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Administrators' Roles and Practices in the Implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions

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Abstract

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Positive behavior intervention support is a behavioral approach that was implemented in the early 2000s across the United States to assist educators in addressing the behavioral concerns of students with special needs. Since its implementation, it has been used to assist students at all levels with emotional and behavioral needs to achieve academic success in over 20,000 schools. However, there was a reported lack of administrative support and insufficient understanding regarding administrators' roles in the process. The purpose of this basic interpretive qualitative study was to examine administrators' roles and decision-making practices in implementation of the behavioral intervention approach across elementary schools in Guam. The conceptual framework for this basic qualitative study consisted of Rogers's innovation diffusion theory and Lorenz's complexity theory. Data were collected from interviews with 8 administrators. and analyzed using open coding to identify patterns that were then categorized into 5 emergent themes: degrees of administrative autonomy, realizing importance of a schema, positive outcomes, challenges and setbacks, and perceptions of improvements of the behavioral approach. The participants described the effectiveness of the behavioral approach as positive; however, they found that inadequate buy-in, resources, and professional training were still areas of need. Study findings may help administrators and teachers in Guam better address the social and emotional concerns at school by strengthening administrative practices.

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Dedication

My dedication is two-fold. I dedicate this dissertation to the next generation, especially those in my family. I pray that my success inspires others to reach for the moon and strive for excellence in all that they do. In addition, I dedicate this work to my husband, Larry. I could not have done this without your support, the extra push to go on over a long period of time, cheering for me at each level of success, and your never-ending love. Here's to you, my love.

I also want to thank all of my family and friends who have continued to support me during this journey and saw me as I could be before I even reached the finish line. A special shout out to my baby brother, Tony Maldonado, and BFF, Hilda Rodriguez, with my grandmother's hands for reading my papers over the years. Thank you all for believing in me even when I did not think I could make it to the end. You all inspired me to be a better person. Eternally grateful.

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Thank you, heavenly Father, for your grace and never giving up on me. It is first and foremost because of you that I have been able to reach this level of success.

I want to thank Dr. Alice Eichholz for her sincere guidance, support, and advisement as my chair through this dissertation process. Dr. Eichholz was so gracious to step in when my mentor, Dr. Laura Weidner, had to step down due to family medical reasons. Dr. Eichholz was there to provide feedback on my work and encouraged me with every revision, providing constructive feedback and a positive mindset. Additionally, my thanks to Dr. Cheryl Keen. As my methodologist, I appreciated her perspective and wonderful "can do" attitude. Additionally, my deepest heartfelt thanks to Dr. Weidner for being with me through most of this journey. She was always available, encouraging, and "real" with me even when I felt I just could go no further. She reminded me to strive for excellence. You will always hold a special place in my heart. Lastly, I am forever grateful to the Guam participants in this study for giving so generously of their time and for sharing so many of their experiences. This dissertation is truly in support of their success.

The activity, which is the subject of this report, has been authorized by the Guam Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein, as well as the methods utilized, do not necessarily reflect the position of the Department. No official endorsement by the Department or the Government of Guam is inferred. The author accepts full responsibility for the methodology and for the contents of this document.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Educators are often presented with the challenge of improving students' behaviors and searching for ways to help them become successful academically and socially (Houchens et al., 2017). At the same time, teachers face ongoing budget cuts, increased class sizes, a lack of up-to-date resources, and minimal professional development training (Shuster et al., 2017). In addition, teacher training often does not address how to help students with emotional and behavioral challenges, while other constraints, such as a lack of administrative support, are significant obstacles for educators (Shuster et al., 2017).

Positive behavior intervention support (PBIS) is a data-driven behavioral approach using a schoolwide evaluation tool and tiered fidelity inventory tools with a preventative, schoolwide, and multitiered framework. PBIS has been implemented in schools across the United States to help address students' emotional and behavioral needs before the behaviors begin to impede their progress. PBIS is based on the principles of applied behavioral interventions (eliciting positive behaviors and reducing negative behaviors) to promote long-term changes in positive social interactions (McIntosh, Canizal Delabra, & Kelm, 2016). Under the three-tiered structure of the PBIS framework, educators can address behaviors ranging from minor infractions, such as calling out in class, to transgressions that require higher levels of intervention, for example, bringing weapons to school (Griffiths, Izumi, Alsip, Furlong, & Morrison, 2019). Behavioral expectations are the same for all students based on the school's needs (Horner & Monzalve, 2018).

Educators struggle to help students due to social and economic concerns; however, they also face an obstacle in the school setting concerning buy-in from their supervisors (Shuster et al., 2017). Noltemeyer et al. (2018) noted that there needs to be 80% buy-in, specifically of PBIS, from stakeholders, including administrators, to implement change using the behavioral approach. While administrative support is essential in the implementation of PBIS, there is a gap in understanding administrators' approach and consistency in the implementation process throughout schools (McIntosh et al., 2016).

Background

PBIS, an approach that emerged in the early 2000s, has been implemented in more than 20,000 schools in the United States, including Guam territory (Bal, Kozleski, Schrader, Rodriguez, & Pelton, 2014; Garbacz et al., 2016; Horner et al., 2014). PBIS came into existence, in part, as a response to the 1997 amendment to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Congress passed this amendment to protect students with special needs and facilitate a plan to improve their behavior using a positive approach (Yell & Shriner, 1997, 1998). The success of PBIS for students with special needs prompted Congress to fund schoolwide implementation of this behavioral approach as a preventative measure to address students' behavioral and academic needs (United States Department of Education [US ED], 2019).

PBIS targets three tiers of behaviors. Tier 1 is applied to all students as an initial phase of prevention. Tier 2 is based on small group sessions with students whose

behavior is not remediated in Tier 1. Tier 3 interventions are centered on wrap-around services by multiple providers such, as counselors, psychologists, and teachers, to address severe behaviors (McDaniel, Kim, Kwon, & Choi, 2018). Various stakeholders, but specifically administrators, are important because they assist with the organization and distribution of resources, such as funds for training, materials for teachers, and reward tokens for the students, which are necessary to implement this behavioral approach (McDaniel et al., 2018).

The purpose of this study was to explore administrators' perceptions about PBIS and the factors that influence their decision-making process when implementing PBIS in elementary schools in Guam, a territory of the United States. There are 41 schools in Guam established to educate elementary through high school students; 27 serve the elementary grades (Poon-McBrayer, 2017). All schools are required by the district to have a positive behavior plan that allows for a safe and supportive school environment. In 2014, the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) published a PBIS guidebook for schools, which delineated the procedures and timeframe to implement the framework.

The implementation of PBIS in Guam is important because of the vast cross-cultural differences on the island. There are many Filipinos, Japanese, and Korean residents on three island nations who identify as members of the Freely Associated States surrounding Guam. The three nations include the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau (Stewart et al., 2017). The residents of these nations are free to enter and reside in Guam due to the Compact of Free

Association. The Compact of Free Association with the United States and its territories also allows the residents to attend schools in Guam. One of the many challenges for the Micronesian residents includes assimilating into American culture. Many of the students in the elementary schools do not speak English, come from nations that have limited educational opportunities, and have special needs and low socioeconomic means (Stewart et al., 2017). Approximately 21% of the student population in Guam's schools are from the surrounding islands (Stewart et al., 2017). Thus, the varied population presents unique challenges for schools and requires an appropriate approach to effectively address students' behavioral issues.

Focusing on administrators' perceptions about PBIS and the factors that influence their decision-making process when implementing this behavioral framework indicated why there are challenges with the implementation of PBIS. The findings from this research may inform administrators regarding how to cultivate an educational system in which all stakeholders embrace preventative strategies and focus on academic achievements in a positive school climate. In addition, such a system may foster an environment that is culturally sensitive to the diverse student population in Guam.

Problem Statement

Across the United States and its territories, state policies regarding how discipline is administered in schools are inconsistent, and this causes a disparity in the implementation of behavioral frameworks (Education Commission of the States, 2019). Jones, Ferguson, Ramirez, and Owens (2018), in their autoethnographic study of school

to prison pipelines and juvenile detention facilities, noted that this disparity would continue unless society changes the way children are disciplined. There may be many life events that impact a child's behavior; concurrently, the educational system is also influential in how discipline is addressed in schools. Disciplinary practices such as zero tolerance, suspensions, and expulsions are exclusionary consequences that remove students from learning and do not eliminate negative behaviors in schools (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018; Fallon, O'Keeffe, & Sugai, 2012; Puckett, Graves, & Sutton, 2019). Many students maintain these negative behaviors in other social interactions, which may lead to adverse consequences, such as prison or detention, as they get older (Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014).

Elementary schools in Guam have conditions that may require appropriate strategies to address their students' academic, social, and emotional needs. Researchers have noted that although the people of Guam share a high regard for their elders, enjoy community hospitality, and a close family structure, the high rate of suicide and violence among young people aged 15 through 24 ranks as one of the highest in the world (Misco & Lee, 2012; Ran et al., 2015). The cultural transformation since the United States defended Guam from the Japanese during WWII, in conjunction with the forces of globalization, have contributed to the loss of indigenous culture as the people of Guam assimilated to the American way of life (Misco & Lee, 2012; Statham, 1998). In addition to the influence of the United States in Guam and its culturally diverse population, changes over the years have precipitated significant behavioral struggles, such as

excessive absences, acting out in class, and lack of participation in school activities, all of which impact how students interact and learn (Fallon, O'Keeffe, & Sugai, 2012; Milgrom et al., 2016; Misco & Lee, 2012). Students' upbringing and behavioral expectations of their cultural background may not be congruent with their experience with current educational practices (Banks & Obiakor, 2015).

The GDOE report (2014) identified incidents of disrespect, defiance, tardiness, property misuse, and dress code and technology violations as ongoing behavioral concerns in schools. Teachers and parents may face challenges with their students but might be more willing to participate in a behavioral approach that helps prevent negative behaviors if school administrators supported their ideas to help students as well as supported programs implemented in schools (Bruhn, Gorsh, Hannan, & Hirsch, 2014; Coffey & Horner, 2012). In research by McIntosh et al. (2016), findings indicated that administrators' roles in the implementation of PBIS are instrumental to its success. Feuerborn, Wallace, and Tyre (2013) concurred that buy-in and consistency of implementation by all stakeholders, specifically the administration, is important for the success of this behavioral approach in schools. Little research, however, has been conducted to understand administrators' perceptions of the PBIS implementation process. This study addresses this gap in the research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions, roles, and decision-making practices of elementary school administrators in Guam regarding the

implementation of PBIS. The results help provide a deeper understanding of their perspectives and identify components of the PBIS, which may need to be changed to facilitate easier implementation of the approach in the schools. Ultimately, the administrators' support may foster increased sustainability and consistency of an approach, which, in turn, may provide a positive way to address negative behaviors. Administrators can help initiate funding for training, community awareness, and district involvement, thus leading to a significant positive impact on students' lives.

Research Question

How do administrators describe their perceptions, roles, and decision-making practices regarding the implementation of PBIS in schools?

Conceptual Framework

In this study, I used both Rogers's (2003) innovation diffusion theory and Lorenz's (1993) complexity theory for the conceptual framework. Rogers's (2003) theory provided the framework to conceptualize what draws or deters administrators from implementing PBIS in their schools. The basis of Lorenz's (1993) theory concerns the interrelationship between varying agents while identifying the pros and cons of any decision(s) to bring about change. Administrators may discuss strategies to solve problems at different grade levels, which all teachers must agree to implement. Complexity theory helps identify factors that administrators take into consideration when facilitating change in their culturally diverse schools.

As administrators begin to implement a new process, such as a behavioral framework, they may follow various patterns to assimilate a plan. Often the process of implementation is nonlinear and fluid. There can be many variables that must be considered before coming to a consensus about a program that will affect many people and become the segue to change (Lorenz, 1993). Further details regarding the conceptual framework are discussed in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

For this study, I adopted a basic interpretive qualitative design using interviews. Arghode (2012) defined qualitative research as an approach that provides the means to comprehend the viewpoints of many people as part of an inductive reasoning process consistent with understanding a phenomenon, which is the primary focus of this research. Rubin and Rubin (2012) defined interpretive design as a method to capture an unmeasurable reality perceived through an individual's experiences. By interviewing eight participants, I gained an understanding of their perceptions, roles, and decision-making practices regarding the implementation of PBIS in schools. This design allowed for an in-depth understanding and insight related to the decision-making process of administrators regarding the implementation of PBIS.

Definitions

Administrators (specific to PBIS) are principals and assistant principals in the schools who implement the behavioral approach (McDaniel et al., 2018).

Positive behavior intervention support (PBIS) is a multitiered, evidence-based framework or approach to promoting long-term changes in positive social interactions to support students' academic and social interactions in schools (Horner & Monzalve, 2018).

Assumptions

In this study, I assumed that all participants were representative of other professionals in similar positions using PBIS in Guam. Second, I expected that the participants would provide responses to the interview questions that were truthful to ensure validity in the study. Last, I assumed that there was potential for administrators to reflect on the implementation process of PBIS as some schools in Guam have implemented the PBIS approach.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study was limited to participants from schools in the GDOE, which consists of one school district with 27 elementary schools (Poon-McBrayer, 2017). The study was limited to elementary schools in Guam. I selected Guam due to the varied culture on the island and its varied population. The population in Guam is ethnically diverse and includes native Chamorros, Filipinos, Pacific Islanders, and others from the surrounding Micronesian Islands (Stoicovy, Fee, & Fee, 2012).

The delimitations of the study were framed by my choice of the participants and grade levels. The participants included eight principals who had, to some degree, implemented PBIS at the elementary school level. I did not choose to interview teachers

because the gap in the literature concerns the role of administrators. I did not include middle and high school administrators because they were in the initial phases of PBIS implementation at their schools at the time of this study.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study was that I only interviewed administrators who worked in elementary schools and no other stakeholders in the PBIS process. Second, because of the unique nature of Guam's cultural diversity, it may not be possible to generalize the results to other locations with similar diversity. Finally, my own bias, which I address in Chapter 3, is that I am very familiar with the education system in the United States with 30 years of experience working in the educational field with over 17 different administrators.

Significance

This study may have significance regarding how the implementation of PBIS proceeds across schools in Guam and other states, territories, or countries. The findings from this study can help administrators look at PBIS more closely before they make a decision about a particular behavioral approach. Moreover, the results of this research will be shared with other administrators leading to a better understanding of the challenges, successes, and decision-making processes of implementing PBIS. Thus, the decisions of administrators may impact the future of children, who, under the current disciplinary approach in education, may be sent to prisons or detention facilities unless society changes the way children are disciplined.

Summary

Congress funded the implementation of a schoolwide behavioral approach as a preventative measure to address students' behavioral and academic needs (Students in Guam face generational struggles resulting in negative behaviors in the school setting. Effective implementation of PBIS could help prevent adverse behaviors, such as excessive absences, acting out in class, and lack of participation in school activities, helping students to learn alternative ways of addressing their actions (Fallon et al., 2012). However, little research had been conducted to understand administrators' perceptions of the PBIS implementation process. In this study, I researched the implementation of the PBIS framework in Guam. PBIS appears to have been implemented inconsistently, as not all the schools used the approach on a regular basis (McIntosh et al., 2016). For a behavioral framework that is being implemented in many schools in Guam, limited information was found to show administrators' perceptions and thought processes revealing why they choose to implement the behavioral approach in their schools or select other approaches. Some barriers identified include a lack of knowledge of the behavioral approach, poor implementation, and lack of administrative support (Bambara, Goh, Kern, & Caskie, 2012; McIntosh et al., 2016).

In this chapter, I provided a background for the study, the problem statement, purpose, and research question designed to provide insight into the perceptions of elementary school administrators in Guam related to the implementation of PBIS. I discussed the conceptual framework based on Rogers's (2003) innovation diffusion

theory and Lorenz's (1993) complexity theory. I explained the nature of the study—a basic interpretive qualitative design using interviews. Definitions of key terms, assumptions, scope, and delimitations of the research as well as its limitations and significance were discussed. In Chapter 2, I provide an in-depth review of the literature, seminal and current, on PBIS to identify the gap in the literature. A thorough analysis of the conceptual framework used in this study is also included.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The use of PBIS promotes a positive climate conducive for student learning (Feuerborn et al., 2013; OSEP, 2019). However, one of the challenges is a lack of consensus about the implementation of the approach among stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, and administrators (Bal et al., 2014). Horner, Sugai, and Fixsen (2017) and McIntosh et al. (2016) concurred that the lack of principal backing is a concern when implementing PBIS. Research regarding administrators' choices related to implementing PBIS in Guam schools is lacking but necessary to assure that there is consistency in implementation of the behavioral approach throughout a school district. The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions, roles, and decision-making practices of elementary school administrators in Guam regarding the implementation of PBIS.

With the support of the administrators, teachers and parents can implement changes to promote positive student behaviors in school. Administrators who take ownership of the process of reform and foster positive school climates with stronger relationships can empower teachers and faculty as well as cultivate agreement on change (Kyzar & Strickland-Cohen, 2017; Yoon, 2016). Feuerborn et al. (2013) agreed that acceptance of behavioral interventions by all stakeholders, especially administrators, has been important to the success of the behavioral approach in schools. Horner et al. (2017) studied effective educational practices and noted the process of implementation is particularly important.

McDaniel, Sunyoung, and Guyotte (2017) identified two reasons why stakeholders might not support PBIS in schools. First, in communities with higher poverty levels, administrators viewed PBIS as a lower priority than those in more affluent communities. Second, administrators have many responsibilities, thus adding an additional obligation is not favorable. Minimal research exists concerning administrators' reasons for accepting or rejecting the PBIS framework or the circumstances under which they make these decisions. In this study, the focus of the research question was to identify administrators' perceptions and the factors that impact their decisions related to the implementation of PBIS in their schools.

In this chapter, I explain the literature review search strategy used to find recent studies related to PBIS and administrators' acceptance of PBIS in K-12 school systems. Following this, I explain the conceptual framework I used for this study and discuss how related theories, including Rogers's (2003) innovation diffusion theory and Lorenz's (1993) complexity theory, have been applied in previous research as well as in this study. Next, I provide an overview of the literature related to the history of PBIS, the issues and considerations relevant to implementing PBIS, and other types of behavioral interventions used to improve behaviors and acceptance of these interventions by school stakeholders. After discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the studies, I identify the need for further research regarding administrators' decision-making practices related to the implementation of PBIS.

Literature Search Strategy

I developed this literature review using an exhaustive review of current literature from the Walden University Library research databases and search engines. The search included sources I gathered via EBSCOhost, Thoreau Multiple Databases tool, Walden University's Dissertation Database, ProQuest, ERIC, SAGE, and Education Source, along with Google Scholar cross-references to identify peer-reviewed journals. I used the following keywords and phrases in various combinations to complete this research: *positive behavior intervention*, *tiers*, *check in and check out (CICO)*, *juvenile detention*, *student behavior*, *educational organizations, implementation*, *school-wide evaluation tool (SET) survey*, *PBIS mentors*, *coach*, *assimilation*, *data-driven*, *interventions*, *administration*, *leadership*, *principals*, *systemic change*, *buy-in*, *school climate*, *support*, *sustainability*, *school culture*, *office discipline referrals (ODR*), *framework*, *cultural diversity*, *cultural influences, stakeholders*, *fidelity*, *family support*, *barriers*, and *change agent*. In addition, I used the references from the articles I reviewed to expand the search for available resources. Most of the research was published within the last 5 years; however, I also identified and used seminal works published earlier.

Conceptual Framework

Two theories were useful for the conceptual framework of this study: Rogers's (2003) innovation diffusion theory and Lorenz's (1993) complexity theory. These theories provide specific paradigms related to influence on transitions and implementation of changes. Innovation diffusion theory includes several phases—from

acknowledging an idea to the final phase of implementation (Rogers, 2003). The phases are relevant for understanding the administrators' thought processes when acknowledging the PBIS approach and determining if it is an idea that is compatible with the needs of schools. Lorenz's complexity theory delves into the intricate and nonlinear processes that lead to different decisions. In the next section, I describe Rogers's innovation diffusion theory and Lorenz's complexity theory as derived from systems and chaos theories (Lorenz, 1993) and then compare the two, specifically as they relate to adapting to changes and making transitions using newer approaches to learning frameworks such as PBIS.

Rogers's Innovation Diffusion Theory

In innovation diffusion theory, Rogers (2003) identified five consecutive phases to facilitate change: (a) knowledge of the innovation, (b) persuasion (attitude), (c) the decision to approve or reject an idea, (d) adoption of the idea, and (e) confirmation of the approval from others. The first phase—knowledge of the innovation—is broken into three sections: (a) becoming aware of a process or awareness knowledge, (b) subsequent learning about how things work or a how-to knowledge, and (c) conceptualizing the underlying principles of the idea or principles knowledge. Once stakeholders internalize the process, they can determine whether the knowledge is relevant to their specific needs.

In the second phase of the innovation diffusion theory—persuasion—the stakeholders gain in-depth information about an innovation (Rogers, 2003). They must then (a) decide if the new information is viable, (b) identify the related pros and cons, (c)

create a big picture of the idea, and (d) determine how it may be beneficial to the organization (Rogers, 2003). Through this process, the decision-makers can adopt an attitude that allows them to reject or accept an idea (Richards, Aguilera, Murakami, & Weiland, 2014; Rogers, 2003).

The third phase of the innovation diffusion theory—decision—concerns the stakeholders' adoption of a process to accept or reject an innovation (Rogers, 2003). During this phase, decision-makers may partially implement new ideas on a trial basis to determine how well a group might accept and incorporate the idea and determine whether the group will accept or reject it for the long-term. If the group rejects the idea, the decision-makers can move on to other ideas, but if accepted, the group may begin the implementation phase (Rogers, 2003).

In the fourth phase of innovation diffusion theory—implementation—all stakeholders have come to a consensus that the plan or idea is appropriate, data can be collected, and the plan will work for their organization (Rogers, 2003). During the final and fifth phase—confirmation—the stakeholders know the benefits of the innovation and incorporate the plan into their schedules as well as inform others about what is happening in their organization (Rogers, 2003).

Rogers (2003) streamlined these five phases for change and emphasized initiation and implementation as the primary components. In the initiation phase, the stakeholders, such as those at a school, identify the need for change and explore solutions. The school then begins to implement the change by modifying the new ideas to best fit the existing

organizational structure until the change is fully incorporated and part of the school dynamics.

Rogers (2003) emphasized that those adopting an innovative process often seek data to reduce uncertainties about the phases to be implemented before approving the changes. Raynard (2017) suggested the estimation of the impact of innovation is subjective and based on the level of interest and commitment of the stakeholders involved. For example, teachers can implement behavior modifications in the classroom for a specific marking period, collect data related to student behavior, and then consult with the grade levels and core PBIS teams or cadres for support.

Change may also occur when those of high rank and social prestige encourage innovation (Reiger, Gibson, Passarelli, & Flaspohler, 2017). Stakeholders whom the community looks upon positively are often emulated and have a larger peer following. Faculty members often look up to administrators who encourage and support them as positive leaders (Bosworth, Garcia, Judkins, & Saliba, 2018). Stakeholders with a smaller following may not be acknowledged; therefore, the level of innovation for change could be reduced (Reiger et al., 2017).

Rogers (2003) delineated the process for the adoption of the phases described above and how members of different and interrelated cultures incorporate these phases over time. Researchers and practitioners from the science and education fields have interpreted and implemented Rogers's diffusion of innovation theory. Doyle, Garrett, and Currie (2014) identified processes nurses could consider when contemplating a new idea.

In their study, nurses used mobile devices to demonstrate what they were learning. Doyle et al. posited that technology and leadership supports were important factors to implement mobile devices and sustain a program for their use. Supporting the notion that technological support is an important factor to implementation, Tshabalala, Ndeya-Ndereya, and van der Merwe (2014) identified the lack of functioning technology as an obstacle that educators faced when attempting to adopt blended learning in a higher education setting in South Africa.

Avidar (2017), using innovation diffusion theory in the context of social change, rather than in the context of technological advances, incorporated social marketing to influence societal situations such as homelessness. An example of social marketing is providing small loans to individuals who want to start a business but do not have the means without help from an organization. Tyre, Feuerborn, and Woods (2018) found that teachers and administrators were more willing to implement change when the goals and expectations were concise and transparent. Wood and Butt (2014) identified the iterative process of change as challenging when stakeholders did not have similar perspectives, thus making decision making inconclusive.

Lorenz's Complexity Theory

Change is a perpetual, iterative process of decision making; therefore, the circumstances surrounding the change will evolve and appear as disorganized (Lorenz, 1993). When administrators and faculty members decide to make changes, there can be an ongoing process of discussion before they proceed to implementation. Lorenz (1993)

provided a lens to view how leadership can make changes in culturally diverse communities. The basis for using complexity theory in the conceptual framework for this study was the interrelationships between specific agents or ideas as catalysts for change. Viewing change through this lens, which does not have discreet phases, may not appear as stepwise or linear; however, the theory was useful for viewing change as an emerging and evolving process.

Complexity theory originated from von Bertalanffy's (1968, 2008) systems theory. Von Bertalanffy defined systems theory as a perspective derived from mathematics; however, researchers have applied the theory widely in diverse fields by considering the definition as a composite of two concepts or ideas that change into something completely different. The theory later evolved into chaos theory described by Lorenz (1993) as "sensitively dependent on interior changes in initial conditions" (p. 24).

Researchers have had differing perspectives on complexity theory. Ambika (2015) attributed chaos theory, developed in the early 1960s, and the concept of the butterfly effect to Lorenz. According to Ambika, this theory eventually evolved into the more contemporary complexity theory. The theory, which changed over time, was referred to as the complexity theory due to the connection of intricate and nonlinear details that culminated with unexpected results (von Bertalanffy, 2008). In this study, this theory helped provide an understanding of the acceptance phase of the PBIS framework through the process of implementation in schools as well as an awareness that there were many variables to consider when attempting to restructure and implement any

components of an approach (Mason, 2016; Wood & Butt, 2014). The complexity theory assisted me in shaping the interview questions, which addressed the processes administrators have used to initiate change and how they came to their decisions.

Complexity theory includes a definition of change as a nonlinear process that underlies the apparent disorganization or instability of the change process (Shakouri, Teimourtash, & Teimourtash, 2014). White and Levin (2016) reported that instability was the segue for transformation. Perkins (2017) postulated that change could begin with a common understanding of an idea among several people; however, this idea can also cause turmoil until all parties are in agreement. For example, the challenges administrators and teachers face in a school may trigger a need for change and result in a modification of the approach.

The relationship among stakeholders, according to Kershner and McQuillan (2016), has an indirect positive or negative influence in schools. Mason (2016) asserted that educational organizations are complex yet interrelated units. The lack of administrative support, the socioeconomic status of the surrounding community, and political governance (policies and practices) were factors that contributed to challenges for schools, which may have resulted in more negative behaviors and poor academic performance of students (Mason, 2016).

White and Levin (2016) examined the acceptance of low academic performance in high schools by addressing the practices and attitudes of the stakeholders. They noted the expectations of faculty and staff tended to cause negative results for students. In

contrast, Mason (2016) suggested community and school stakeholders who understood the culture of the school and came to a mutual consensus could become change agents and impact the implementation of programs. Once stakeholders began the process, ongoing changes and sustainability of school programs could become a reality. As a result, the interaction of different environmental factors can create new and emerging dynamics (Mason, 2016).

Watkins et al. (2017) found that educational leaders must understand the culture of an organization as it transforms. Leadership should be aware of events that occur in the environment, possess emotional intelligence and self-awareness of their perspectives, and care for stakeholders. Watkins et al. noted those leaders who lacked these skills might not have been successful in making changes in an educational organization.

Two Theories: One Conceptual Framework

For this study, I focused on the third and fourth phases of Rogers's (2003) innovation diffusion theory—adoption and implementation—and Lorenz's (1993) complexity theory to create a conceptual framework to understand administrators' decisions to use PBIS as a behavioral approach in schools. Rogers noted that stakeholders might initially adopt or reject approaches then return to making innovations after they have more information, and the ideas have been reconsidered. The knowledge of innovation phase is consistent with the implementation process for PBIS because it allows stakeholders to learn about PBIS through ongoing dialogue, identifying important factors, and then return to the decision-making process. Administrators and faculty who

are interested in the approach can gain in-depth knowledge through training before they move toward implementing PBIS and integrating it into their organization (United States Department of Education [US ED], (2019).

In complexity theory, Lorenz (Kershner & McQuillan, 2016) identified how change could evolve in a nonlinear manner due to ongoing circumstances that influence the restructuring process. Circumstances may include the specific cultural needs of the school, the level of difficulty implementing a program, the stakeholders' perspectives, and the fidelity and sustainability of a program (White & Levin, 2016).

Lorenz's (1993) complexity theory and Rogers's (2003) innovation diffusion theory were used as the conceptual framework for this study to consider the patterns of administrators' experiences in adopting and implementing the PBIS program. The results from this study provide a deeper understanding of how educational leaders perceive PBIS, and why they choose to implement or reject the behavioral approach. Understanding was enhanced by viewing the participants' perceptions using the intricacies of change as described in Rogers's (2003) five phases of change and Lorenz's nonlinear processes of structuring implementation. Rogers (2003) described the process of acceptance of a new or different idea but did not identify or break down how individuals and groups move toward each phase of change. According to complexity theory, decision-makers need to think about how transitions, such as changing a behavioral approach, can evolve (Lorenz, 1993); however, complexity theory does not contain specific phases in the process as does innovation diffusion theory (Rogers, 2003).

Complexity theory allows the researcher to identify the pivotal unstructured ideas they gather, similar to brainstorming before coming to a final idea (Lorenz, 1993). Conversely, innovation diffusion theory is more appropriate to reach final goals for change (Rogers, 2003).

Literature Review

Helping students with special education needs was an impetus for PBIS. Through the 1997 amendment to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Congress sought to also address intervention plans to help students with challenging behaviors. The initiation of the functional behavior plan in conjunction with positive behavior supports and strategies were implemented. The 2004 reauthorization of the Act included behavioral modifications for all students (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004). In this literature review, I discuss the research findings regarding the origins of PBIS, the role of stakeholder involvement in the behavioral framework, PBIS and cultural needs, and behavioral intervention across different settings.

Positive behavior intervention is an innovative, preventative framework that has been implemented by stakeholders in many schools across the United States (McIntosh, Moniz, Craft, Golby, & Steinwand-Deschambeault, 2014). According to Bosworth et al. (2018) and McIntosh, Predy, et al. (2014), administrators were pivotal to the success of the framework. Although the research revealed important findings regarding the implementation of PBIS in elementary schools, I found no study that identified why administrators accepted or rejected the implementation of the behavioral framework.

Given this gap, research on administrators' roles and perceptions about PBIS in elementary schools was warranted.

Positive Behavior Intervention Support

The use of PBIS has evolved from an approach to reduce misconduct among special needs students to assisting all students with behavioral concerns. The overall objective has been to improve all students' academic performance (Hill & Flores, 2014). Students with behavioral problems in school experience negative outcomes including poor attendance, expulsion, suspension, and a higher dropout rate compared to well-behaved students. Some behaviors contributing to these negative outcomes are bullying, fighting, disrespecting teachers and peers, and bringing weapons to school (Chitiyo et al., 2014). PBIS is based on the principles of applied behavioral interventions and is a multitiered, evidence-based framework to promote long-term changes in positive social interactions (McIntosh, Moniz, et al., 2014). Bal et al. (2014) noted that a goal of PBIS has been to encourage students to participate in creating an educational setting with a positive climate with opportunities to learn and improve their academic skills. Thus, both children in regular education and those with special needs can benefit from a productive environment where they can focus on academic accomplishments.

Origins of PBIS. PBIS originated in the United States in the early 2000s primarily to assist students with special educational and emotional needs. The PBIS framework spread across many countries and different types of facilities to include K-12 schools, juvenile detention centers, and prisons (Gelbar, Jaffery, Stein, & Cymbala,

2015). Gelbar et al. (2015) demonstrated that behavioral interventions in schools varied and included using intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and intervention plans for students with social and emotional concerns. Educators have superficially addressed many of the students' negative behaviors by using after-school detention, time out, seclusion, loss of favorite activities, behavior plans, and repetitive warnings. This punitive approach might reinforce unwanted behaviors, and without training students on alternative methods to encourage positive behaviors, educators might not feel prepared to address students' emotional and behavioral needs (Pétursdóttir, 2017).

In a study conducted in Iceland, Pétursdóttir (2017) focused on using functional behavior analysis to address students' behavioral needs. The functional behavior analysis is a detailed plan used to address the needs of students with significant behavioral issues. Pétursdóttir demonstrated that master's level students were not familiar with the process when they attempted to generate functional behavior analyses for students in preschool through the secondary grades. Once these graduates learned how and why functional behavioral analyses are generated, they had a better understanding of these plans. The results indicated that thorough training for educators and administrators before they use and implement new programs could contribute to the success of the program (Pétursdóttir, 2017).

Implementation of PBIS. Letendre, Ostrander, and Mickens (2016) described successful implementation of PBIS to include professional training throughout the school year. The training should incorporate efforts to achieve acceptance among stakeholders,

setting clear behavioral expectations, ongoing collection of data, and sustaining consistency in implementing a program throughout the school. To carry out a PBIS behavioral framework, a core team of stakeholders might be formed to include administrators, counselors, psychologists, and specific PBIS mentors who support the core team, teachers, and parents (Letendre et al., 2016).

Kelm, McIntosh, and Cooley (2014) identified important factors for successful implementation of PBIS to include, for example, stakeholders' agreement with the proposed changes, expectations of students and teachers, and teams collecting school-wide behavioral data over time. Letendre et al. (2016) agreed that the most effective results occurred when administrators supported (a) the faculty's and staff's decision to use behavioral approaches, (b) teachers' implementation of the framework to develop strategies in the classrooms, and (c) parents' agreement regarding what is done in the school to create a positive school culture. Parents' support and an environment conducive for learning with fewer referrals to the principal can promote stronger academic performance from students as demonstrated by higher scores on formal tests (Letendre et al., 2016).

Multiple tiers of PBIS. Mercer, Mcintosh, and Hoselton (2017) stated that PBIS consists of three tiers of behavior interventions. They proposed that the first tier be focused on learning basic social rules, following classroom routines, using school-wide rules like walking (rather than running) in the building, being quiet in the cafeteria, participating in class, and cooperating with peers. By preventing or reducing negative

behaviors, teachers, staff, and faculty can reward students in an environment that is transparent and predictable (Mercer et al., 2017). Classroom teachers can collect data to identify problem behaviors for individual students. They can share these data with other educators and staff, such as administrators, counselors, and psychologists. Administrators can hold meetings with teachers and other staff members to find alternative ways to address students' needs (Letendre et al., 2016).

In the second PBIS tier, faculty and support staff address the specific needs of students who did not respond to initial interventions in Tier 1. Typically, students who require Tier 2 interventions exhibit challenging behaviors, such as excessive fighting, disrespect toward teachers, and excessive absences (PBIS, 2019). Second tier strategies include frequent use of small group sessions with students for problem-solving, check in and check out (CICO), and peer and counselor mentoring. In a case study, Sanchez, Miltenberger, Kincaid, and Blair (2015) found interventions such as CICO were effective for improving behaviors of students in elementary schools. The CICO intervention is a behavioral strategy in which students check in with a peer or adult concerning their daily goals. The students and their peers or adults meet again at the end of the day to review the students' behavioral and academic achievements. Sanchez et al. suggested that using CICO in elementary schools was an effective strategy if done consistently. In the Sanchez et al. study, which included one teacher, three students, and peer tutors who worked with students with attendance issues, the use of CICO interventions led to improved student

behaviors where the students met 72%-80% of their daily goals. When unmonitored, students met their goals at rates of 47%–69% (Sanchez et al., 2015).

Students move to Tier 3 interventions when their behavioral needs are increasingly more severe and require ongoing one-on-one assistance. In this case, specialized personnel generate functional behavior plans for students; these providers include school psychologists, administrators, and other support staff (PBIS, 2019). Malloy, Bohanon, and Francoeur (2018) researched a high-risk secondary school in New Hampshire in a 3-year quantitative study. The results indicated a need to address all students; however, the approach for each age group was different. In their study, Malloy et al. showed that high school students respond well to PBIS when their emotional and behavioral needs link with the interventions. Results of the PBIS implementation included reduced office discipline referrals, suspensions, and unexcused absences after implementing PBIS.

In quantitative study, Lane, Carter, Jenkins, Dwiggins, and Germer (2015) surveyed 365 administrators to identify the effectiveness of the implementation of PBIS in their schools. The results revealed that Tier 1 interventions were most prevalent because teachers were familiar with the basic social and emotional strategies of intervention. Administrators and teachers did not consistently implement Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions because they did not have the full continuum of professional training required to address the students' more complex social and emotional needs, which may be unmet by Tier 1 interventions (Lane et al., 2015).

In a 5-year descriptive case study, Cressey, Whitcomb, McGilvray-Rivet, Morrison, and Shander-Reynolds (2014) studied a core team consisting of an elementary school counselor and several other staff members who implemented a pilot PBIS intervention targeting one grade level. Prior to the implementation of the behavioral framework, the school administration approved measures for the counselor to attend a summer PBIS training. The counselor then worked with a team that included a social worker, fourth-grade teachers, an administrator, and two PBIS experts from Framingham State University. The members gathered archived data consisting of students' negative behavior patterns, then shared updates regarding their behaviors and how the team supervised the implementation of PBIS.

As part of the plan, the participating research team used a systemwide evaluation tool to survey and interview the students, staff, and administrators (Cressey et al., 2014). The use of surveys assisted in assessing the school's climate and the behavioral interventions needed. In addition, the team administered an annual survey to the faculty with the goal of identifying the fidelity of implementing PBIS in the school. They also used the survey to identify needs. All teachers set clear universal expectations with the students based on the survey results. The team also informed parents about the behavioral framework and provided updates on an ongoing basis. As each school year progressed, the team identified and shared with each student the consequences for continued negative behaviors as well as providing rewards as positive reinforcement for improved behaviors. The team used student goal achievement as a benchmark for the success that occurred as

a result of using the behavioral framework. Over the 5-year period, the stakeholders noted improvements in students' behaviors and academic achievement (Cressey et al., 2014). Cressey et al. demonstrated that improvements in behavior allowed more opportunities for students to focus on academics and concluded that leadership support, sustainability, and the fidelity of implementation were pivotal to making positive organizational changes in the school.

In a mixed-methods study, McIntosh, Predy, et al. (2014) used a survey to identify variables or factors that were barriers to implementing and sustaining PBIS. The participants had knowledge of PBIS and represented 234 schools across 14 states. The survey consisted of 50 items related to implementing and sustaining PBIS. The top responses concerning how to implement and sustain the program concerned the need for administrative support and skilled leadership teams to assist teachers, consistent data collection, and implementation with fidelity (McIntosh, Predy, et al., 2014). These results correlated with the lack of data associated with administrative support of PBIS.

Bosworth et al. (2018) conducted an empirical study with high school students to identify the correlation between bullying and PBIS. The researchers noted that positive changes occurred in the school because of the administrators' involvement and ability to empower other members of the faculty.

PBIS core teams. A core PBIS team can be made up of stakeholders in the school and may include teachers, parents, counselors, and administrators. Malloy et al. (2018) noted that the PBIS core team is an important component of the approach as it facilitates

the PBIS processes used at school. According to the PBIS (2019) program, members should receive training on how to deal with varied student behaviors, collect data, assist teachers in implementing distinct behavioral strategies, and present solutions for resolving negative behaviors. Furthermore, PBIS coaches or mentors, although not primary members of the core team, are important members who work with the core group as consultants. The team can request coaches through the district or identify them at the school level. The coaches should consult with teachers and give constructive feedback. The coaches can assist administrators in clearing up team, teacher, and staff misunderstandings about PBIS. The coaches' role also includes helping to set clear school goals, guiding teachers when strategies are not working, and eliminating cultural barriers that impact PBIS (2019).

Using quantitative research methods, Bethune (2017) studied the effectiveness of PBIS coaches in assisting elementary school teachers who were implementing Tier 1 strategies. The teachers had opportunities to work alongside coaches so they could discuss specific interventions for students and how to proactively manage their behaviors in school. Bethune's findings were consistent with those of Malloy et al. (2018), who suggested that having teachers work with coaches or mentors while implementing the PBIS framework was a more effective strategy than allowing them to learn on their own as they implemented behavioral strategies for students. Coaching appeared to increase the accuracy and fidelity of implementation.

The Role of Stakeholders in PBIS

In this section, I discuss the roles of specific stakeholders in relationship to PBIS in the schools. The stakeholders in this study include administrators, teachers, and parents.

Administrators in PBIS. The role of a school administrator is that of a leader who enforces rules to effect change (Evanovich & Scott, 2016). Furthermore, administrators collect student data as a part of determining the overall needs of a school. Predictions from data can lead to developing preventative behavioral measures and increasing the academic performance of students. Mathews, McIntosh, Frank, and May (2014) identified components that were important for increasing the success of PBIS programs using a survey of staff and faculty from 261 schools across the United States. A goal of the study was to identify factors that impact the success of PBIS.

The findings indicated that administrator support was essential for the successful implementation of PBIS. Principals enabled teachers to help students develop emotional and social skills; therefore, teaching activities that addressed these needs were quite different than those that applied to subject matter materials (Mathews et al., 2014).

McIntosh et al. (2016) identified various factors that correlated with Rogers's (2003) innovation diffusion theory and the role of the administrator. Administrators found that speaking with other administrators and/or conducting visits to other schools helped them to see how others implemented frameworks and helped them develop a positive attitude concerning the behavioral framework. In a qualitative study, Weiland,

Murakami, Aguilera, & Richards (2014) found that administrators who were more involved in PBIS meetings tended to give teachers time to collaborate and present what they learned to colleagues. Administrators who are active and enthusiastic about the implementation of a program can impact change in schools.

Teachers in PBIS. According to the innovation diffusion theory, the role of the teacher is related to the second phase of persuasion (Rogers, 2003). Teachers can be resistant to transitions when they must change the strategies they use in their classes, although they can be persuaded to participate in the change process. In a qualitative study of Romanian teachers, Palos and Gunaru (2017) focused on teacher attitudes toward continuing education training and resistance to change. The researchers found that the teachers enjoyed educational training; however, if school administrators mandated change, they were less responsive.

The impact of mandated change is relevant to implementing PBIS because the majority of stakeholders must agree for effective change to occur. Bosworth et al. (2018) found that administrators who supported changes in schools were also instrumental in influencing teachers to partake in systemic change. Filter, Sytsma, and McIntosh (2016) found that buy-in from teachers resulted in a positive attitude toward change as well as a commitment to implement it. Houchens et al. (2017) studied elementary schools in Kentucky and found a positive impact from the use of PBIS in schools where the leadership was prepared to advocate for teachers. Richards et al. (2014) found that PBIS

was viewed from a different perspective because teachers were educating students regarding behaviors and social skills and not just teaching academic subjects.

Parent involvement in PBIS. Garbacz et al. (2016) found that cultivating common interests and goals is often a challenge when there is limited communication among parents and students and diverse cultural and social needs. These needs could include homelessness, lack of proper nutrition and medical attention, language barriers, and a lack of safety in the community. Garbacz et al. noted that families at different levels of education communicated differently. The parents who had limited education did not interact as much with their children as the more educated parents. The educated parents could expose their children to parks, museums, and other cultural events as well as help them with school activities. Garbacz et al. found that parents with elementary school children were more involved, but as they entered middle and high school, this lessened. This may have been because of language barriers, an increase in difficulty in academic work, and the child's focus shifting to cultivating social interactions with peers (Garbacz et al., 2016). Flannery, Frank, McGrath Kato, Doren, and Fenning (2013) found students in secondary school wanted to be more autonomous in their decision making. Thus, students transitioning to adulthood with ongoing behavioral needs were more focused on their lives outside of school.

Cummings (2017) identified the pyramid model, based on the PBIS framework, where the focus is on nurturing students' social and emotional engagement and development at an early age. Cummings identified three intervention phases that fostered

social interactions between school and home settings. McIntyre and Garbacz (2014) concurred that building relationships between home and school is a primary component of the pyramid model. Garbacz et al. (2016) stated that communication with parents concerning the rationale of programs and plans was important when implementing changes. In agreement with McIntyre and Garbacz, Garbacz et al. suggested that conversations at school should also extend to the home. The extension of these relationships can increase the sustainability and fidelity of PBIS.

However, it was also clear from Garbacz's et al.(2016) and McIntrye and Garbaez (2014) findings that as students progressed to the upper grades, the communication and support between home and school tended to decrease. Consequently, these researchers found that parents and community members were not as involved with communicating with the schools as they may have been with afterschool and other programs. Parents did not feel they were equipped to proficiently facilitate change and help students succeed because they lacked knowledge about school programs and curriculum. Although there are potential barriers, faculty and staff can implement PBIS if they have a positive attitude concerning cross-communication with families and the community.

In a separate study, Garbacz et al. (2018) identified strategies school staff used to work with parents so that they could actively engage in their children's education. According to Garbacz et al., all stakeholders should invest in learning about the unique needs and strengths of the others while building relationships and increasing school-

family engagement. The increased relationships and communication lead to deeper involvement in school academically and socially.

PBIS and Cultural Needs

When implementing PBIS, it is important to consider the needs of students who are culturally diverse (Betters-Bubon, Brunner, & Kansteiner, 2016). Horner et al. (2017) suggested that although PBIS has proven to be a flexible framework that allows for changes based on the needs of the population, administrators and teachers may not easily make adjustments because PBIS is not a static framework. In addition, the potential adjustments evolve relative to the needs of the school as a whole and the students as individuals (Horner et al., 2017).

In a 5-year study, Betters-Bubon et al. (2016) noted that elementary schools' disciplinary referrals for African American and Latino students were disproportionally higher than for their Caucasian and Asian peers during the first year of implementation of behavior lessons. The rate for African American students was significantly higher at over 55%. Better-Bubon et al. identified the counselor as a pivotal stakeholder in the success of PBIS because they are familiar with cultural diversity and could increase stakeholders' awareness of different cultural behaviors. In the study, school staff invited community speakers to address diverse cultural needs. Better-Bubon et al. found a reduction in office discipline referrals of Black and Latino students after the first year of PBIS implementation.

Lopez (2016) studied Latino students in Arizona and found that educators who had a linguistics background and were knowledgeable of dual language methods and Latino cultures, were more aware of cultural differences than teachers who did not have this training. Consequently, teachers with these skills and experience were able to reduce behavioral concerns and racial disparities. Moreover, Skiba and Williams (2014) and Huang (2018) found that African American, Hispanic, and Native American students received more out-of-school suspensions related to low social-economic status and aggressive behaviors than did Caucasian students. In both studies, the researchers identified racial disparities; however, if educators had some awareness of school culture and there was a positive school climate, there were fewer behavioral concerns than in schools without these characteristics (Huang, 2018; Skiba & Williams, 2014).

Greflund, McIntosh, Mercer, and May (2014) studied an Aboriginal population and found results commensurate with those of minority groups in the United States. In this study, many children of Aboriginal ancestry who attended Canadian rural schools were of low socioeconomic status and lived transient lives. Often, these children were displaced from their homes and forced to live in residences where the cultural upbringing the children were exposed to was unfamiliar to them. The Indigenous students received heavier and more frequent reprimands for misbehaving, but no disproportionality of their improved behavior was evident between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students (Greflund et al., 2014). Providers working in schools were familiar with the cultural diversity of their students and could better relate to their cultures.

Horner et al. (2017) and McIntosh, Moniz, et al. (2014) concurred that in places where school staff were culturally responsive to the population in their schools, they were able to cultivate safe and positive school climates. The Indigenous students in Canada are taught social behaviors by teachers, which are reviewed on an ongoing basis at school. Misco and Lee (2012) noted that the education system in Guam is complex. This is due to the intricate history related to ongoing wars on the island. As a territory of the United States, the local people have transitioned from a culture of the purely Indigenous Chamorro to a mixture of people from the Micronesian islands, the Philippines, Japan, and the United States. Stoicovy et al. (2012) found that, unlike the students in Canada, the Chamorro students of Guam represent over 21 ethnic groups. According to Misco and Lee, the education system on the Island reflects all the different cultures now identified as the people of Guam under the jurisdiction of the U.S. education model of teaching. Educators have tried to teach based on the populations in their schools to improve social and cultural sensitivity.

Through these studies and an in-depth understanding of the Guamanian students and their families, researchers can identify commonalities among students, such as cultural disparities, mistaken intellectual abilities, and high incidences of misbehaviors. As the administrators, teachers, and parents become aware and understand cultural differences, the school community can incorporate core social values based on their students' needs when implementing the behavioral framework.

Behavior Intervention Across Different Settings

Behavioral intervention strategies are visible across a range of educational and social settings, including alternative schools and juvenile detention facilities (McIntosh, Predy, et al., 2014; Pinkelman, McIntosh, Rasplica, Berg, & Strickland-Cohen, 2015). Children in juvenile detention facilities often present with emotional and behavioral challenges and childhood diagnoses of academic deficits (McIntosh, Predy, et al., 2014). Many of these children have faced challenges, such as broken homes, negative long-term school experiences, imprisonment, truancy, and drug and sexual abuse (McIntosh, Predy, et al., 2014; Predy, et al., 2014). Dembo et al. (2016) reported that children in academic and emotional challenges were often in need of more than basic behavior intervention strategies. McIntosh, Predy, et al., 2014, Dembo et al. (2016) all noted that interventions, such as seclusion from their daily environments, medication, and intense psychological therapy, were warranted.

Programs used in the past have included zero tolerance because administrators considered students who broke the rules as a risk to themselves and others. These students often went from school to juvenile detention facilities or to prison (Lopez, Williams, & Newsom, 2015; Mallett, 2016; Alonzo-Vaughn, Bradley, & Cassavaugh, 2015). Mallett (2016) found that punitive feedback corrected the negative behaviors temporarily; however, the use of restorative or rehabilitative strategies, such as PBIS, enabled students to create relationships and learn new ways to deal with their circumstances. Mallet found that there was a link between positive outcomes and the

administrators, teachers, and other related service providers, who worked consistently in accordance with the behavioral framework.

McDaniel, Jolivette, and Ennis (2014) compared two alternative educational facilities where staff used the PBIS framework. Group 1 did not apply the behavioral recommendations, but Group 2 made significant changes to see if PBIS was effective. The researchers found that help with positive activities and the change in attitude from administrators and facility employees were pivotal to the systemic change process as implemented at the alternative schools and detention facilities. The findings showed that students in educational detention facilities required Tier 2 and 3 interventions because of the severity of their negative behaviors (Daniel et al., 2014). The students required more intense supervision and ongoing team-based interventions as well as personalized attention. The teachers in Group 2 worked extra to create plans for these students in addition to providing academic support. Group 1 dropped out because there was not enough acceptance of the PBIS programs; however, Group 2 decided to implement the framework regardless of the extra work (Daniel et al., 2014).

In addition, McDaniel et al. (2014) found that while PBIS could work in alternative educational settings, there was an adoption and adaptation process that had to take place. Group 1 behaviors did not change, but students in Group 2 received more rewards and clearer expectations than Group 1. Findings regarding student behaviors were not given in the study; however, McDaniel et al. found that both groups of administrators and faculty were strained by the workload required to maintain an

alternative educational setting for students with appropriate discipline and responses to emotional needs.

Simonsen and Sugai (2013) noted that students in alternative educational settings have a right to an education. The difference between working in restrictive detention and a more typical school setting is that the challenges of monitoring and adjusting the curriculum for the social and emotional wellbeing of students in restrictive detention is greater. Understanding how negative behaviors may be reduced in different settings was relevant to my study because it relates to the research question regarding why administrators do or do not implement the PBIS framework.

In a 3-year study, Steed, Pomerleau, Muscott, and Rohde (2013) found that preschool children in rural schools received limited services and resources because they were not near major cities. In rural areas, there is a lack of qualified faculty and staff and a higher rate of staff turnover, while children in these communities face different social-emotional challenges than their urban counterparts. The use of PBIS in rural preschool settings resulted in higher social interactive skills for children through the first 2 years of the study (Steed et al., 2014). During the third year of PBIS implementation in the rural environments, teachers and staff received ongoing training and their understanding of the framework increased. Similarly, Kelm et al. (2014) found that when administrators in elementary schools in British Columbia had concerns about the number of students with behavior problems in their schools, they decided to replicate the PBIS as it had been used in the United States.

PBIS in various settings. In a case study, Kelm et al. (2014) compared the implementation of PBIS in an elementary school to that of middle schools. The results indicated that in the elementary school, the use of the behavioral framework with fidelity increased the number of positive student behaviors and the level of academic achievement. In this case, the program included latitude for teachers to identify the specific needs of the school and its culture. Kelm et al. also compared the elementary (fourth graders) students' improvements to those of students in middle school (seventh graders). The fourth and seventh grade students' math scores increased along with feelings of safety in the school. However, the seventh-grade students were not as aware of the school expectations as were the fourth graders. Overall, Kelm et al. found that results depended on the population under study, but the use of PBIS in the Canadian school showed positive outcomes in behaviors and academics.

Malloy et al. (2018) found that in high schools where there was no framework for behavioral interventions there were lower student academic achievement, poor attendance, and high dropout rates. Malloy et al. found that the primary school students' needs were different from secondary school students as those in the upper grades are adolescents transitioning into adulthood. For example, high school students focus on life aspirations, including college and future vocations. High school students' social and emotional needs are also distinct from elementary and middle school students.

Flannery et al. (2013) studied eight high schools in the United States where PBIS had been implemented. They found that school size, culture, and age of the students

could be factors that affect implementation. These factors could make collecting data, establishing leadership groups, and determining the needs of schools, challenging. In addition, the results showed high schools often have diversity in leadership and structure that creates difficulties for leaders and decision-makers to come to a consensus. Flannery et al. did find positive impacts in high schools during the second year of PBIS implementation. These included a reduction in student violence, such as fighting and disrespecting faculty. However, changes took longer to implement due to the complexity of the high school culture, difficulties in reaching a consensus and collaboration, and acceptance from the administrators, teachers, and students.

In a subsequent study of 12 high schools in the United States, Flannery, Fenning, Kato, and McIntosh (2014) found the results of implementing PBIS were similar to those found by Flannery et al. (2013). In both studies, behavior patterns did not diminish during the first year; however, during the second and third years of implementation, the researchers noted a decrease in office referrals, suspensions, and student lateness. Flannery et al. (2014) used a quasiexperimental design when comparing data prior to the implementation of PBIS. Their findings showed increased school attendance and decreased office discipline referrals. For students who were performing below grade level, academic progress increased minimally. In addition, there was also monitoring of the implementation of PBIS as the school implemented the framework in their school over time.

PBIS outside of the United States. Behavioral concerns in school are not unique

to the United States. Studies carried out in Canada, Turkey, and Africa revealed that students in these geographic regions were also in need of behavioral reorganization (Chitiyo et al., 2014; Greflund et al., 2014; Kelm et al., 2014; McIntosh, Moniz, et al., 2014; Melekoğlu, Bal, & Diken, 2017). According to Greflund et al. (2014), children who identified as having Indigenous ancestry in Canada were treated as second-rate citizens by the school faculty. The students displayed behavioral issues, were incarcerated, and had dropout rates above 50%. Greflund et al. found there was not a remarkable behavioral difference between the Indigenous students and the non-Indigenous students after PBIS implementation.

In a study done in Zimbabwe, Chitiyo et al. (2014) identified behavioral concerns and teachers' perceptions about behaviors such as truancy, drug use, sexual misconduct, bullying, and violence. Teachers noted that although parents consented to physical punishment for their children, it was not effective. The researchers found that Zimbabwean teachers identified what was socially inappropriate behavior based on their cultural values and attempted to correct the problems using physical consequences because that is what they knew. The study revealed that 81% of the teachers felt the behavioral concerns were due to poor discipline. When the teachers attended in-service training about PBIS and became aware of new strategies and behavioral frameworks, their views changed because they realized that punitive feedback was not effective in improving the students' behavior. Chitiyo et al. noted that additional research is warranted in the area of application of PBIS to further explore how student behaviors

would be impacted.

Summary and Conclusions

A review of the literature on PBIS indicates that it is an effective behavioral framework, although education professionals may not have implemented the program in the majority of the schools (Sugai, Simonsen, Freeman, & La Salle, 2016). Teachers are often the first to feel the impact of their students' behaviors and are continuously seeking ways to help them be successful academically and socially (Houchens et al., 2017). However, teachers have faced limitations regarding how they can address students' behavior because they have received minimal in-service training to address negative student behaviors as well as have limited funding, oversized classrooms, increased responsibilities, and a lack of administrative support (Shuster et al., 2017).

Thousands of schools in the United States and around the world have implemented PBIS with the goals of improving school climate, students' wellbeing, and improving academic progress. However, there are still questions about sustainability and fidelity (Tyre & Feuerborn, 2017). One challenge Tyre and Feuerborn (2017) identified was ensuring administrators' buy-in for implementing approach such as PBIS. Researchers often mentioned training, coaching, and implementation, but less information is available regarding administrative acceptance (Andreou et al., 2015; Turri et al., 2016). It is clear from the review of the literature that administrative support is essential in the implementation of PBIS; however, there is a lack of research regarding the implementation process and an insufficient understanding of why PBIS is not

implemented more often in schools nationally and internationally. In this study, I examined administrators' perceptions, roles, and decision-making practices in the implementation of PBIS in elementary schools in Guam. Addressing this gap in the literature clarified the obstacles that impede the implementation of behavioral frameworks aimed to reduce behavioral problems in elementary schools.

To identify administrators' perceptions, roles, and decision-making practices in the implementation of the behavioral intervention approaches in Guam schools, I conducted a basic interpretative qualitative study. In Chapter 3, I discuss the research design and rationale for its selection and my role as the researcher. The methodology used in this study, including participant selection, instrumentation, and procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection, is explained. I also describe the data analysis plan and review issues of trustworthiness and the ethical procedures used in this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions, roles, and decision-making practices of elementary school administrators in Guam regarding the implementation of PBIS. Understanding disparities in the decision-making processes as well as how administrators implement PBIS may indicate underlying problems with this behavioral framework. In this chapter, I discuss my research methodology.

Research Design and Rationale

The following research question framed the methodological approach of this study: How do administrators describe their perceptions, roles, and decision-making practices regarding the implementation of PBIS in schools?

Because I initially determined the research question was better answered with qualitative data, I considered various designs identified by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). The qualitative research designs I considered included phenomenology, ethnography, and case study. Phenomenological studies depict the essence of an experience to form an in-depth understanding of that experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The meaning of the administrators' experiences was not the focus of this study; rather, I sought to explore the perspectives of the administrators regarding their roles in the implementation of a behavioral approach in an educational setting and what was beneficial for their schools. An ethnographical study, according to Merriam and Tisdell, requires immersion in a specific cultural group and climate over time. In my study, I focused on administrators' perspectives instead of culture and school climate. While I coded and categorized data

from interviews, the research did not call for a unique theory. Merriam and Tisdell noted that researchers conduct narrative inquiry by describing the stories or events in someone's life, which form the data I collected data for this study via interviews, but a narration of events was not part of the process. A case study is bounded by time and activity and based on specific characteristics with more than one data point, such as observations, interviews, and documents (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I did not choose case study because the research question calls for the perspectives of one group of stakeholders who are not in a bounded setting.

The research question in this study was best addressed through a basic qualitative interpretive study, as described by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), to elicit a deeper understanding of the administrators' perceptions of PBIS. A basic qualitative approach enables researchers to explore perceptions, meanings, and how individuals make sense of a situation, which allowed for a deeper understanding of the participants' interactions in the context of PBIS implementation. When interviewing the participants, I was able to obtain in-depth information and had an opportunity to ask additional questions based on the information they shared.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, my role was to identify and recruit participants, conduct interviews to collect data, and then analyze and code the data by categorizing emerging themes. I used the data to answer the research question. I was the sole researcher and responsible for all related communication with the participants, the transcription of

interviews, and the corresponding analysis. Although I have over 30 years of experience working in schools, I did not have a relationship with any of the participants in the Guam study.

Once the study was approved by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), I worked with the central educational office in Guam to recruit participants. I maintained a journal to reflect on the data, and I used audio recordings of the participants' interviews, so I did not distort their wording. In addition, I had my committee review a portion of the interviews to make sure that any bias I might have had did not influence the outcome of the study.

Methodology

In this section I discuss separate aspects of the methodology used in this study. These include participant selection logic, instrumentation collection, procedures for data collection, and the data analysis plan. For each, I provide details of the process I applied.

Participant Selection and Recruitment

To identify potential participants, I worked with the Guam school district office and completed the documentation needed to obtain their cooperation in identifying the appropriate elementary school administrators for the participant pool. Once the study was approved by my committee, the deputy superintendent who was in charge of overseeing GDOE's administrators agreed to provide a letter of cooperation. After receiving permission and the approval number from Walden University's IRB, I forwarded my invitation to potential administrators to participate in this study. Administrators who were

willing to be included in the study responded directly to me. I then sent emails to the participants explaining their roles and the time commitment for the interviews along with the consent form for participation, which they were to return to me. I selected the eight administrators who responded to my invitation and who self-reported that they were in charge of PBIS at their schools. The data collected from the eight participants were sufficient to reach saturation. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that a repetition of the same information by the participants is when data saturation is reached.

Instrumentation

The primary data source were the participants' responses to semistructured interview questions (see Appendix) that I designed based on the research question, literature review, and conceptual framework for this study as well as assistance from my committee. Rubin and Rubin (2012) defined a semistructured interview as having questions prepared prior to the interview in conjunction with follow up questions for additional clarification or that lead to other ideas, thus allowing for rich and in-depth information. In addition, Rubin and Rubin noted that using responsive interviewing allows for increased rapport with the interviewee and leads to ongoing reciprocity during the interview. The interview protocol began with an overall summary of the study, including the purpose of the research. The participants had time to ask questions before the interviews began. To facilitate reciprocity during the interviews, I paced my questions and allowed the interviewees time to respond without rushing to the next question. I used follow-up questions in the form of probes related to the research question.

Procedures for Data Collection

Once I obtained approval from Walden University's IRB and the school district, and the district identified the potential administrators who worked in the elementary schools, I visited all schools and presented invitations to participate in the study to the potential participants. I asked that those who were interested respond to me directly. Once the administrators responded, I sent them the invitation and consent form by email. When the consent form was returned, I scheduled face-to-face or phone interviews with the eight administrators for 35-75 minutes, based on the participants' availability. I recorded all interviews with the permission of the participants. Each participant received a $20 gift card in appreciation for agreeing to participate in the study.

The data collection began with an introduction of my role as a doctoral student and an explanation that this research was a requirement for completing my dissertation. I then explained the purpose of my study. I asked each participant if they had any questions before we began the interview process. I reminded the participants that they could refuse to answer a question or withdraw from the study at any time with no repercussions. I recorded the 35-75-minute phone interviews using a digital recorder along with a back-up recording device to avoid any loss of data. All information remains confidential to protect the participants. I created pseudonyms for each to guard their identities and their schools.

Once each interview was complete, I transcribed the recording. To ensure the accuracy of the transcripts, the participants were emailed copies of their transcribed interviews for review and verification along with the opportunity to provide corrections

and additions. I asked them to respond by email concerning any changes or additions to the transcripts and collected responses within 5 business days after they were received. In the process of data collection, I followed all regulations approved by Walden University's IRB, which were fundamental to the ethical standards for this study.

Data Analysis Plan

Once each participant reviewed and returned their interview transcripts, I began the process of continuous open-ended coding by searching the responses to identify themes and patterns that emerged. This approach to coding, as recommended by Rubin and Rubin (2012), enabled me to make an in-depth connection with the participants' PBIS experiences to the research question and collect rich data. Patton (2015) noted that a thorough analysis of data creates purposeful relationships among the responses collected. Patton's approach to data analysis included organizing the data, breaking it up into meaningful groups and patterns, and then identifying the emerging information. Open coding provided a way to extract the participants' feelings and experiences related to the research study. I took into consideration the theories in the conceptual framework (Lorenz, 1993; Rogers, 2003) and looked at the data to categorize any patterns, such as repeated words or phrases, and similar experiences at various stages of implementation of PBIS

In addition, I used a research journal and made notes from each interview, which I used to help with coding the participants' responses. To locate concepts, events, and themes readily, and to ensure I addressed all data, I used markers on each transcription as

suggested by Rubin and Rubin (2012). I took meticulous notes, which also ensured transparency and enables future readers to see how I conducted the study.

Issues of Trustworthiness

There are four components that ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research. The components are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. As the researcher, I incorporated validity and reliability in my study by having the participants read the transcripts. In this study, the participants reviewed the authenticity of their responses from the interviews for accuracy.

Credibility

I established credibility by extracting rich details from the data. This allowed me to make connections that revealed patterns as well as the opportunity to discover unexpected similarities in the data (Patton, 2015). To reduce bias in the study, I recorded all interviews, and I kept notes in a journal. I corroborated all information as I transcribed and coded data. Furthermore, to increase the credibility of the study, I provided participants with a copy of the interview transcripts for their review.

Transferability

Transparent data collection and analysis facilitates future research in other locations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I collected detailed descriptions based on the administrators' responses to the interview questions. Other researchers will be able to read and duplicate the research because of the in-depth information provided. To ensure

transferability, I kept notes of my transactions with the participants, detailed accounts of data collection, and the sequential procedures during the interview process.

Dependability

Guba (1981) described dependability in qualitative research as the consistency and stability of data over time. Reviewing my journal data, interview recordings, and interview notes allowed for ongoing checks of quality data and transcriptions. I also kept a field journal of calls and emails. I separated all data for each interview, thus making sure, through these thorough checks, to ensure replication of this research with similar results.

Confirmability

Confirmability, as defined by Guba (1981), is the ability to base findings on the participants' interview responses and data collected by the researcher. I coded and categorized transcribed responses. In addition, I maintained a journal and took notes during the interviews and coding process to reduce bias and maintain objectivity. In addition, I asked my committee members to help me identify any potential bias that may have influenced the results of my data.

Ethical Procedures

Upon approval from the Guam Department of Education and Walden University's IRB, an invitation to participate in the study was sent to potential participants by the district office asking those interested in taking part to respond to me directly. The consent form, which I emailed to the participants, included an explanation of the procedures and

purpose of the study, policies regarding confidentiality and privacy, information on withdrawal from the study, and the security of collected data. To ensure the confidentiality of the participants, I used pseudonyms during the interview and coding process as well as in the final dissertation.

Because I do not work in the Guam schools, I had no personal relationships or connections with the deputy superintendent of GDOE. I had no prior relationships with the participants who took part in this study. I shared confidential information with my committee members as needed in coded or private formats, and only as the information was related to this study. To ensure confidentiality, I stored electronic data on my personal computer protected by a password only known to me. In addition, I will keep interview recordings, transcripts, and any correspondence in a secure location in my home for 5 years as required by Walden University, at which time all data will be destroyed.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I shared the research design and rationale for the study to identify administrators' perceptions about their roles and practices in the implementation of the behavioral approach across elementary schools in Guam. My role as the researcher was to identify and recruit participants, conduct interviews, and then analyze and code the collected data by categorizing emerging themes. The methodology for this study included semistructured interviews, which I conducted as part of a basic interpretative qualitative design with eight administrators in Guam. I addressed issues of trustworthiness and

ethical procedures. In addition, I discussed how I obtained IRB approval and school district approval to solicit participants for this research, as well as how I protected the data and ensured the confidentiality of the participants in this study.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the setting for this study and the participants' demographics. The data collection process and analysis are described along with the results of this study and how trustworthiness was established.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions, roles, and decision-making practices of elementary school administrators in Guam regarding the implementation of PBIS. This study was expected to develop a deeper understanding of administrators' perceptions and identify components of the PBIS that may need to be changed to facilitate easier implementation of the approach in schools. In this chapter, I present the setting and demographics of the participants in the study, the data collection process, the description of the data analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness. I conclude the chapter with the research results.

Research Question

How do administrators describe their perceptions, roles, and decision-making practices regarding the implementation of PBIS in schools?

Setting

The study included eight participants from eight different elementary schools throughout Guam. I obtained a list of the administrators and their respective schools from the GDOE school directory webpage. I visited schools throughout the island and presented my intent to conduct the study and its purpose. At each school, I gave the administrator or the school office personnel my contact information in a sealed envelope and asked them to get in touch with me if they were interested in participating in the study. Only individuals who met the criteria for this study were asked to participate.

All participants selected the times and locations for the one-to-one private interviews. One of the challenges in data collection was time restrictions as many of the participants had busy workdays comprised of meetings, training, and other school related responsibilities. As a result, interviews were held before, during, or after work, depending on the participants' schedules. During the interviews, some of the administrators noted that they had meetings afterward; however, they all responded to the questions and did not rush to reply. Several interviews were rescheduled more than once due to unexpected work situations.

Demographics

I invited participants who were administrators in schools using PBIS at the elementary grade level. All eight participants were principals in the Guam school district and familiar with the initial implementation of PBIS or inherited the behavioral framework when they became administrators at their schools. All participants were full-time administrators. Table 1 provides the gender-neutral pseudonyms I assigned to each participant, their administrative role, years in their current position, and their initial impression of the behavioral approach. All but one participant was originally positive about the behavioral approach.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Administrative background	Experience	Initial perception of behavioral approach
Emerson	Principal	>20 years	Positive
Finley	Principal	>10 years	Positive
River	Principal	>10 years	Positive
Skyler	Principal	>10 years	Positive
Avery	Principal	>5 years	Positive
Dakota	Principal	>5 years	Positive
Morgan	Principal	<5 years	Positive
Haven	Principal	<5 years	Previously unfamiliar

Data Collection

After receiving IRB approval (No. 11-22-19-0419967) from Walden University and consent from the GDOE, I obtained a list of all the elementary schools and their corresponding addresses from the GDOE district office directory. I visited the elementary schools and presented a copy of the description of the study and the GDOE approval letter to conduct the research to the administrator. If an administrator was not available, the sealed envelope with the description of the study and approval letter were left with the office personnel.

Those who chose to participate were able to review the consent form and then email me stating that they would participate in the research study. Prior to the interviews, I confirmed the date, time, and location via email with each participant. I conducted each of the interviews in person at a time, date, and location selected by the participants. I began each interview with the same script by reviewing the purpose of the study, its voluntary nature, steps to ensure participant confidentiality, and the conclusion of interview procedures. I then asked the participants if they had any questions before beginning the interview.

Each semistructured interview included all interview questions; however, there were specific variations due to the participants' experiences. There were similarities in the participants' responses were based on how the behavioral approach was begun at the school, procedures of initial implementation, and challenges experienced. The interviews were recorded using a hand-held recorder in conjunction with hand-written notes. I listened intently so that I could ask additional questions related to their responses. I also used probing questions that I had designed as part of my interview protocol to aid me in gathering relevant information related to my research. Individual interviews lasted between 35-75 minutes. Following each interview, I transcribed the audio recording and sent the participant a copy for review. I asked the participant to review the transcript for accuracy and add any additional information and return it to me within 5 business days. No participants requested changes. The participants were presented with a $20 gift card in appreciation for participating in the study. One participant noted that the gesture was

appreciated but did not accept the gift card. The data collection process took approximately 3 months to visit schools, recruit participants, and schedule and conduct interviews.

I used pseudonyms in the transcripts and findings; the participants were assured of the confidentiality of their information at the beginning and end of the interviews. Recruitment information, interview responses, and the coding process were kept confidential and not shared with the participants' organizations or others who took part in the study. I adhered to all IRB regulations required by Walden University. All interview recordings, transcripts, the research log, and correspondence will remain stored in my password-protected personal computer for 5 years, as required by Walden University, at which time all data will be expunged.

There was one variation to the data plan. While there were eight participants who completed the interviews, I scheduled nine interviews; however, one administrator had to cancel the appointment due to work obligations and was not able to reschedule a time for the interview. Using the guidelines from Rubin and Rubin (2012), I reached data saturation with the eight interviews when no new information was presented.

Data Analysis

The first step in this basic qualitative study was to transcribe and summarize each interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I read then reread each transcript while listening to the audio recording to ensure accuracy prior to sending the individual transcripts to the participants for their review. In addition, I reread each transcript with the intent of

identifying commonalities and differences. I wrote comments on the side of the text and underlined emerging themes and concepts. I looked for repetitive responses to each question. Next, I reviewed the participants' answers to the interview questions based on additional emerging responses. These were then retyped according to each question and color-coded to readily identify patterns.

I used a thematic approach to inductive reasoning, as described by Patton (2015). Many of the responses to the questions were similar, especially the initial questions regarding implementation of PBIS. Lastly, I used my research log to make sure additional details noted in the interview sessions were not overlooked. The coding process helped me structure my outline of themes and gain a more in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and perceptions of PBIS.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

In this section, I address how I adhered to Walden University's ethical standards and IRB guidelines and scholarly methodological practices to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The following ensured the trustworthiness in the study.

Credibility

An integral component of research is rigor and congruency of findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I included a review process to ensure the accuracy of data collected for each interview. I asked the participants to review the transcripts and confirm that the

information presented reflected their responses. I also used a research log for additional interview notes and to document the interview process.

Transferability

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), transferability is focused on the extent to which a study can be applied to other settings. In this study, I identified the location and academic level of the organization and clearly stated the purpose of the study. I selected participants from the GDOE schools who were familiar with PBIS. I delineated the details of my research design and provided information about the data collection process.

Dependability

Guba (1981) noted that dependability in qualitative research is achieved when there is sufficient and consistent data to authenticate the results. I kept a research log, interview notes, phone call details, and highlighted comments related to commonalities and differences related to evolving themes. Data were categorized to ensure replication with similar outcomes.

Confirmability

To address this criterion, I reflected throughout each step of the data collection process to maintain objectivity. In addition, I maintained a research log to record my steps and wrote detailed notes during the interviews and coding process to reduce bias. I reflected throughout each step of the data collection process to maintain objectivity. My research log demonstrated my thinking process and allowed me to maintain a neutral

point of view. The conceptual framework was used to identify relationships between the research question, interview questions, emerging themes, and purpose of the study.

Results

After the interviews with eight school administrators, I organized the data into categories reflecting similarities and differences. I identified five major themes that addressed the research question: How do administrators describe their perceptions, roles, and decision-making practices regarding the implementation of PBIS in schools? The five themes that emerged from the data analysis were (a) degrees of administrative autonomy, (b) realizing importance of a schema, (c) positive outcomes, (d) challenges and setbacks, and (e) perceptions of improvements of the behavioral approach. These five themes represent the significant ideas that emerged from the participants' detailed responses as they each discussed their experiences with PBIS. The participants shared their experiences of successes and challenges as they implemented the behavioral approach in their schools. The descriptions of the themes capture the in-depth, rich details and emotions of the responses related to the research question.

Theme 1: Degrees of Administrative Autonomy

The first theme, degrees of administrative autonomy, emerged as I analyzed the results and reflected on the administrators' experiences as they implemented the behavioral process in their schools. The key words that evolved from the data included *autonomy* and *resolutions*. The administrators worked with the teachers, each with a different emphasis to implement ways to address the needs of the students in their

specific schools. All eight participants indicated they were given a set of guidelines, but they each had the autonomy to apply the behavioral approach as they deemed appropriate at their school. I learned from the participants that the behavioral approach was started in 2006 through a discretionary grant started by student support services and GDOE middle school administrators. In 2010, the grant was extended to the entire school district. The grant afforded the district coaches and a behavioral specialist and funded conferences and ongoing training for administrators and school staff.

All of the participants noted different ways to help the students with their administrative autonomy. Emerson viewed autonomy as "getting to the root of the problem" by inviting parents to the school to help resolve problems. Avery expressed autonomy in the school by working with a team and "checking the whole child" by making sure the students were "safe, healthy, engaged, and challenged." The students in Avery's school came from challenging environments and may have experienced homelessness or could have been part of a transient student population. Skyler and River, on the other hand, directed teachers to complete office discipline referrals, had students speak to one another to resolve conflict, or sent them to a counselor if issues continued.

The administrators allowed the teachers to address the issues with less administration involvement to resolve behavioral problems, and, as a result, did not facilitate meetings as often as when the behavioral approach was implemented. Four of the eight participants shared details and events related to group efforts in resolving and

implementing guidelines in their schools. In these schools, there seemed to be more group discussions regarding the roles and responsibilities of each team member.

Dakota and Finley shared a different perspective on addressing autonomy in their schools. Dakota, who acted as a liaison between the district office and the faculty, shared, "I allow time for changes to take place in the school and the teachers to be part of shared leadership." Finley stated, "Leading by example and believing in the approach empowered the faculty and staff to also believe in the behavioral approach." The participants all used data to analyze the needs for the program before implementing ways to facilitate autonomous changes in the schools.

Theme 2: Realizing Importance of a Schema

The second theme, realizing importance of a schema, emerged based on key words that included *data*, *accountability*, *reteach*, *collaboration*, *and interviews*. The participants discussed how they understood the need for a schema in implementing different procedures based on the schools' needs to obtain positive behavioral changes. All eight participants shared that they understood that the schema for the behavioral approach was implemented district-wide due to ongoing negative behaviors, such as increased office discipline referrals, physical aggression, stealing, excessive absences, and disrespect of others.

Avery and Haven discussed how they arrived at solving problems as they arose in the schools. Haven stated that recording and analyzing data using specific protocol helped to create clear rules and expectations for the students. This was especially true for

those who had significant problems or were “repeat offenders,” which was how Haven identified students who were continuously sent to the office for fighting or being disruptive. Haven’s explanation indicated a sense of differentiated accountability in addressing the individual needs of the students: “Students understand more when we have clear expectations, and students are rewarded and recognized for their behaviors.” Avery shared that having monthly meetings with staff to review and discuss data helped them come to decisions about behaviors at each grade level. Avery noted that organizing monthly meetings allowed the school to have ongoing remedies for different negative behaviors.

For Morgan, it seemed that developing a practice of direct hands-on interaction and collaboration with the team before speaking to the students helped to reduce behavioral issues in the school. “At our school, we cross-reference and check each other to make sure we are on the right track when implementing behavioral strategies.” Dakota stated, “We treat each other with respect and use positive approaches instead of punitive ones.” Dakota appeared focused on changing the way teachers saw behavioral feedback, thus impacting how strategies could be incorporated with constructive intervention. Skyler, on the other hand, felt that interviewing the students directly and including the counselor to facilitate the intervention helped them to delve deeper into potential problems.

Theme 3: Positive Outcomes

The third theme refers to the administrators' discussion of positive outcomes that resulted from implementing PBIS. The key words that emerged for this theme were *attitude*, *receptive to positive feedback*, *fewer referrals*, *increased academics*, *different focus*, *collaboration*, *motivation*, and *consistency*. All eight participants responded that PBIS had positive outcomes that impacted the entire school. Finley discussed the benefits by noting that "teacher and staff attitudes have changed, and there is a reduction in physical aggression at the school." River and Skyler shared that "coaches are being used to train and provide support to the administration and teachers." Training facilitated ongoing cyclical changes that included mindset changes and different outlooks on how resources from the district were being utilized. Dakota described feelings of pride in the positive outcomes of the behavioral approach:

> School is a home away from home. The students have respect for one another, there are less referrals to the office, and their academics are the primary focus now, and there is positivity . . . the kids are part of the beauty of the school.

Emerson, Finley, and Dakota spoke of collaboration as a positive outcome. Dakota noted, "There is more collaboration, cohesiveness, and teacher-led meetings." Emerson also saw collaboration as ongoing discussions with the team while attempting to problem-solve to come to a solution. Avery was surprised about the students' increase in self-esteem: "Kids used to get rewards for positive behaviors; now they do not need them

as often as before. They are learning, building relationships, and know the school expectations."

Haven presented a different perspective regarding the positive outcomes of the approach, commenting:

> While the students and staff are happier because the school expectations are clear . . . giving students continual rewards for appropriate behavior may be misleading. Positive behavior can be a reward in itself. Students can become competitive, causing other students to become insecure because they did not receive rewards.

Of the eight participants, Haven was the only one who believed that providing ongoing rewards could create competition, with some students becoming insecure.

Theme 4: Challenges and Setbacks

The fourth theme that emerged from the data included several challenges and setbacks while implementing PBIS. The participants were asked about their perceptions of the process experienced during the implementation and assimilation of the behavioral approach. They indicated that it took an average of 3 to 5 years to see consistent changes take effect in the elementary schools. During those years, specific challenges and setbacks were revealed. They described a variety of experiences that represented these and used the terms *buy-in*, *transition*, *time*, *funding*, and *coaches*.

Buy-in was a topic raised by the participants that demonstrated the challenges they experienced in implementation of PBIS All of the participants stated that PBIS was

successful in their schools, yet there was inconsistency with the buy-in of various stakeholders. Dakota stated, "While the behavioral approach is quite successful at our school, changing the adult's mindset and attitude about education has been an ongoing challenge." Avery had a similar opinion:

> We had to break the barrier of language and culture between home and school before everyone understood the behavioral mindset. The more we communicated with the staff, students, and parents, the easier it became to see that this approach was good for everyone.

Morgan shared that not only was buy-in an issue, but time was a factor when transitioning to new ways of addressing behaviors.

> It took some time. People have their own ways of disciplining, and just trying to mesh and create one system across the board was not easy. Over time, people understood the process, saw the data results, and understood the need for the safety of our students.

The participants acknowledged the transitional complexities involved in incorporating a different approach that was not the norm for students, parents, or teachers at their schools. In addition, while the schools were integrating the behavioral approach, other factors emerged that caused setbacks due to lack of personnel. Time to train new staff transitioning into the school was difficult as well as obtaining funds to support the approach. Haven and River noted that while administrators attempted to attend meetings and assist in maintaining the fidelity of the behavioral approach, they were busy and

sometimes had very little time to train new faculty and staff to address the behaviors related to the different PBIS tiers. River stated,

> PBIS is a great approach, and we make sure safety is first in our school; however, we need time and training. We cannot train as needed and implement new ideas due to ongoing meetings and requirements that we need to fulfill as administrators. Novice teachers coming into education are not trained to deal with the behaviors. Behavior intervention classes should be offered to new teachers coming, so they have an idea of the types of behaviors that our students exhibit. Behaviors are more complex now.

Other participants shared similar feedback related to limited time for ongoing training and meetings, resources, and inconsistent buy-in due to the mindset of faculty and staff. Emerson described that with a reward system came the need for resources; funding was also an issue. While responding to the discussion about setbacks, Emerson stated:

> I want to have more tangible things for the students that include rewards during monthly assemblies, but it is sometimes difficult to come up with new ideas when there is limited funding. At times, the teachers and I have to do fundraisers or buy our own materials to provide for the children.

Emerson, an administrator with more than 10 years' experience, felt the coaches could be a challenge when they were sometimes abrasive and did not communicate their expectations of the school in a clearly. Emerson commented, "The coaches can be an

additional resource in our school, but I was surprised to hear the manner in which the coaches were aggressive and demanding of our school data." Two of the participants, however, Finley and Skyler, shared that they found the approach was great and indicated no particular challenges or setbacks evident in the behavioral approach.

Theme 5: Perceptions of Improvement of the Behavioral Approach

The last theme, perceptions of improvement of the behavioral approach, came about when the participants discussed what they would change. All eight participants mentioned in their responses that the behavioral approach was positive for the schools; however, six also noted areas that could be improved to more effectively facilitate its implementation. The common areas identified for improvement were funding that would also help with resources and training, better use of coaches, and parental involvement.

Emerson, Skyler, and Haven shared their perceptions for future change in the area of funding. The need for financial support to buy materials, such as rewards, tokens, banners, posters, awards during special assemblies, and other items to support implementation of the approach, was a struggle for the schools. Emerson stated, "It was very difficult to run a school store with limited resources because the students look forward to trading in their tokens for prizes."

Skyler felt funding would be best utilized to train teachers about behavioral strategies related to the three tiers of behavior in the program. Skyler remarked, "I would like to see funding to support the teachers and students while sustaining the behavioral

approach. If the coaches have already taught us how to collect and analyze data, perhaps we can use the funds for the coaches in a different way."

Haven shared that training coaches, who would then train administrators and teachers, would be a better use of the coaches' time in schools. I asked Haven what type of training would help the teachers and administrators. Haven replied,

> The coach can show us different techniques for dealing with some behaviors. There are some behaviors that are not just about running, being rude, or calling out in class. We have students with emotional issues and other situations that are not typical, such as poverty and homelessness, that may require a different way of addressing these needs. This would be really beneficial for all of us.

In the area of parent involvement, Finley and River discussed increased parent training and ongoing home collaboration. Finley mentioned inviting parents to the school to discuss ways to encourage the students to have better study habits and engage in effective communication, whereas River felt increasing parent awareness of the data collected in the school would be helpful. River shared, "We are going to look at the data as a whole school to include the parents and describe the types of behaviors that are acceptable and what target behaviors should be retaught at school and at home." They each described ways to improve parental involvement that included increased awareness of what is taught at the school and carry-over to their home life.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the setting for this study, its demographics, as well as the data collection process and analysis. I discussed evidence of trustworthiness and the results of the study. The data analysis elicited five themes: (a) degrees in administrative autonomy, (b) realizing importance of schema, (c) positive outcomes, (d) challenges and setbacks, and (e) perceptions of improvements of the behavioral approach.

The findings of the data analysis were related to the administrators' perceptions of the implementation of PBIS. In response to the research question, the findings revealed most of the participants found different ways to individualize the behavioral approach to address their schools' needs. These autonomous changes evolved with the changing needs of the schools. The participants' experiences varied with cyclical challenges that required ongoing collaboration to support the students' needs. The participants' perception of their roles changed from one situation to another in which the teachers led the discussion and the participants monitored what was being done in the schools. The participants expressed their enthusiasm regarding working collaboratively with their teachers, yet they felt that the administration's support was imperative to the success and sustainability of the behavioral approach. The participants often stated that working with their teams of grade level representatives, counselors, and coaches helped to facilitate the success of PBIS. They also shared that buy-in, although evident, was still a challenge at some schools. Funding for materials and training as well as time for training was

sometimes difficult because the participants were busy addressing other matters that took priority over behavioral concerns.

My research question focused on administrators' perceptions regarding their roles and decision-making practices. As it related to their roles, administrators felt they were often present in discussions, but many times they had to leave the decision-making to the team while they addressed other issues. Administrators reiterated that their support of the behavioral approach was imperative to the success of the implementation. While the approach was positive, there needed to be follow up and ongoing collaboration to maintain fidelity. The participants provided their suggestions for improvements that focused on current needs that could make the behavioral approach more effective.

In Chapter 5, I interpret my findings in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and apply my conceptual framework to the results of this research study. I also describe the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and implications for positive social change. I conclude the chapter with the relevancy of the study and its implications for the behavioral approach.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic interpretive qualitative study was to examine administrators' perceptions of their roles and decision-making practices in the implementation of PBIS across elementary schools in Guam. Administrators in Guam have the challenging job of implementing a behavioral approach that is different from the behavior practices that had been implemented in previous years. The principal findings of the study emerged from the participants' perceptions of their experiences with the implementation of PBIS in their schools.

For this study, I used a semistructured interview process as part of a basic interpretative qualitative design to elicit a deeper understanding of the administrators' perceptions of PBIS as well as a process of inductive reasoning to attribute meaning to the responses. In this chapter, I interpret five themes and correlate the results based on the conceptual framework and the studies analyzed in the literature review. I report the limitations of the study, future recommendations, and implications of the main findings.

Interpretation of the Findings

My interpretations of the study's findings align with my research question concerning the perception of participants regarding their roles and decision-making process in the implementation of PBIS at the elementary school level. The themes that emerged from the interview process were (a) degrees in administrative autonomy, (b) realizing importance of schema, (c) positive outcomes, (d) challenges and setbacks, and (e) perceptions of improvements of the behavioral approach. In this section, I interpret

the findings within the context of the conceptual framework of this study. Rogers's (2003) innovation diffusion theory, specifically, the third and fourth phases of the theory, and Lorenz's (1993) complexity theory were the basis of the framework. These two theories provide specific paradigms to facilitate an increased understanding of administrators' decisions to implement PBIS as a behavioral approach in schools.

Degrees in Administrative Autonomy

Rogers's (2003) knowledge of innovation phase was consistent with the implementation process for PBIS the interviewees described because the process allowed stakeholders to learn about PBIS through ongoing dialogue and identify important factors then return to the decision-making process. All participants conveyed their perceptions of how PBIS should be implemented in their schools while maintaining autonomy to address the needs of their students. Often, the purpose of the administrators' and teachers' discussions and analysis of data was to allow the them to collaborate and identify the needs of the students, which helped the adoption and implementation process to occur naturally.

According to Kyzar and Strickland-Cohen (2017) and Yoon (2016), support for administrators and teachers helps to promote students' positive behaviors in school. Administrators who take ownership of the process of reforms and foster positive school climates with stronger relationships empower teachers and faculty and cultivate agreement on changes. Feuerborn et al. (2013) also found that acceptance of behavioral

interventions by all the stakeholders, especially administrators, has been important to the success of the behavioral approach in schools.

Realizing Importance of Schema

I found the importance of a quality schema to address the students' needs was perceived to be significant for the success of the behavioral approach in the interviewees' schools. The use of shared schema led to a sense of common purpose as the participants sought to solve individual school issues and concerns. This allowed the administrators to collect data to show the changes in the schools as well as sharing their schemata with neighboring schools.

All eight participants described the application of individualized types of interventions in their schools that would facilitate improvements based on their data-driven needs. The participants used schemas, such as student accountability, hands on interaction, and identifying clear expectations, to implement PBIS. In my study, Lorenz's (1993) complexity theory regarding nonlinear change was supported as change was described as happening in a nonlinear manner related to iterative and evolving circumstances that influenced the restructuring process. Based on the insights I gained from the participants' responses, they seemed to cultivate a sense of collaboration, which required ongoing reciprocity to elicit change. The research findings of Mason (2016) and Watkin et al. (2017) revealed that the interaction of different environmental factors and an understanding culture as it transforms could result in dynamics that perpetuate change.

Positive Outcomes

In Rogers's (2003) fourth phase—implementation—all stakeholders come to a consensus that the plan or idea is appropriate, data can be collected, and the plan is implemented and will work for their organization. In this research study, I determined that among the evidence of success shared by all stakeholders at the schools, there were diverse and intentional strategies used to facilitate positive student outcomes that promoted increased academic scores and a change in mindset for many. From the perspective of the administrators who participated in the study, there were motivational elements that the educators, parents, and students sought as part of PBIS at their schools.

Raynard's (2017) and Evanovich and Scott's (2016) research findings aligned with my study in that innovation was subjective depending on the commitment of the stakeholders and administrators and their awareness of the overall needs of their schools resulting in some type of reform. Hence, the results of my study demonstrated that the participants had clear expectations of the positive outcomes based on their extensive work in gathering data. The data, combined with their innovative ideas to make the plans work for their specific needs, resulted in positive organizational changes in the schools.

Challenges and Setbacks

McIntosh, Predy, et al. (2014) identified factors such as buy-in and funding as challenges and or setbacks to implementing and sustaining PBIS. Other specific challenges and setbacks pertained to how to implement and sustain the program, the need for administrative support, skilled leadership teams to assist teachers, consistent data

collection, and implementation with fidelity. The participants in my study also found that administrative leadership was very important to sustain the behavioral approach. In addition, funding and ongoing support from the district to assist the schools were shared by the participants as being important and align with the findings of McIntosh, Predy, et al.

Rogers's (2003) implementation process is described as iterative and emerging in different ways based on the situation. The majority of the administrator participants expressed a desire to lead, embodying critical leadership skills as they implemented the behavioral approach using collected data, ongoing collaboration, and consistency when delineating clear school expectations. Although the participants stated they had positive experiences with the behavioral approach, there were also comments related to the need for increased buy-in, lack of resources, additional ways to utilize the coaches in the schools, and time for training.

Perceptions of Improvement of the Behavioral Approach

Six of the eight participants spoke of changes in the implementation of PBIS in their schools that they would consider for ongoing improvement of the behavioral approach. I understood from the participants' responses that although the PBIS approach was successful in the schools, there were areas of need that were beyond the schools' control. The need for more funding and training was often stated when discussing factors that could improve the implementation of plans to enhance the results of the approach.

In Rogers's (2003) fourth phase—implementation—all stakeholders come to a consensus that the plan or idea is appropriate, data is collected, and the collaborated plan works for their organization. This was important for the participants as they carried out plans to help their faculty and students; however, obstacles such as funding and ongoing training impacted their progress. Research by Letendre et al. (2016) supports the findings of this study in that ongoing support, such as ongoing faculty training with clear expectations, leads to the successful implementation of a delineated plan. All of the participants described ways to enrich their schools, although they often lacked the resources or additional training needed to fulfill the schools' needs. Identification of the limited effectiveness of the implementation of PBIS in schools by Lane et al. (2015) aligns with my study in that administrators and educators did not have the full continuum of professional training required to address the students' more complex social and emotional needs. As a result, the emotional and behavioral needs of the students were not commensurate with the interventions provided.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this study was that only administrators were interviewed; teachers working in the elementary schools did not participate. In addition, the participants were self-selected, and those with different perceptions may not have been included in this sample. Another limitation is whether the results of the study can be generalized beyond the uniquely culturally diverse population of Guam. Guam is a cross-cultural island, largely comprised of Filipinos, Japanese, and Korean residents. The three island nations

identified as the Freely Associated States surrounding Guam are the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau (Stewart et al., 2017). The residents of these nations are free to enter and reside in Guam due to the Compact of Free Association. The residents attend the schools in Guam, which presents the challenge of assimilating to American culture. Many of the students in the elementary schools do not speak English, come from nations that have limited education opportunities, and are students with special needs and low socioeconomic means (Stewart et al., 2017). Approximately 21% of the student population of Guam's schools are from the surrounding islands (Stewart et al., 2017). The research findings may apply to other elementary schools; however, they may not align with other culturally diverse schools because Guam's population is unique in its demographics.

Lastly, as a lifelong educator, I was familiar with the education system in the United States, making it possible that my familiarity might have caused bias regarding education in the local schools. As an experienced educator, I was comfortable speaking with others in the field, yet I focused on the purpose of the study to reduce any preconceived assumptions. I provided transcripts of the interviews to all the participants to reduce bias and minimized any additional predispositions through reflection.

Recommendations

Recommendations for future research are warranted to explore implementation of PBIS in regard to the cultural diversity in Guam. An examination into the cultural populations concerning the use of PBIS in these schools may enrich the literature, shed

light on cultural differences (Micronesian population from the outer islands), and identify best practices that can be utilized in the schools. Additionally, future studies could include more effective behavioral approaches and corresponding resources for behavioral approaches from a district level and how resources impact the buy-in of stakeholders.

Future research could also focus on the different behaviors evident in the schools and how they are addressed at the PBIS Tier 2 and Tier 3 levels in conjunction with the professionals who would be prepared to address the students' needs. This study only included administrators; however, I recommend that future research include coaches and support staff using a case study to allow for detailed data over an extended period.

Lastly, developing and assessing the effectiveness of other participants in the PBIS process, such as the coaches and support staff, or putting educational coaches in the schools, would provide an additional perspective on the approach. Once a school is no longer in frequent need of a coach, research might also shed light on how they would continue to be instrumental to the administrators and the educators. Assessing the perceptions of coaches regarding their purpose and effectiveness in the schools in relation to the behavioral approach is worthy of further study.

Implications for Social Change

The results of the study may have significant implications for school districts implementing PBIS across academic levels. Examining procedures of implementation for administrators may help to delineate clear expectations and responsibilities. Additional funding allocations for training appears to be needed for administrators and teachers to

address emotional and behavioral support that is congruent with intervention. This may increase the buy-in of administrators and educators in the schools. Additionally, the study may inform education policymakers of the evolving changes needed in a behavioral approach that is effective but continues to need sustainability.

My study findings are congruent with the observations of Mason (2016), who suggested community and school stakeholders who understood the culture of the school and came to mutual consensus could become change agents who impact the implementation of programs and make them a reality. These findings support the development of cultivating procedures that are the segue to social changes in the schools.

Conclusion

This study provided a view into the administrators' perceptions and implementation process of PBIS. I found administrators as supportive role models in the implementation of PBIS. The results of this study provide a deeper understanding of how educational leaders perceive PBIS and why they choose to implement the behavioral approach. Rogers (2003) noted stakeholders might initially adopt or reject approaches and then return to making innovations after they have more information, and the ideas have been reconsidered. Using the conceptual framework based on the theories of Rogers and Lorenz (1993) to consider the patterns of administrators' experiences in adopting and implementing the PBIS program, I was able to confirm the process of change is continually evolving based on the needs of the stakeholders. Ongoing collaboration and clear expectations allowed the administrators to work with their faculty and staff to

assimilate a culture of positive interventions. However, more studies are needed to explore the way resources, including funding and training, can be consistent with sustaining the behavioral approach in schools.

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Appendix: Interview Questions

Administrative Background:

What position do you currently hold at the school?

How many years have you been in that position?

Interview Questions:

1. Please tell me about your school's decision to participate in PBIS. How were you involved in the decision?

   Probes:

   a. How were you involved in the decision?

   b. What was the impetus to implement PBIS at your school?

   c. How long has the approach been implemented at your school?

   d. Can you describe the behaviors at the school that were expected to benefit from the approach?

2. What was your perception about PBIS before it was implemented at your school?

   Probes:

   a. What did you see as the benefits?

   b. What did you foresee as possible problems with implementation?

3. How would you define your role as an administrator in the implementation of PBIS?

Probes:

a. What were the initial steps you took in the adoption of PBIS at your school?

b. What challenges did you experience as PBIS was being implemented?

c. Describe a strategy or method that you used to address that specific challenge(s)?

4. How would you describe the decision-making process of implementing PBIS?

Probes:

a. PBIS requires a core team of members to facilitate the implementation of PBIS. Who were the members of your team?

b. How did you arrive at the decision of selecting various members to be on the team?

5. What factors did you take into consideration prior to the implementation process?

Probes:

a. What were the benefits expected?

b. What, if any, support or training was provided as part of the implementation?

6. When implementing the behavioral approach, what situations caused setbacks?

Probes:

a. How were those setbacks resolved?

b. Who was involved in the process of resolving the problem(s)?

7. How were the issues of fidelity or sustainability of PBIS taken into consideration?
8. Please describe how PBIS looks in operation today at your school?

   Probes:

   a. How complete is the implementation?

   b. What, if anything, is left to address?
9. Please describe the school protocol used to address disciplinary issues as part of the PBIS approach.
10. How quickly would you say the school personnel adopted the changes?
11. What problems have occurred during the implementation that were a surprise to you?

    Probe: Can you describe an example of the circumstances?
12. Who were the other school stakeholders involved in helping with implementation of PBIS?
13. What is your overall perception of the behavioral approach?
14. When did you feel that the behavioral framework became part of the school's climate or culture? Why?

Probe:

a. What changes did you see?

b. Who were the people impacted by the changes?

15. How would you describe your role in the implementation of PBIS as it might have changed over time?

    Probe: Can you describe a situation in which your role changed?

16. Please share positive and negative outcomes since the implementation of PBIS.

    Probe: Describe how those outcomes exhibited themselves in the school.

17. What strategies would you perceive as successful to the implementation of the behavioral approach?

    Probe: Please describe the components that stood out in your school.

18. In retrospect, if you could make any changes to PBIS, what would you do to make the behavioral approach more effective?

    Probe: Can you describe the components that you would change?

19. Do you have any questions about the interview? Is there anything else you would like to add?