they were not aligned with the remaining questions. These reversed
responses supported the results that teacher perceptions of PBIS were positive and the model was conducive to meeting students’ behavioral needs and to reducing the incidence of disruptive behaviors within their classroom.

This study did not rate the overall culture and climate of a school, but the results of this section of the survey are comparable to outcomes from a study conducted by Bradshaw et al. (2008). In that study, teachers’ perceptions of the organizational health of their schools were analyzed following the implementation of PBIS. Those results indicated that the teachers perceived the overall school culture and organizational health had improved since implementation.

The third and final section of this survey contained a series of six questions regarding the teachers’ perceptions of the role of administration in the actions of PBIS support and managements. Expectations of an administrator are always high, as faculty and staff are expecting any level of administration to provide leadership and promote instructional excellence and success of all stakeholders of the school. Marks and Printy (2003) describe the role of the building administrator as no longer being “an inspector of teacher competence” but as a “facilitator of growth” p. 374. Neither the study nor the results addressed teachers’ opinions of the expected or perceived job performance of administrators. The questions in this section pertained to both the building administrator and the leadership teams of PBIS. The responses were overall positive in terms of the efforts by administration and leadership teams to support the development and continued energies to establish behavior modification strategies that are collaborative and supportive of a school’s vision.

This quantitative study investigated the existence of a relationship between three variables. For this study, the following questions were investigated:
RQ1: Is there a relationship between teacher perception of PBIS and the implementation process?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between teacher perception of the administrator’s role in PBIS and the implementation process?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between teacher perception of PBIS and the administrator’s role in PBIS?

The results were examined using Pearson’s r Correlation. Findings were comparable to earlier research and what was discussed in the review of literature. Prior to the literature review and upon finding the strong recommendations for teacher buy-in, it was anticipated that the researcher would find a larger number of negative reaction to the questions regarding the teacher perceptions of the PBIS model, as positive behavior interventions are among a large number of paradigm shifts in today’s ever changing educational picture. The most surprising aspect of the study was the positively correlated results stemming from a large number of veteran teachers who have experienced numerous changes in educational expectations and programmatic curriculums. It was not intended by the researcher to attempt to isolate respondents or participating schools by levels of experience, so these results were unexpected.

Data from this study indicate there is a statistically significant correlation between teacher perception of PBIS and the implementation process. It was determined that teacher perception of PBIS and the effort teachers put into the implementation process are positively correlated. They indicate their belief in the opportunity for positive behavioral outcomes through an intervention system; therefore, they are more inclined to implement and use the model within their classrooms for their students’ behavioral
growth. The principles of PBIS support developing strategies to provide interventions for identified behaviors in order to reduce and reform the behaviors (Sugai & Horner, 2008).

The teachers’ perception of the role of administration in PBIS indicate that they see the leadership team, administrators, and themselves as collaborative teams to best serve the students. This allows them to address the increasing social needs of students, as well as increase the opportunity for higher learning while decreasing the problematic behaviors. With these collaborative efforts, teachers indicate they support the PBIS model, and their efforts are supported systematically. Therefore, they are more likely to implement PBIS with fidelity. Research by Cushing et al., (2003) indicates that the administrator’s role is a key point to implementation and forming a social climate of a positive interaction between students and teachers. In regards to the relationship between the administrator’s role in PBIS and teachers, McKevitt and Braaksma (2008) specify that an essential component for successful implementation is a supportive administrator. This study indicates the relationship between the administrator’s role in PBIS and teacher perception is positively correlated; therefore, they work cooperatively to develop an effective behavior management and intervention program.

There may be several indicators to explain positively correlated results from this study. These indicators can possibly include a successful PBIS program at the participating school, or the existence of a notably supportive administration and leadership team. A collaborative school staff who enjoys a positive climate and culture with the school may enjoy the opportunity to develop a cohesive program to support behavioral interventions to provide best practices for all students. Even taking into consideration some plausible indicators, the results stand for themselves. The relationship between all variables exists from the results of the study.
Limitations

There are limitations to this study. The participating schools included only public schools in one coastal county in the state of Mississippi. These results do not represent PBIS in practice in other areas of the state or in private schools across all grade levels. This study did not include high schools. High schools are complex in the behavioral needs of their students, so these results represent a range of students from elementary to middle schools.

In addition, limitations that were unexpected were the fact that all participating schools were in the formative years of the implementation process. It cannot be assumed that the limited experience with PBIS directed the results. When the schools were selected, the only selection criteria was their participation in PBIS.

Another limitation to this study regarding PBIS is that the effectiveness of PBIS was not addressed, only teacher perception was studied in terms of a relationship that might affect implementation. It can be assumed that the perception as positively correlated to the implementation process indicates that PBIS must be producing measureable results.

Recommendations for Policy or Practice

The results from this study will allow schools in the process of adopting a behavior management program to analyze the PBIS model from a teacher perspective. PBIS is an increasing trend in schools each year as the need for systematic interventions and behavior modification systems increase. With so many studies indicating the overall success and impact PBIS produces in reducing negative behaviors and increasing academic performance, there are few research studies examining the implementation process of PBIS based upon teacher perspective, and teacher perspective of
administrative support of PBIS to drive implementation efforts, teacher perspective, and the professional support with training and technical support for teachers. This research can drive coaches in developing strategies to encourage teacher buy-in, enabling fidelity of implementation which may lead to increased academic success (Tillery et al., 2010).

This study can provide school administrators insight on teacher perceptions regarding PBIS, as well the perceptions of administrators’ involvement and their impact on implementation. Companies produce extensive marketing efforts for proprietary programs that promise increased student achievement, and this study might also allow administrators to determine how teachers would respond to any program that endorses positive behavior strategies in lieu of punitive behavior ladders. This study also indicated the importance of training and support that was provided through the leadership teams and administrators, indicating a positive correlation between this training and support and teacher perspectives.

School districts are exploring the importance of continuity in instruction and behavior plans, and this study can provide insight on the equal importance of teacher perception as to implementation efforts and the relationship between the variables to promote successful implementation. If building level administrators are at forefront of teacher perception and implementation efforts, then continued and recurring behavioral expectations on a district level can be established, allowing for smooth transitions as students advance through grade levels.

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

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Further research into this area of PBIS is suggested. The current study was conducted to determine whether a relationship existed between teacher perceptions of Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) and the implementation process. There are many avenues of research that can be explored. One avenue is to examine if these variables concerning teacher perceptions are related to the success of the PBIS program. With that study, researchers will have to determine how to measure the success of the program to obtain operational results.

This study could also be expanded to different areas of the state to determine if the results are restricted to geographic areas and demographics. A broader scope of students could be explored as well. Using high school behavioral needs as a variable, the teacher perception aspect would be interesting to compare teachers in lower grades to teachers in upper grades.

This study did not take into account the length of time a program has been in place at the school. The commonality of the schools was not deliberate. This study could be conducted again to compare the teacher perceptions from the same campuses after the formative years of implementation to a length of time that PBIS is in place. It would be interesting to discern if the positive correlation can be attributed to the onset of implementation or if the program is sustainable through time. This same study using the length of time a program has been implemented as a variable might adjust the outcomes and lead to further studies regarding sustainability.
\section*{APPENDIX A}

\section*{TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SUPPORT}

\textit{Are you a certified teacher licensed in the state of Mississippi?}  
Yes ☐  No ☐

\textit{Number of years’ experience in education}

0-4 ☐  5-9 ☐  10 – 14 ☐  15-19 ☐  20+ ☐

\textit{Number of years at present school}

0-4 ☐  5-9 ☐  10-14 ☐  15-19 ☐  20+ ☐

\textit{Are you on PBIS team on your campus?}  
Yes ☐  no ☐

\textit{How many years has PBIS been implemented in your school?}

Planning stage ☐  0 – 1 ☐  2 – 3 ☐  4 – 5 ☐  more than 5 ☐

For each of the following questions, please put a mark in the box that best reflects your answer.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Number} & \textbf{Strongly Disagree} & \textbf{Disagree} & \textbf{Neutral} & \textbf{Agree} & \textbf{Strongly Agree} \\
\hline
1. & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\
\hline
2. & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\
\hline
3. & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\
\hline
4. & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\
\hline
5. & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\
\hline
6. & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\
\hline
7. & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\
\hline
8. & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
## Teacher Perception

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PBIS has increased student engagement, thereby reducing disruptions within the classroom and daily routine.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PBIS is an effective tool in promoting positive behaviors in students.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The framework of PBIS needs to be analyzed and restructured at my school; the goals and objectives are not increasing positive behaviors by my students.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The positive behavior support program is an effective tool for handling disruptive students in my school.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PBIS has reduced the number of major discipline issues in my classroom.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PBIS is necessary as the behavior management system.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I give positive reinforcement to all students who follow the rules and meet the expectations as taught.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My students who misbehave are still misbehaving; they are not motivated by the reward system in place.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PBIS has created an environment where inappropriate behaviors are not punished.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PBIS is targeting the students who normally behave without any intrinsic motivation.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>The teachers were included in developing a behavior matrix to align with PBIS standards.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree 1</th>
<th>Disagree 2</th>
<th>Neutral 3</th>
<th>Agree 4</th>
<th>Strongly Agree 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>The leadership at my school takes an active role in the development and implementation of PBIS.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>My administrators have provided tools and strategies for behavior interventions to improve behavior management techniques.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>The PBIS leadership team at my school has executed the required components to meet the goals of the school’s vision.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>The leadership team has differentiated between classroom-managed behavior and office-managed behaviors.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>The PBIS team has established criteria to determine the need for additional training and support.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>The leadership team was included in developing a behavior matrix to align with PBIS standards.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

SAMPLE LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENTS

November 2, 2013

* * *

Janice M. Hansen
18 Scot Station Cove
Long Beach, MS 39560

[Name] Superintendent
School District
11072 Highway 49
Gulfport, MS 39503

Dear Mr/ Ms. [Name],

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study with the teachers at [Name] School District. The information gathered will be used in my dissertation at USM, shared with my dissertation committee.

The research will investigate if there is a relationship between teachers’ perception of positive behavior intervention support systems (PBIS) and the implementation, and if there is a relationship between teachers’ perception of the administrator’s role in the implementation process. The data gathered will be kept confidential in a safe location in the researcher’s home with only the researcher and committee members having access to the participant’s responses. No teacher, school, or district will be identified. The research will not interfere with any classroom instruction or be a distraction to the school. The time to complete the survey will take less than ten minutes. I plan to begin collecting this data in December 2013 and be completed by May 2014. Participation is completely voluntary; participation may be discontinued at any time without penalty or prejudice to the participant. Surveys collected for this study will be destroyed by a shredder after the study is completed. There is no inherent risk associated with being a participant of this survey. The purpose of this study is to provide administrators with a clear picture of teachers’ attitudes regarding the PBIS model to allow the leadership teams an opportunity to provide best practices in support and training to ensure a successful implementation effort.

I am required to follow all of the ethical guidelines of research as proposed the Human Subjects Committee at USM. Upon receipt of your consent letter, I will submit my application to this committee for approval.

Thank you for your time, and I hope you will grant me permission to collect the data from the schools in your district by either my attending a faculty meeting to distribute and collect my survey. In an extreme case, a designated employee to do on my behalf will be trained by me. If it is your decision to grant me permission, please reply on your school district letterhead your intent. Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,

Janice M. Hansen
APPENDIX C

SAMPLE FOLLOW UP LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENTS

November 22, 2013

Janice M. Hansen
18 Scot Station Cove
Long Beach, MS 39560

Superintendent
School District
Highway 49
MS 39503

Dear [Name],

Thank you for speaking with me on the phone today. I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study with the teachers at [School District] School District. The information gathered will be used in my dissertation at USM, shared with my dissertation committee.

The research will investigate if there is a relationship between teachers’ perception of positive behavior intervention support systems (PBIS) and the implementation, and if there is a relationship between teachers’ perception of the administrator’s role in the implementation process. The data gathered will be kept confidential in a safe location in the researcher’s home with only the researcher and committee members having access to the participant’s responses. No teacher, school, or district will be identified. The research will not interfere with any classroom instruction or be a distraction to the school. The time to complete the survey will take less than ten minutes. I plan to begin collecting this data in December 2013 and be completed by May 2014. Participation is completely voluntary; participation may be discontinued at any time without penalty or prejudice to the participant. Surveys collected for this study will be destroyed by a shredder after the study is completed. There is no inherent risk associated with being a participant of this survey. The purpose of this study is to provide administrators with a clear picture of teachers’ attitudes regarding the PBIS model to allow the leadership teams an opportunity to provide best practices in support and training to ensure a successful implementation effort.

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Sincerely,

Janice M. Hansen
APPENDIX D

IRB APPROVAL

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional-review-board

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the “Adverse Effect Report Form”.
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.

Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 13120301
PROJECT TITLE: Is there a Relationship between Teacher Perception of Positive Behavior Interventions Support and the Implementation Process?
PROJECT TYPE: New Project
RESEARCHER(S): Janice M. Hansen
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership and School Counseling
FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 01/22/2014 to 01/21/2015

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board
APPENDIX E

EMAIL TO PRINCIPALS

To
Cc

[Draft] Add a subject

[Draft] Add a subject

Principal, as we discussed on the phone today, I have received permission from your superintendent to conduct a survey with your staff regarding PBIS for my dissertation. I have attached a copy of the letter I received for your files. I would like to schedule a time that I can come to your school to meet with your staff. If you have a regularly scheduled staff meeting, I would like to present the study to your staff and leave the surveys with them to complete. I will return to pick up the completed surveys so that I am not an interruption to your meeting agenda.

Thank you for your support and assistance.

Jan Hansen, NBCT, M.Ed.
APPENDIX F

NOTE OF CONSENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
AUTHORIZATION TO PARTICIPATE IN
RESEARCH PROJECT

Consent is hereby given to participate in the research project entitled

**Relationship between Teacher Perception of Positive Behavior Interventions Support and the Implementation Process.**

All procedures and/or investigations to be followed and their purpose, including any experimental procedures, were explained by Janice M. Hansen.

Information was given about all benefits, risks, inconveniences, or discomforts that might be expected.

The opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and procedures was given. Participation in the project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice. All personal information is strictly confidential, and no identifying information will be disclosed. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided if that information may affect the willingness to continue participation in the project.

Questions concerning the research, at any time during or after the project, should be directed to Janice M. Hansen at 228-596-3678. This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-5997.

A copy of this form will be given to the participant.

Returning a completed survey implies consent to participate.

______________________________________________  __________________________
Signature of person explaining the study                  Date
REFERENCES


Bradshaw, C. P., Koth, C. W., Bevans, K. B., Ialongo, N., & Leaf, P. J. (2008). The impact of school-wide behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) on the


really know how treatments are implemented? Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 15(4), 198-205.


assessing school-wide positive behavior support. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 6*(1), 3-12.


Kasper, B. (2005). Administrative support and roles for implementation of positive behavior support in high schools. In H. Bohanon-Edmonson, K. B. Flannery, L. Eber, & G. Sugai (Eds.), *Positive behavior support in high schools: Monograph from the 2004 Illinois high school forum of positive behavioral interventions and supports* (pp. 25-35).


