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# K-1 Teachers' Perceptions of the Use of the Tribes Program to Address Behavioral Issues

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Abstract

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MA, Michigan State University, 2017

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Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Behavioral issues in the early childhood setting are increasing, which negatively affects learning and development. There are many programs that educators use to decrease behavioral issues, such as the Tribes Learning Community, or the Tribes program. There is very little research on the perceptions about the Tribes program from early childhood educators in the western region of the United States and in the general educational setting. Exploring teachers' perceptions can help elementary schools determine whether the programs decrease behavioral issues. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine K-1 teachers' perceptions of the use of the Tribes program to address behavioral issues at GHJCN (pseudonym) Elementary School. Sugai and Horner's behavioral intervention framework guided the study and the research questions, which asked K-1 teachers of their perceptions of the Tribes program on reducing behavioral issues and the training and support needed to implement an effective program. Six K-1 teachers with a shared experience of early childhood education, behavioral issues, and the Tribes program were selected as participants. Individual semistructured interviews were conducted to gather in-depth responses that thoroughly answered the research questions. Structural coding and thematic analysis generated four major themes: teacher buy-in, school support, consistency, and training. Overall, the participants expressed the need for more professional development and knowledge of the Tribes program. A 3-day professional development project was developed based on the findings. Professional development builds K-1 teachers' knowledge and implementation skills of the Tribes program. The outcome of this study can potentially promote positive social change for teachers by helping them improve on best practices to reduce behavioral issues.

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Dedication

This project study is dedicated to my family and friends. Thank you for your patience, encouragement, and support. I love you all so much, and I am so grateful to have you in my life. I could not have done it without you!

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my family, friends, and colleagues for their love and support throughout this whole process. I would also like to thank Dr. Robb, Dr. Hunter, Dr. Berndt, and the excellent Walden faculty. You all pushed me to challenge myself and grow and improve as a researcher. I am eternally grateful. Thank you, God, for giving me the strength and perseverance to keep going even when things were tough. You were all instrumental in helping me to complete this challenge, so again, thank you.

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Section 1: The Problem

**The Local Problem**

GHJCN Elementary School (a pseudonym) is a private Catholic school located in the western region of the United States. The school website states their commitment to providing students with quality education and encouraging students to practice and learn respect and justice to all people regardless of their background. Substantial importance is placed on not only academics but also social, emotional, and behavioral development.

The problem investigated through this study is that there is an increase in the number of behavioral issues in the K-1 classrooms at a private Catholic elementary school located in the western region of the United States. The Tribes program was introduced to the school about 8 to 10 years ago. The principal at the study site reported that the amount of instruction used in the classroom has dwindled over the years. When the Tribes program started, educators were required to implement instruction at least once a month, but there is no requirement now. For the 1st few years of the Tribes program, the teachers were formally trained by other teachers. Since the 2016-2017 school year, there have been no available trainers because there are no certified trainers, and the teachers who were trainers are no longer at the school. Over the past 5 years, many teachers have expressed trying to implement the program, but without success. There might be a lack of fidelity and limited resources that affect teachers' abilities to implement the Tribes program. Additionally, there have been limited data or other feedback about the program.

According to the unpublished Academic Reports, from the 2016-2017 school year, a strategic plan to implement a program to support students' growth was discussed. The school website also implemented some goals such as learning to work well with others, understanding and managing feelings and emotions, and acquiring the necessary qualities like resilience to contribute to society in a meaningful and positive way. The Tribes Learning Community, or the Tribes program is a program that has been used by the school to reach these goals and to create a safe environment, which promotes and improves positive behavior (see Tribes Learning Community, 2019). Still, the reports at the study site have indicated that there has been no change to the program in the elementary school. According to the unpublished School Board reports, from the 2016-2017 school year, the elementary school set a goal for students to demonstrate qualities such as responsibility, respect, and positive relationships. However, feedback about whether the objectives were met, specificities of whether the Tribes program helped achieve those goals, or feedback from teachers are limited. In the past 3 years, the professional development (PD) calendar included one 30-minute Tribes program refresher for teachers. To effectively implement and sustain a program like the Tribes program, feedback, ongoing training, and PD are necessary. Even though GHJCN Elementary School has a program that should improve behavior, there has been an increase in behavioral issues. In fact, according to the unpublished school records (see Table 1), over the past 5 years, there has been about a 23% increase of children in kindergarten and first grade who required guidance counseling for behavioral issues.

**Table 1**

*Reported Behavioral Issues (2015-2019)*

| School year | Number of students with behavioral issues in Kindergarten and first grade | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2015-2016 | 14 out of 75 | 19% |
| 2016-2017 | 15 out of 65 | 23% |
| 2017-2018 | 19 out of 60 | 32% |
| 2018-2019 | 25 out of 60 | 42% |

According to a guidance counselor at the study site, the behavioral problems include peer conflict, oppositional behavior, stealing, and aggressiveness. The unpublished school records also indicate that children reported as having behavioral issues experienced one or more factors such as economic struggles, lack of structure in the household, divorced families, discord between parents, and a suspected mental health issues in the early stages of being evaluated and diagnosed.

According to the school website from the study site, there is an increased need for educators to meet students' behavioral needs and to develop a safe environment with positive social relationships. There is also an increased need for emotional support and improved abilities to produce students who positively contribute to society by displaying their spiritual, academic, and emotional potential and by providing advanced counseling services. Most importantly, according to the unpublished School Board reports, there is a

need for program evaluations and teacher feedback. At GHJCN Elementary School, a little informal feedback was given, but more in-depth feedback about the Tribes program is necessary.

Many children in the United States face mental and behavioral challenges. Two categories of behavioral problems are internalizing (e.g., withdrawal) and externalizing (e.g., aggression; Aguiar et al., 2019). About 9.4 million (12.8%) children in the United States have been diagnosed with special health care needs (i.e., behavioral, emotional, or physical condition; Glassgow & Van Voorhees, 2017). However, children's mental, behavioral, and emotional problems are often undetected or untreated, which implies that the actual number of children with emotional, behavioral, and mental issues could be more (Glassgow & Van Voorhees, 2017).

According to the National Survey of Children's Health (see Table 2), from 2016-2018, there has been a slight change of children ages 3 through 17 across the United States with a mental or behavioral condition who received treatment after diagnosis (Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health, n.d.). The table shows that about half of the children received treatment out of the sample count of diagnosed behaviors, which implies that about 4.7 million children in the United States who are diagnosed with a mental, behavioral, and emotional problem have not received treatment.

**Table 2**

*Children With a Mental/Behavioral Condition Nationwide: Treated and Untreated*

*(2016-2018)*

| Year | Sample count | Received treatment (%) | Sample count | Did not receive treatment (%) |
|------|-------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| 2016-2017 | 4,868 | 50.7 | 3,713 | 49.3 |
| 2017-2018 | 3,674 | 50.3 | 3,003 | 49.7 |

From "Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health" supported by Cooperative Agreement U59MC27866 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). Retrieved from (www.childhealthdata.org).

In the state where GHJCN Elementary School is located (see Table 3), from 2016-2018, there was a slight improvement in the number of children who received treatment (see Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health, n.d.). This table also shows that about half of the children received treatment out of the sample count of diagnosed behaviors, which is consistent with the implication that about 4.7 million children in the United States diagnosed with a mental, behavioral, and emotional problem have also not received treatment.

**Table 3**

*Children With a Mental/Behavioral Condition in the State: Treated and Untreated (2016-*

*2018)*

| Year | Sample count | Received treatment (%) | Sample count | Did not receive treatment (%) |
|------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| 2016-2017 | 62 | 45.6 | 51 | 54.4 |
| 2017-2018 | 42 | 54.4 | 33 | 45.6 |

From "Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health" supported by Cooperative Agreement U59MC27866 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). Retrieved from (www.childhealthdata.org).

Early childhood education is a crucial time in life. Early detection and interventions of mental, emotional, and behavioral problems can improve children's life outcomes (Sorensen & Dodge, 2016). When children develop and grow in a safe environment, positive lifelong health and well-being are significant (Raikes et al., 2019). In the educational field, many programs are available to provide useful skills and strategies in the areas of behavioral improvement for teachers and children. Evidence-based programs can make a substantial impact when the program is implemented with fidelity (Domitrovich et al., 2019). Feedback from teachers is vital for elementary schools to establish improvements to the program and for student outcomes. Shewark et al. (2018) stated the following:

Without hearing directly from the teachers, we do not know how teachers are

assimilating the various messages they receive about the importance of

maintaining a well-managed classroom climate with their perception of their

social-emotional teaching efficacy and their own emotional experiences in the

classroom. (p. 3)

However, there is not enough feedback from teachers on whether programs that improve

behavior are useful and can reach the goals of the school and program. There is also a

paucity of research about the Tribes program. There is a critical gap in the education field

of the lack of teacher feedback and views of both their students' perceptions and

experiences and their own within the classroom (Shewark et al., 2018).

**Rationale**

In GHJCN Elementary School, equipping educators with strategies to meet

students' behavioral needs is essential, as indicated in the school's Strategic Plan. The

Tribes program was implemented to provide children with opportunities to develop

crucial skills such as empathy and teamwork that contribute positively to the community.

According to the principal of GHJCN Elementary School, teachers have informally

reported their struggle to use the Tribes program through discussions at faculty meetings.

Teachers expressed having challenges with using the program because of lack of time

and difficulties implementing the Tribes program, and there is limited data or feedback

about its effectiveness. When the school counselor at the study site taught guidance

classes to the students, data were not collected, so evidence of whether the lessons made

a positive difference does not exist. Teachers from GHJCN Elementary School also

reported a lack of time in the day to implement a social-emotional learning (SEL) and

social-emotional competence (SEC) experiences.

When there is an understanding of the teachers' ideas and experiences about the Tribes program, the classroom climate and academics might improve. Drawing on the teachers' perspectives might provide insights into the program's strengths and weaknesses, which help continue professional growth and prepare educators (see Yuan, 2017). Improving best practices and learning to effectively and consistently implement strategies can help students become adults who positively contribute to the community by supporting and caring for others.

The purpose of this study was to examine K-1 teachers' perceptions of the Tribes program to address behavioral issues at GHJCN Elementary School. Because teachers' perceptions can shape children's behaviors, it is essential to understand what those perceptions are (Swit et al., 2018). Exploring the teachers' current perceptions of the Tribes program helped me gather information and allowed the development of a project that might positively change teachers' perceptions and encourage effective implementation while acquiring new and useful best practices, which might decrease behavioral issues.

**Definition of Terms**

The following definitions are essential terms used throughout this study.

*Classroom climate:* An environment established and maintained for the children by the teacher (Shewark et al., 2018).

*Externalizing behaviors:* Behaviors that are undercontrolled (e.g., tantrums; Hartman et al., 2017).

*Internalizing behaviors:* Behaviors that are overcontrolled (e.g., social withdrawal; Hartman et al., 2017).

*Prosocial behaviors:* Behaviors like helping and sharing, which benefits others (Carter & Ellis, 2016).

*Tribes Learning Community:* A behavior management program that creates a safe and harmonious environment for students and teachers (Brown, 2016).

### Significance of the Study

This project study was significant because teacher feedback of any program is necessary to provide growth in children and teachers. Examining how the teachers perceive the Tribes program and their experiences determined the support and other resources needed to help teachers reach GHJCN Elementary School's goal of promoting positive behavior.

In the general educational setting, there is a deficit of educators' perspectives, knowledge, and skills that are needed to train teachers effectively (Cardona-Moltó et al., 2017). There is also a lack of knowledge of effective intervention strategies for problematic behaviors in the classroom (Moore et al., 2017). Learning about different experiences and ideas offers various perspectives that can provide valuable information that is beneficial for the improvements of a program and best practices. Teachers can benefit from this study, as well as the children.

When teachers provide feedback, positive changes can be made so children can experience a high-quality education. A significant component of a high-quality education is the SEL experiences, safe environment, and the positive relationships between peers

and teachers (Oberle et al., 2016). Prioritizing SEL and students' SEC enhances well-being, mental health, and behavioral skills needed for positive life outcomes (Oberle et al., 2016). GHJCN Elementary School has a Tribes program that can promote positive relationships as well as establish and maintain a productive learning environment. However, according to the unpublished school reports from 2015 to 2019, there has been an increase in behavioral issues, which is why the investigation of the Tribes program was needed. The outcome of this study can potentially promote positive social change for teachers by helping educators improve on best practices through the investigation of their perceptions of the use of the Tribes program. Effective implementation can enhance the school climate and decrease the number of children with behavior issues and increase children's academic and life-long success, as well as the educators' continued professional growth.

**Research Questions**

Teachers at GHJCN Elementary School have not had the opportunity to provide in-depth feedback on the Tribes program, which may decrease the number of students with behavioral issues. Feedback is essential to gain an understanding of what is needed to effectively implement a social-emotional program. In this study, I investigated the teachers' perceptions of the use of the Tribes program to address behavioral issues. The following questions guided the project study:

Research Question (RQ)1: What are the K-1 teachers' perceptions of the Tribes program to address behavioral issues at GHJCN Elementary School?

RQ2: What training and support do the K-1 teachers need to implement an effective program to reduce the number of behavioral issues in their classrooms?

**Review of the Literature**

The focus of this study was the K-1 teachers' perception of the use of the Tribes program to reduce behavioral issues. The major themes of the literature review are a review of the broader problem, managing behavioral problems, and the Tribes Learning Community. Throughout the exhaustive search of the literature, when no new studies or articles to support the themes were available, I determined that saturation for this review was reached.

An electronic search was used to develop a review of the literature. The databases included Walden University's library, Education Source, EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, and online research books. The search terms used in the study included *general behavioral issues, disruptive behavior, behavioral challenges, internalizing and externalizing behaviors, managing behavioral issues, behavior management, classroom management, prosocial behaviors, self-regulation, resilience, praise,* and *positive learning environment.* Other terms included *early childhood education, primary, elementary, kindergarten, first grade, early childhood educators' perceptions, social-emotional learning, social-emotional competence, social-emotional learning programs, peer relationship or likeability,* and *Tribes Learning Community.*

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework that guided the study was Sugai and Horner's (2006) schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SWPBIS). Melekoglu et al.

(2017) stated that the SWPBIS follows the applied behavior analysis method and is grounded in behaviorism. Melekoglu et al. also stated that the SWPBIS approach guides educators to redesign the teaching and learning environment to implement evidence-based practices in the classroom and schoolwide. Some evidence-based practices include preventing challenging behaviors, improving behavior support programs, and helping children develop social skills (Melekoglu et al., 2017). The goal of the SWPBIS is to help educators improve the environment by reducing challenging behaviors and improving teachers' current practices (Melekoglu et al., 2017). Safety and discipline are a priority for schools. The SWPBIS can allow teachers to receive the behavioral supports needed for success in various areas such as academic and social development (Childs et al., 2016; Chitiyo & May, 2018; Gage, Whitford, et al., 2018). In these studies, the SWPBIS is relevant because the researchers used the framework to reduce behavioral issues (Childs et al., 2016; Chitiyo & May, 2018; Gage, Whitford, et al., 2018). I discovered the supports and training that the K-1 teachers need to reduce behavioral problems through the information from the SWPBIS.

When implementing evidence-based programs, a collaboration between stakeholders such as teachers and feedback from teachers is vital. Feedback from teachers is most important because the educators are implementing the programs and strategies (Melekoglu et al., 2017). Each piece of data collected from teachers determines what is needed, what the strengths are, and whether alignment between the goal of the school and what the teachers are doing at the school occurs (Melekoglu et al., 2017). Teachers have expressed what is needed, such as coaching, to improve the effective implementation of

strategies to reduce behavioral problems (Bethune, 2017; Vancel et al., 2016). Feedback from teachers at GHJCN Elementary School about the Tribes program was necessary because there is a lack of data and information about the program.

The application of SWPBIS offers instruction on implementing effective strategies and programs to decrease behavioral issues in the K-1 classrooms. The SWPBIS informed my study by guiding me to create interview questions to gather the data from teachers to answer the research questions about the Tribes program and what support and resources teachers need to decrease the number of children with behavioral issues.

**Review of the Broader Problem**

*General Behavioral Issues*

Behavioral issues are prevalent in the early childhood educational setting, which can negatively impact students' learning. Teachers have reported frequent behavioral problems, which is detrimental to students' development in the classroom (Martino et al., 2016). Learning can be difficult when children cannot pay attention or control negative behaviors. Garwood and Vernon-Feagans (2017) used subscales to gather data about students' behaviors, peer problems, and emotional symptoms and discovered that children who exhibit behavioral issues in the classroom could not learn as well or as fast as their classmates.

*Behavioral Issues and Managing the Classroom*

Throughout the school year, many teachers in the United States are overwhelmed by the difficulties in managing behavioral issues. One of the most challenging aspects of

the profession is classroom management (Akdag & Haser, 2016; Moore et al., 2017).

Fear that teachers are not prepared to manage a class and the lack of management

strategies can affect student behaviors and engagement. Akdag and Haser (2016)

interviewed 16 novice educators specializing in early childhood education before and

after they started teaching. All of the participants feared their inability to manage the

classroom because they felt unprepared (Akdag & Haser, 2016). However, when the

teachers implemented classroom management strategies such as establishing rules and

maintaining positive relationships, they had a positive experience with managing

behaviors (Akdag & Haser, 2016). Another group of researchers examined four groups of

1,242 teachers' use of classroom management practices (Gage, Scott, et al., 2018). The

Multiple Option Observation System for Experimental Studies was used to measure the

rate per minute of teachers' positive feedback, negative feedback, student disruption, and

engagement (Gage, Scott, et al., 2018). Gage, Scott et al. (2018) found that the teachers

with lower rates of classroom management practices had less engaged students, while

teachers with higher classroom management rates had more involved students. The

researchers highlighted the likely relationship between classroom management and

student engagement and achievement (Gage, Scott, et al., 2018). However, there is a lack

of information about strategies to effect change in teacher behavior, as well as teachers'

knowledge of effective strategies to prevent problem behaviors (Gage, Scott, et al., 2018;

Moore et al., 2017). Further research into both effective management strategies and

teachers' actions should be considered to gain a deeper understanding of what teachers

need to reduce feelings of stress and overwhelming emotions to manage behavioral

challenges effectively. The specific types of behaviors that teachers struggle to manage that hinder learning and are prevalent in early childhood are disruptive behaviors and internalizing and externalizing behaviors.

***Disruptive Behavior***

Disruptive behavior refers to the negative actions and reactions from children that interrupt activities, learning, and development. Children exhibit disruptive behavior that causes distractions, which hinder learning (Aspiranti et al., 2018; McHugh et al., 2016; Watson et al., 2016). Some of the behaviors include inattentiveness or off-task behavior (i.e., peer and self-distractions, walking around, and environmental distractions), oppositionality, and aggression (Godwin et al., 2016; Stormont et al., 2019). Understanding how disruptive behaviors may manifest can allow teachers to decrease behavioral problems.

**How Disruptive Behavior is Manifested.** When young children transition into kindergarten and first grade, disruptive behavior may manifest in the classroom. Adjustment into the school environment and challenges that teachers face, such as managing behavioral problems, may cause disruptive behaviors.

Adjusting into kindergarten or first grade can cause children to engage in negative behaviors because of their inability to manage the change. Children transitioning into an educational setting experience new people, expectations, and daily routines, which can overwhelm many students and cause potential behavioral issues (Stormont et al., 2019). Some children need additional support to manage the overwhelming transition into a new environment. Early interventions may identify which children are experiencing

difficulties with the change, so teachers can use the information to better meet the needs of the children (Abenavoli et al., 2017; Racz et al., 2016). Stormont et al. (2019) examined the effectiveness of a universal screener, which predicted outcomes in first grade. Six urban elementary schools participated in the study, and kindergarten teachers completed ratings of behaviors and academic competence (Stormont et al., 2019). The data predicted higher levels of disruptive behaviors in children who had poor behavioral readiness (Stormont et al., 2019). Landry et al. (2017) furthered the study by providing intervention training for teachers and parents to improve children's school readiness in areas such as behavior and social skills. However, Landry et al. found that only some intervention effects were observed. Lack of consistent training and feedback for teacher strategies are a few possible reasons why changes in all school readiness areas were not observed (Landry et al., 2017). Teachers can identify the difficulties that each student experiences and use tools and programs that provide strategies to prevent disruptive behaviors (Abenavoli et al., 2017; Racz et al., 2016; Stormont et al., 2019). However, teachers should also effectively manage disruptive behaviors that already exist.

Teachers' inability to implement management strategies may cause disruptive behaviors. Educators' behaviors and their instructional strategies may affect their ability to manage children, which leads to daily disruptive behaviors. Godwin et al. (2016) collected observational data at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year of children's attention allocation patterns, student characteristics, instructional strategies and format, and whether the type of school was related to attention allocation patterns. The authors discovered the types of instructional strategies that encouraged on-task behaviors,

such as decreased instructional time and small group instruction (Godwin et al., 2016).

Similarly, Roorda et al. (2017) examined on-task behaviors through observations and

teacher reports, but specifically whether the teachers' responses influenced behaviors.

The researchers in both studies discovered that increased instructional time and

controlling teacher behavior increased children's off-task actions (Godwin et al., 2016;

Roorda et al., 2017). When educators understand how disruptive behaviors may manifest,

teachers can plan instruction that increases engagement and decreases disruptive

behaviors.

   **Strategies to Decrease Disruptive Behaviors.** Positive relationships between the

teacher and student may decrease disruptive behaviors. Roorda et al. (2017) discovered a

link between the teachers' controlling behaviors and students' negative behaviors. Nash

et al. (2016) found that compassionate and nurturing relationships between the children

and teachers impact behaviors. However, Owens, Holdaway et al. (2018) argued that

many studies have failed to examine the link between teachers' behaviors and students'

behaviors. The failure to explore the relationship between the teachers' and students'

behaviors limits the understanding of the necessary classroom management skills

(Owens, Holdaway et al., 2018). Examining the relationship between teachers' and

students' behaviors can provide a greater understanding of the significance of classroom

management strategies. The authors have different views on whether there is sufficient

evidence of the relationship between teacher and student behaviors (Owens, Holdaway et

al., 2018; Roorda et al., 2017). However, researchers have agreed that more studies

regarding teacher and student behaviors can be beneficial for implementing strategies to

decrease behaviors that negatively affect the classroom and teacher (Owens, Holdaway et al., 2018; Roorda et al., 2017).

### *Internalizing and Externalizing Behavior*

Internalizing and externalizing behaviors are more severe types of behavior that occur in the classroom. Internalizing behaviors are overcontrolled behaviors such as worry, fear, social withdrawal, anxiety, and depression (Hartman et al., 2017). Externalizing responses are undercontrolled behaviors such as verbal and physical aggression, noncompliance, defiance, temper tantrums, and rule-breaking (Hartman et al., 2017). The undercontrolled actions may be more noticeable than the overcontrolled behaviors, but both types can still affect academic outcomes.

**How Internalizing and Externalizing Behaviors Affect Academic Outcomes.** Internalizing and externalizing behaviors may negatively affect children's academic development. Children are at risk for academic maladjustment because of high levels of internalizing or externalizing behaviors (Hernández et al., 2017; Roorda et al., 2017). Metsäpelto et al. (2017) examined students' learning during the first 4 years to analyze if reading skills and aspirations are affected at the end of elementary school due to externalizing behaviors. Teachers' ratings of externalizing behaviors and children's self-ratings of reading interest were collected and compared to self-reports of interest in reading and aspirations at the end of grade 6 (Metsäpelto et al., 2017). Lane et al. (2019) examined the predictive validity of the Student Risk Screening Scale—Internalizing and Externalizing scores from 4,456 elementary school students. Lane et al. found that the Student Risk Screening Scale—Internalizing and Externalizing scores indicated that

students with externalizing and internalizing behaviors were more likely to have low reading scores and academic progress. Lane et al. and Metsäpelto et al. took different approaches to explore whether externalizing and internalizing behaviors affect educational outcomes. The authors confirmed that internalizing and externalizing behaviors do affect academic progress (Lane et al., 2019; Metsäpelto et al., 2017). Discovering ways to reduce the behaviors is necessary.

**Strategies to Decrease Internalizing and Externalizing Behaviors.** Proper implementation of programs and interventions can reduce internalizing and externalizing behaviors. McDaniel et al. (2018) conducted a study with three study groups, including 33 third-through-fifth-grade participants, to measure changes in behavior. Two groups (i.e., response group) participated in the appropriate intervention level while the control group participated in universal preventive support (McDaniel et al., 2018). The response groups have decreased their externalizing behaviors while the control group showed no improvement in behavior (McDaniel et al., 2018). Early intervention and diagnosis of children as young as 4 years old can reduce more serious behavioral problems (Dever et al., 2018). High levels of internalizing and externalizing behaviors can be managed when teachers understand the practices and strategies to reduce negative behaviors.

Improving children's executive function (EF; e.g., working memory) may also decrease externalizing and internalizing behavior. Morgan et al. (2019) used various assessments to measure academic achievement, EF, and behavior. Morgan et al. found that children with inhibitory control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility are predictive of academic success, as well as fewer internalizing and externalizing

behaviors. The researchers confirmed that helping children develop behavioral skills and strategies could make a positive impact in the classroom and in children's lives as they grow and develop from grade to grade (Dever et al., 2018; McDaniel et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2019). Understanding what may lead to externalizing and internalizing behaviors may help teachers prevent the development of severe behaviors.

**Preventing the Development of Internalizing and Externalizing Behaviors.** Early childhood educators can avoid high levels of behavioral issues by identifying factors such as adverse temperament at an earlier age that can lead to externalizing or internalizing behaviors. Adverse temperament is the inability to regulate attention, low adaptability, and high activity level (Crockett et al., 2018). Children with adverse temperament are more likely to develop externalizing behaviors but may be prevented through strong relationships with teachers (Crockett et al., 2018). Crockett et al. gathered information from a 5-point, seven-item teacher-child conflict subscale (e.g., "This child and I always seem to be struggling with each other"), which determined how well the relationship between the teacher and student is, as well as teacher and parent reports. Crockett et al. found that children who were better able to control their temperament had positive relations with their teacher, which decreased externalizing behaviors. Children with control over their behaviors formed stronger relationships with their teachers than children with adverse temperament. McKinnon and Blair (2018) furthered the link by describing that student characteristics can influence the teacher-child relationship. For example, children with lower EF (i.e., cognitive processes that monitors attention, organize information, and plans for goal-directed behaviors) had a higher risk of conflict

with the teacher, which increased adverse reactions (McKinnon & Blair, 2018). Through

questionnaires and teacher responses, Nash et al. (2016) found that educators need to be

more aware of what causes behavioral problems, and educators also need compassionate

and nurturing interactions between the teacher and students. The authors confirmed that

students who exhibit behavioral issues could develop higher levels of externalizing

behaviors depending on their relationships with the teachers (Crockett et al., 2018;

McKinnon & Blair, 2018; Nash et al., 2016). Early identification of behavioral problems

can prevent the development of internalizing and externalizing behaviors to improve the

classroom climate.

### Effects on the Classroom

When behavior problems (e.g., disruptive, externalizing, and internalizing

behaviors) occur in the classroom, essential instructional time can be lost, which can

impede learning and development, and increase levels of stress. Behavioral issues shift

the teachers' and students' focus from the instructional task to the distraction (Gage,

Scott, et al., 2018). Teachers frequently encounter behavioral challenges, which leave the

educators and children feeling stressed and needing support (Sezer, 2017). Behavior

problems repeatedly halt teaching and learning, which is why teachers and students

continually get distracted and feel stressed. The distractions hinder the children's ability

to progress academically (Gage, Scott, et al., 2018; Moffett & Morrison, 2019; Sezer,

2017). Also, because of the high levels of stress and distractions that occur, relationships

between peers may be strained.

Behavioral issues can negatively affect relationships in the classroom. Consistent behavioral problems can increase difficulties in peer relationships (He et al., 2018; Krull, et al., 2018; Prykanowski et al., 2018). He et al. (2018) explored whether increasing positive behaviors can improve peer relationships and prevent behavioral problems. Three hundred twenty-three children from 18 different elementary schools were observed and assessed from kindergarten to the end of first grade (He et al., 2018). The assessments measured low social preference, behavioral problems such as aggressive behavior and depressive symptoms, and change in prosocial behaviors (He et al., 2018). He et al. found that increasing peer relationships can prevent behavioral issues, but more support may be required for students demonstrating challenging behaviors like aggression. Krull et al. (2018) measured the extent of behavioral problems and learning difficulties that affect classroom relationships. Through analyses of sociometric data (i.e., a method of measuring social relationships), Krull et al. found that children with behavioral problems had a significant decrease in peer acceptance. He et al. and Krull et al. agree that behavioral issues can increase with strained relationships in the classroom, so developing positive relationships are essential. Creating a safe environment that fosters positive relationships is another strategy to decrease behavioral problems.

When educators establish and maintain a safe learning environment and model appropriate behavior, children's development and growth of prosocial behaviors may increase. Children can perform academic and social tasks at a higher level when they feel safe (Allen & FitzGerald, 2017; Johnston et al., 2019). In a safe environment, children can express themselves, take risks, and make mistakes, which are all essential

experiences that promote personal, academic, and social growth. Through positive

relationships, children can learn about the social environment, how they can contribute to

the community, and deepen their understanding of themselves (Anderson, 2018).

Educators can enhance children's knowledge and application of respect and other

positive behaviors by modelling the behavior. Students observe how adults, such as

teachers, behave, and will adapt to the responses (Johnston et al., 2019). Further, the

teachers' social-emotional competence shapes the relationships formed in the classroom

(Schonert-Reichl, 2019). Teachers can impact the way children behave, so learning to

model appropriate behavior and managing emotions can teach children to do the same.

Children's negative behavior can be redirected with the teachers' guidance. When

teachers learn and apply strategies to manage and redirect behaviors, children's

development can be positively impacted (Hatfield & Williford, 2017; Jiang & Jones,

2016). However, ongoing training and support are necessary. Moffett and Morrison

(2019), and Sezer (2017) agreed that there is a need for teacher support and training to

decrease children's stress levels, improve the classroom climate, and improve strategies

to reduce negative behavior, enhance learning and development, and increase

instructional time. Behavior problems may disrupt children's learning and development,

but proper training and support for teachers to redirect behaviors can improve the effects

in the classroom.

***Effects on the Teachers***

Managing disruptive behavior is one of the biggest concerns for teachers.

Teachers' inability to handle the classroom, as well as the lack of support and training is

a contributor to stress, burnout, dissatisfaction, and departure from the profession

(Camacho & Parham, 2019; Humphries et al., 2018; Klopfer et al., 2019). Without the

proper training, experience, and knowledge to manage disruptive behaviors, teachers may

not feel confident or adequate to teach students. Zencicroglu and Sadik (2018) used

scales such as the Quality of School Life Scale and the Attitudes and Beliefs on

Classroom Control Inventory. The Quality of School Life Scale gathered data about

teachers' feelings about the school, interactions between students, and administration

(Zencicroglu & Sadik, 2018). The Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control Inventory

collected data about instructional, people, and behavior management (Zencicroglu &

Sadik, 2018). Zancicroglu and Sadik found the need for more training on methods and

programs to manage a classroom, as well as information from teachers about classroom

challenges. Ouellette et al. (2018) found that disruptive behaviors contribute to high-

stress levels but providing training for teachers to implement evidence-based programs

did not show improvements to teachers' stress or satisfaction. More research into what

supports teachers need to manage behavioral problems is necessary to have a better

understanding of other reasons why teachers are feeling stressed and burned out. Even

though the conclusions that the researchers made differed, all of the researchers

confirmed that the educators' well-being could affect their abilities to teach and

implement classroom strategies (Camacho & Parham, 2019; Humphries et al., 2018;

Klopfer et al., 2019; Ouellette et al., 2018; Zencicroglu & Sadik, 2018). It is vital to

understand teachers' concerns about managing behaviors to increase satisfaction in the

workplace, as well as enhance strategies to identify and manage the different types of behaviors.

**Managing Behavioral Issues**

Educators need effective strategies and knowledge about managing behavioral issues because of the daily disruptions that occur in the classroom. When educators gain new knowledge and skills to decrease behavioral problems, the classroom environment and interventions can improve (Chaffee et al., 2017; Kirkhaug et al., 2016). Nye et al. (2016) found that proactive management strategies and positive, nurturing relationships are necessities to support children with behavioral problems. Positive approaches, such as open discussion and encouragement, are also suggested for even more severe behavioral issues such as physical aggression (Swit et al., 2018). Children with minimal to severe behavioral problems respond best to positive management strategies and relationships. However, Kirkhaug et al. (2016) explained that children with critical externalizing and internalizing issues need an even more comprehensive and tailored intervention. Positive management strategies used with evidence-based programs that implement various lessons and strategies to manage behavioral problems may be the best way for students to experience severe difficulties in behaviors. Kirkhaug et al. found that a universal behavioral program for students with severe behavioral problems was not sufficient and concluded that more interventions were needed. Further information about other types of positive management strategies and programs that show improvement in behavior is essential.

***Strategies to Manage Behavioral Problems***

There are many different strategies to manage behavioral problems, such as increasing prosocial behaviors, setting rules and expectations, and using positive management strategies. Educators should know their students and learn to implement strategies effectively.

One strategy to manage behavioral problems is to increase prosocial behaviors. Interventions to promote prosocial behaviors can reduce disruptive behaviors and increase achievement because of the behavioral, academic, and emotional competencies that are enhanced through the interventions (Johnston et al., 2019; Longobardi et al., 2019; Shin, et al., 2019; Viglas & Perlman, 2018). Further, children with improved prosocial behaviors can reduce the risk of developing externalizing and internalizing behaviors (He et al., 2018). Johnston et al. examined six classrooms of students who received prosocial lessons. He et al. collected data from kindergarten students receiving an intervention program called Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies. Viglas and Perlman (2018) examined the effects of a mindfulness program on prosocial behaviors through a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire that the teachers filled out. The researchers found that increasing prosocial behaviors can protect children from developing severe behavioral problems and improve positive relationships between peers (He et al., 2018; Johnston et al., 2019; Viglas & Perlman, 2018). Encouraging prosocial behaviors such as self-regulation and resilience is essential to reducing behavioral issues and contributing to a positive classroom climate.

**Self-Regulation.** Children need self-regulation skills to become independent and responsible adults. The first 5 years of a child's life is the most critical time for children to develop self-regulation skills (Timmons et al., 2016). From about 4–10 years old, a tremendous change in children's EF occurs (Liew et al., 2018). When children learn self-regulation skills at the most significant developmental period, healthy development may occur. EF and self-regulation allow children to improve attention, memory, and self-control (Liew et al., 2018). Programs that increase children's self-regulation skills contribute to improving school climate, decreasing behavioral issues in the classroom, and increasing prosocial behaviors in the school and at home (Liew et al., 2018). Cadima et al. (2016) expressed that children showed more considerable self-regulation due to close teacher-child relationships. However, Timmons et al. (2016), Viglas and Perlman (2018), and Williams (2018) expressed other ideas about the best way for children to develop self-regulation skills. Some of the ideas include various work settings, music, play-based learning, and social-emotional learning programs.

Children can have opportunities to practice self-regulation skills in various settings with the teacher's guidance and knowledge. Self-regulation skills in a social, academic, and play settings, as well as in the whole group and small group settings, give children different experiences to adapt to (Timmons et al., 2016). Play and interactions in various contexts allow children to practice and develop fundamental skills like flexibility, negotiation, attention, and cooperation (Timmons et al., 2016). Children practice essential skills that benefit learning and development because children have the opportunities to work and play with various peers in many different settings. Timmons et al. (2016) found

that play-based learning provides the best strategies for children to develop self-regulation skills. However, Williams (2018) expressed that music is the best strategy for children to develop self-regulation skills. Williams found that music can give children the opportunities to build the neurological bases of self-regulation, which allows children to build critical skills during early childhood. Music can enhance brain development, which can improve children's abilities and acquisition of self-regulation (Williams, 2018). Another way to help students develop self-regulation skills was introduced by Viglas and Perlman (2018), which is the idea of a developmentally appropriate classroom environment. Viglas and Perlman implemented a mindfulness-based program to show any changes in kindergarten students' self-regulation, prosocial, and maladaptive behaviors. The group that completed the mindfulness program showed improvement in self-regulation and prosocial behaviors (Viglas & Perlman, 2018). Social-emotional programs like mindfulness are effective in the advancement of SEC and the enhancement of the classroom and school climate (Liew et al., 2018). Effectively implementing programs can contribute to student success in all developmental domains. Although the researchers have various ideas of the acquisition of self-regulation skills, all agree that self-regulation skills are essential for academic and life success (Liew et al., 2018; Timmons et al., 2016; Viglas & Perlman, 2018; Williams, 2018). The researchers raise significant questions about self-regulation, and the need for further research into various strategies to reduce behavioral challenges and increase other prosocial behaviors such as resilience.

**Increasing Children's Resilience to Manage Behavioral Problems.** When children are resilient, teachers' struggles to manage a classroom may decrease. Children's prolonged challenges in and out of school can worsen behavioral and cognitive outcomes (Sattler & Gershoff, 2019). However, children who can fully engage in tasks, cope in various situations, and bounce back from challenges, can make academic and personal gains (Cefai et al., 2018; Pitzer & Skinner, 2017). Helping children stay engaged in the classroom and handle difficulties can make a positive change in behavior and academics. Bezuidenhout et al. (2018) case study explored children's resilience and coping skills during a difficult transition. Creating a healthy support system, such as the educators and school psychologists at school, who are warm, caring, loving, and supportive, improved resilience and prosocial behaviors, and provided stability (Bezuidenhout et al., 2018; Pitzer & Skinner, 2017). Children need stable and nurturing adults to support their needs, which also strengthens resilience. Cefai et al. (2018) came to a different conclusion, which is that implementing intervention programs effectively will increase resilience. Since programs provide resources and strategies for teachers, resilience can be maximized. Schussler et al. (2018) expressed another idea: teachers need to acquire resilience. Teacher resilience refers to the ability to commit to maintaining the responsibilities of an educator despite the difficulties and setbacks (Schussler et al., 2018). Addressing and meeting the personal and environmental factors of educators' needs "provide teachers a greater capacity to adapt and to meet the needs of their students" (Schussler et al., 2018, p. 24). Teachers need to have the resilience skills to be the adult that provides security for the children. The authors confirmed that with teachers'

resilience and guidance, essential skills that can improve children's behavioral, academic, and social-emotional development can be acquired (Bezuidenhout et al., 2018; Cefai et al., 2018; Pitzer & Skinner, 2017; Schussler et al., 2018). When educators demonstrate resilience and help children develop those skills, they are better able to provide a safe and positive learning environment for children and decrease behavioral difficulties.

**Other Classroom Management Strategies**

Preventing possible behavioral problems can be successful with the effective use of classroom management strategies. Classroom management skills range from enthusiasm to clear expectations, consistency, routines, and efficient use of time (Gage, Scott, et al., 2018). Setting rules and expectations are strategies that many educators establish. Rules and expectations are standard practices that teachers use to set the tone of the school year (Watson et al., 2016). The educators' consistency of the rules and expectations for the children, and the children's understanding of what is expected of them, can improve and maintain behaviors. One approach to classroom rules is the Color Wheel System (CWS) (Watson et al., 2016). The CWS sets multiple rules based on the type of activities such as projects, free time, games, independent work, and group work (Watson et al., 2016). The CWS can reduce disruptive behavior and encourage students to stay on task (Aspiranti et al., 2019; Watson et al., 2016). Training, knowledge, and effective implementation of the management strategies presented by the researchers help teachers to manage their classroom effectively (Aspiranti et al., 2019; Gage, Scott, et al., 2018; Watson et al., 2016). Another classroom management strategy prevalent in the early childhood educational setting is praise.

**Praise.** Two types of praise are used to help teachers manage behavioral problems--general and specific. General praise refers to any praise statement (e.g., good job), and behavior-specific praise (BSP) describes the desired behavior (O'Handley et al., 2018). For example, if a teacher points out that it is nice to see a particular student walking quietly to the desk, the teacher specifies the student's behavior. O'Handley et al., (2018); Royer et al. (2019) presented a relation between BSP and improved behaviors. O'Handley et al. provided weekly feedback to teachers to increase BSP, and Royer et al. investigated a classroom teacher's use of BSP to measure behavioral and academic outcomes. The use of BSP enhances prosocial behaviors and reduces undesired behaviors. However, unlabeled praise (i.e., general praise) is more common than labeled praise (i.e., BSP) (Floress et al., 2018; O'Handley et al., 2018; Owens, Holdaway, et al., 2018). Floress et al. (2018) observed the natural use of praise used by 28 teachers from six different schools and five districts for over 140 hours. Owens, Holdaway, et al. used a Student Behavior Teacher Response (SBTR) system to observe 55 teachers' rates of praise per hour and students' rates of challenging behaviors per hour. The researchers confirmed that many teachers are using general praise and reprimands, which is not as effective as BSP (Floress et al., 2018; O'Handley et al., 2018; Owens, Holdaway, et al., 2018). The use of BSP is low compared to the use of general praise and reprimands. More research about how praise and other management skills affect children may be needed to implement knowledge and skills that encourage prosocial behaviors.

**Reprimands.** Although praise in the classroom may decrease disruptive behaviors, some educators use reprimands to manage children. Reprimands include

correction statements, punishment, and negative communication (Downs et al., 2019).

Teacher reprimands are used more often than praise and increases as children get older

(Downs et al., 2019). However, teacher reprimands may worsen behavioral issues. Direct

observations and classroom management ratings of students' disruptions and

engagement, and teachers' praise and reprimands were collected for 4 to 6 months

(Downs et al., 2019). Higher rates of reprimands were associated with lower engagement.

Caldarella et al. (2019), Downs et al. and Spilt et al. indicated that students' negative

behavior increased when reprimanded.

Traditional disciplinary methods are usually harmful and teaching children

developmentally appropriate discipline practices are much more effective because of the

development of positive social-emotional and behavioral health (Garrity et al., 2017;

Spilt et al., 2016). The researchers agreed that reprimands and other negative strategies

are not developmentally appropriate and do not enhance the children's well-being and

health (Garrity et al., 2017; Spilt et al., 2016). Teaching children proper skills, rather than

using methods that do not allow children to learn and grow, is critical. Using programs

that include strategies to deliver developmentally appropriate instruction to decrease

behavioral issues can assist teachers in managing the classroom.

**Tribes Learning Community**

GHJCN Elementary School has implemented a program used to teach students'

social-emotional skills, as well as creating a safe and welcoming environment for

children. The Tribes program is a behavior management plan that promotes a positive

learning environment (Brown, 2016). Brown (2016) explored a principal's Tribes

program implementation at an elementary school and learned the process of

implementation. The overall goal of the Tribes program is to develop a safe atmosphere

and a positive school culture where behavioral expectations and interventions reduce the

number of behavioral difficulties (Brown, 2016). Of the 12 elementary schools in the

district, each school averaged about 17 suspensions, while the elementary school in the

case study averaged about five suspensions (Brown, 2016). However, it is essential to

state that the correlations between the low suspension rate and the Tribes program are not

definite (Brown, 2016). The low suspension rates may not be the result of the Tribes

program. Stones (2016) explored the teachers' perspectives of the impacts the Tribes

program has on introverted students. The study results were positive, with teachers

expressing the benefits of the Tribes program, but there is a lack of information regarding

the challenges, implementations, and uncertainties of the program (Stones, 2016). The

researchers shared positive perceptions of the Tribes program (Brown, 2016; Stones,

2016). However, it is essential to note that a limited number of studies have been

conducted about the Tribes program. Gathering data about all aspects of the Tribes

program can identify the needs and weaknesses and determine whether the program is

beneficial.

## Implications

The lack of feedback from teachers about the use of the Tribes program is

worrisome at GHJCN Elementary School. Understanding teachers' perceptions of the

Tribes program provided necessary information that can strengthen implementation,

which can benefit the teachers and students. The literature review describes the

importance of SEL experiences and evidence-based programs to decrease the number of children with behavioral issues and increase the children's positive life outcomes (Yang et al., 2019).

Teachers at GHJCN Elementary School revealed the challenges and benefits of the Tribes program. The teachers also discussed the support and training needed to implement the program effectively. There is currently a lack of feedback from teachers in both the general educational setting in the United States and the local setting in which this study takes place (see Humphries et al., 2018). This study may fill the gap in practice by using the teachers' feedback to make a meaningful change to implement and sustain an SEL program effectively. The findings from this investigation of the teachers' perceptions of the use of the Tribes program can improve children's well-being and behavior, which can also enhance classroom climate and promote learning.

The data revealed that PD training is needed. Stakeholders can gain the insight necessary to decide whether the Tribes program meets GHJCN Elementary School's strategic plan and overall mission through this project study. Most importantly, learning and understanding the teachers' perceptions and experiences can promote positive social change at GHJCN Elementary School by providing their needs and nurturing their strengths to better support the students and each other.

## Summary

I examined the K-1 teachers' perceptions of the use of the Tribes program in decreasing the number of behavioral issues and the training and support the teachers need to implement an effective program. Sugai and Horner (2006) have contributed to the

understanding of teaching and learning approaches to implement evidence-based

practices that help teachers reduce behavioral issues in the classroom. The Tribes

program is a program that should reduce behavioral problems and increase a positive

classroom climate. However, there is an increase in behavioral issues. Also, teachers at

GHJCN Elementary School have not provided feedback about the use of the Tribes

program, which is necessary for the improvement of any program.

In the first section, I discussed the problem in the broader educational system as

well as the problem in the local setting. The literature and framework supported the need

to explore the issues. Section 2 addresses the methodology of the study and the data

collection and analysis process.

Section 2: The Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' perceptions of the use of the Tribes program to address behavioral issues at GHJCN Elementary School. The qualitative approach guided this study and answered the research questions below:

RQ1: What are the K-1 teachers' perceptions of the Tribes program to address behavioral issues at GHJCN Elementary School?

RQ2: What training and support do the K-1 teachers need to implement an effective program to reduce the number of behavioral issues in their classrooms?

**Qualitative Research Design and Approach**

Understanding the teachers' perceptions of the Tribes program aligned with the qualitative approach. The purpose of qualitative research is to understand the meaning that individuals or a group of people make based on their experiences in the natural setting (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The participants construct meaning through the perspectives and experiences shared with the researcher, who then analyzes the data to discover theories and concepts (Smith, 2018). I explored and examined teachers' perceptions and experiences to identify themes and shed light on the challenges, benefits, and the needs of the teachers.

Another type of research is quantitative. In quantitative analysis, the researcher conducts experiments or surveys, with a cause-and-effect approach (Smith, 2018). Quantitative methods did not align with the purpose of my study because my focus was on teachers' perceptions of the Tribes program rather than experiments or a cause-and-effect approach. Quantitative research also analyzes data statistically, represents the

social environment through numerical data, and prepares impersonal and objective reports of the findings (Smith, 2018). Qualitative research examines the data using analytical induction (i.e., a research strategy to explain types of phenomena), represents the social environment through verbal and pictorial data, and shares reports based on the researchers' interpretations of the constructs of the information (Smith, 2018). Participants' experiences played a vital role in this study, which validated the qualitative methodology choice. I also constructed the information based on my interpretations of the reports shared by the teachers.

## Basic Qualitative Research Method

A goal of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding rather than a broad overview of the teachers' perceptions. Basic qualitative research is a flexible methodology (Liu, 2016). This design was most appropriate for this study because of the flexibility of a basic qualitative approach and the ability to gather in-depth information. I gathered comprehensive knowledge of the teachers' perceptions and experiences through interviews.

One approach that is similar to the basic qualitative approach is grounded theory. The grounded theory approach develops theories and concepts that emerged from the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The basic qualitative approach is more limited, and the focus is on essential themes rather than building theories (Liu, 2016). Because I did not construct new theories or concepts, the grounded theory approach was not suitable for this study. Another method that had been considered for this research was a case study. A case study researches one or more real-life events, uses many resources, and is more specific,

usually bounded by time and place (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The topic of this study was more general and was not be bounded by time or place, which is why a case study was also not as fitting.

<div align="center">**Participants**</div>

**Criteria for Selecting Participants**

Purposeful sampling was used to select participants. This type of sampling allows a careful selection of individuals and settings to answer the research questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In this study, I explored K-1 teachers' perceptions, so the teachers at GHJCN Elementary School were selected as participants. These participants were chosen because they had a shared experience of early childhood education, behavioral issues, and the Tribes program. Selecting the location where the problem was discovered and selecting individuals affected by the problem was the primary function of purposeful sampling and my study.

There are many strategies to achieve purposeful sampling. The most closely aligned approach with this study was reputational sampling. The reputational sampling strategy identifies people with knowledge who can shed light on the issues (e.g., interviews of long-time employees; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The participants selected were teachers who had experiences with the Tribes program. The population for the study was 11 K-1 teachers and coteachers at GHJCN Elementary School. All of the teachers and coteachers were invited to participate in the study because of the small population. I invited the teachers to volunteer to be a participant through email and reassured them that they could decline. The email included the purpose of the study and details about the data

collection process. The teachers who accepted the invitation received an informed consent form. There were not enough teachers who responded, so I visited each teacher privately to answer any concerns and questions they had about the study. Because of the small population, the minimum number of participants was six. The six K-1 teachers provided me with the information that I needed for my study. The teacher demographics are listed in Table 4. There are no set rules when it comes to sample size (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). As long as the data are credible and useful and can be done with the available time and resources, sample size becomes less essential (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). A $10 gift card was offered as a thank you for participating in the study. If a participant had decided to withdraw from the study, the gift card was still to be given; no participant withdrew from the study. The selection criteria ensured that the teachers had early childhood education experience as well as experience using the Tribes program.

**Table 4**

*Teacher Demographics*

| Participant | Grade |
| --- | --- |
| Participant 1 | K |
| Participant 2 | K |
| Participant 3 | 1 |
| Participant 4 | K |
| Participant 5 | 1 |
| Participant 6 | 1 |

**Sample Size**

The sample size was another consideration when selecting participants. There were six kindergarten teachers and coteachers and five first grade teachers and coteachers, totaling 11 teachers at GHJCN Elementary School. Bigger sample sizes can be used in qualitative research. However, bigger sample sizes usually occur in longitudinal studies (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Some factors to consider when choosing smaller sample sizes (i.e., about 10 or less), is whether the purpose of the study is to gather rich and in-depth information, the variety of participants, the broadness of the research question, the method of data collection, and the sampling strategy (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The smaller sample size was ideal because I collected in-depth responses from a group of teachers with experiences in the early childhood educational setting as well as the Tribes program.

GHJCN Elementary School did not require a process of approvals from the district. The gatekeepers (i.e., individuals who grant or deny access to the research site) of the study site were the president of GHJCN Elementary School as well as the principal of the elementary school. First, I set up a meeting with the principal and president for approval to conduct my study at the elementary school. At the meeting, I discussed plans to research the participants at the study site, which was approved. The Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) also approved the study. The Walden University approval number for my study is 08-14-20-0762030.

**Protection of Participants**

**Informed Consent**

Ensuring individuals' understanding of their role in a study and obtaining

permission to include them in the research is ethical. Whenever a researcher is seeking

access to settings or groups, obtaining data that are not accessible, or eliciting

information through interviews and other means, informed consent in qualitative research

is necessary (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The participants in the study read and signed an

informed consent, which included precise details about the study and the rights of the

participants. Participants understood their role in this study, the possible risks that may

occur, and their right to withdraw from the study. The participants were informed of any

changes and processes such as data collection and analysis throughout the study. All

participants understood the voluntary nature of this study and were not coerced or

pressured to participate. Any electronic information used in the study is protected in a

private hard drive located off the study site. Any printed reports are locked in a secured

location. After 5 years, all information will be disposed. I met with the participants

individually to answer any questions or clarify any information on the informed consent

form.

**Confidentiality and Anonymity**

Confidentiality and anonymity protect an individual's privacy and identity. One

way that I ensured confidentiality was by pseudonyms. Pseudonyms throughout the study

can protect participants' identities (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Using pseudonyms and

information that do not identify the participant ensured the promised privacy. There are other strategies to ensure privacy and anonymity.

I thought about ways that my data could be compromised and planned for steps to protect the participants from this possibility. For example, sometimes confidentiality is not guaranteed. The researcher may not disclose any information about what the participants shared; still, the researcher cannot control what the participants share with others (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Throughout the study, I ensured transparency and honesty about possible risks. I also kept the participants informed if any issues occurred or if there were potential issues that arose so that the participants were aware and safe from harm.

The data that I collected are also stored somewhere safe. Securely storing any data manages confidentiality (Ravitch & Carl). I saved all hard copies of information in a locked location away from the study site. Online data are stored in a private hard drive and are located in a secured area away from the study site. If I was unsure of what other steps to take, I contacted both my chair and the IRB staff for guidance.

**Protection From Harm**

Throughout the study, participants needed to be protected from harm. Some forms of harm include intentional or unintentional coercion or pressure to participate in a study, deception or misleading the participants about the study, reacting in a way that makes participants feel judged through words or actions, adding time to promised timeframe, exposing data, not considering the comfort of participants, and inaccuracy of the participants' ideas (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Consistent discussion with participants throughout the study prevented harm. I ensured that the participants felt safe from harm

by providing all details about the research and their role, keeping promises of confidentiality and anonymity, and making sure that any response provided was accurate.

Speaking with experienced researchers also helped me ensure the safety of the participants. Having conversations with experienced researchers helped me set boundaries to safely articulate the expectations to the participants and gatekeepers of the study site (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Other individuals that maintained the safety of the participants were the IRB staff. I communicated with the IRB staff and my chair to make sure that all decisions were ethical, and that my interpretation of the data was objective while maintaining the confidentiality, anonymity, and respect of all participants.

Establishing and maintaining rapport between the researcher and participants are essential and can also minimize harm. When limitations are clearly stated, and there is a healthy researcher-participant relationship, the researcher can gain authentic responses. Reciprocity can also help the productive relationship between the researcher and the participant. Building trust, developing relationships, and displaying genuine interest in the participants are part of the reciprocity process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Trust and sincere intentions helped participants feel more at ease, which allowed for a respectful and comfortable relationship. Continuous positive interactions and other methods were necessary to develop reciprocity.

**Data Collection**

In-depth qualitative interviewing was used to answer the research questions fully. I interpreted and reflected on the participants' responses, which is why interviews were the most appropriate data collection method. A one-on-one semistructured interview

gathered in-depth responses that accurately answered the research questions while simultaneously exploring other responses to gain other data about the K-1 teachers' perceptions of the Tribes program to address behavioral issues, and what was needed for successful implementation of a program that may reduce behavioral issues. A semistructured interview is focused, yet there is still an opportunity to gather other information that provides rich data.

I prepared some interview questions in advance and included follow-up questions throughout the interviews (Appendix B). I reviewed the informed consent form and asked the participants if they were still willing to participate in this study. Before beginning the conversation, I discussed the purpose of the study, the amount of time the interview will take, and a word of appreciation for volunteering. I also made sure that the participants had time to ask any questions to ease some doubt or confusion they may have had. A private room was selected to conduct the interviews to avoid distractions and other people who may be able to hear the conversation. Some participants did not feel comfortable completing the meeting at the location due to COVID-19 restrictions, so a videoconferencing application, WebEx, was used to conduct the interviews. Because I analyzed the responses, I got permission to use a transcription application that audio recorded the entire interview. The participants understand that the audio recordings and any information collected are safely secured and were disclosed only to the educator to ensure the analysis was objective and free from bias.

Attentive and active listening during the interview was crucial. Careful and active listening allowed me to make essential notes that contributed to the significant themes,

discussed follow-up questions for an even more enriching interview, and helped me to stay engaged so that I had a clear understanding of the responses. Staying attentive also showed genuine interest, which encouraged participants to share more thoughts and experiences that was beneficial.

When developing the interview instruments, there are some tips to follow. The questions should not be leading or confusing, there should be a reasonable number of items, and should end with a question that allows participants to clarify any answers or ask questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I created open-ended questions that were clear and not too wordy. I also constructed a reasonable number of questions, so the interview was not too lengthy. Also, the conversation ended with a question that allowed participants to add anything they may have missed.

It is also essential to be aware of body language, facial expressions, and feedback. The way interviewers present themselves may make the interviewee feel judged and uncomfortable. I did not comment on the responses that the participants shared, to avoid possible inaccuracy or harm that could have occurred. For example, if I made a comment that agreed with the participant, this may have influenced the participant to continue sharing the same thoughts. If I made a comment or showed any expression of disapproval, this may have limited responses or affected a change in response. Either way, incorrect reactions and harm may occur because of body language, facial expressions, and feedback.

**Reflective Journaling**

To keep track of data throughout the study and have a thorough understanding of each datum, a method such as reflective journaling is useful. Reflective journaling allowed me to deepen my knowledge of others' perceptions and experiences, which helped me to understand my study. The purpose of reflective journaling is to foster self-reflection, develop good research habits, formulate new plans and actions for positive social change, and enhance other parts of researcher qualities (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I improved the quality of my understandings and interpretations of the data through reflective journals and grew as a researcher that promotes positive social change.

When I started the data collection process, I wrote an entry weekly on an online journal, which contained any questions, clarifications, and other reflections that needed addressing. The following week, I got the answers to the questions I had and wrote them down in detail so when I looked back on my notes, I precisely remembered why they were written down and whether the information was significant to my study. An online journal was used because of the ease of access. Wherever I was, I was able to jot down ideas as they came. The online journal is password protected and maintained the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

**Role of the Researcher**

My current professional role is at GHJCN Elementary School, but I do not supervise any participants in the study. I have worked at GHJCN Elementary School for five years as a kindergarten and first grade teacher. I am currently teaching first grade, but in a separate program from the other first grade classrooms. Some biases that I

recognized and overcame were my beliefs and opinions about the Tribes program at the school. Because I work at GHJCN Elementary School, I had my perceptions and experiences. I consider other effective, current, and evidence-based programs that can reduce behavioral issues. However, some of the other teachers believed that the Tribes program is effective with their students. I also had my opinions and experiences about what is needed from the school to maintain a program that promotes a positive climate and a high-quality learning environment.

Acknowledging my biases and beliefs about the Tribes program throughout the entire research process ensured that the data collection process was as accurate as possible. I also remained neutral throughout the interviews and in my reflective journal. I made sure the interview and follow-up questions did not imply my beliefs and I did not comment on the responses the participants provided. To ensure neutrality through the interviews and reflective journals, I asked a professional within the early childhood educational setting to examine my data for any biases. The expert is aware of the Tribes program and is not working at GHJCN Elementary School.

**Data Analysis**

After interviewing the participants, I had the participants read through the transcriptions to ensure accuracy and agree to the content before proceeding to the data analysis. After approval, I began coding all of the audio recorded transcriptions and reflective journal entries. The codes help the researcher to detect any patterns and categories to develop themes (Saldaña, 2016). Emerging themes and patterns are the goals of a basic qualitative study, which is why I chose to code for my data analysis.

There are different methods of coding. The most appropriate process of coding in my research is structural coding. Structural coding is best used in semistructured data gathering, testing hypotheses, or investigations to construct significant categories and themes (Saldaña, 2016). Structural coding goes through two cycles.

Before I started the first cycle of codes, I read through the transcripts to have a better understanding and background knowledge of the responses. After getting a good grasp of the components in the transcripts, I began my first cycle codes. The coding method, code, was used in the first cycle. I interpreted each datum by assigning a short phrase or word that summarized each response. Each code was recorded on the Excel spreadsheet.

After completing the first cycle codes, I began the second cycle, where I used the pattern coding method. I used the pattern coding method to detect patterns and categories to develop themes (Saldaña, 2016). I grouped the summaries into smaller categories and themes by analyzing the commonalities of the codes when I read through the first cycle codes. The second cycle codes were also recorded on the Excel spreadsheet. After finalizing the codes, I used the analysis software Quirkos, which displayed and analyzed the qualitative research (Quirkos, 2020). Quirkos helped me confirm the themes I had interpreted from the categories found through the data.

Thematic analysis was my final analysis process. Thematic analysis furthered the pattern coding method (Saldaña, 2016). I constructed simple statements to summarize the major themes of the second cycle. The summarizations of the major themes identified the conclusion. The final analysis stage helped me to present in detail the overall themes that

described the participants' perceptions and experiences of the Tribes program to address

behavioral issues. The findings informed the project that was used in the study.

**Accuracy and Credibility**

Accuracy and credibility of a study ensure validity and reliability. Research is

credible when the researcher seeks an intricate design and provides authentic

interpretations and findings (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). A validation strategy is member

checks. Member checks establish credibility by checking in with participants to challenge

the accuracy of interpretations (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In my study, I asked participants

to review interview transcripts, reflective journals, summaries, and codes to make sure

that the interpretations resonated with the participants' perspectives. The participants

were asked to identify any inaccuracies, misinterpretations, or other findings. I also

responded to any critiques or disagreements as soon as I receive them so that I

represented the information as accurate as possible.

I also included peer debriefers to identify possible biases in my research. Peer

debriefers include mentors, critical friends, and other groups to create an environment

where interpretations of the data and research process are challenged through the

assumptions and biases that I may make (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Throughout the

interview and data collection process, an early childhood educator assessed the data and

interpretations critically, so that any biases were identified, and changes were made.

**Discrepant Cases**

The data analysis generated any discrepant cases. Discrepant cases refer to the

evidence that does not fit in a pattern or understanding of the data (Ravitch & Carl,

2016). The interpretations will be more complex; the more the researcher challenges and questions the explanations (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I actively looked for disconfirming evidence to improve the validity of the study.

## Data Analysis Results

I investigated the teachers' perceptions of their use of the Tribes program to address behavioral issues and interpreted the data through qualitative data analysis. Six K-1 teachers and coteachers participated in one-on-one interviews. The research questions that guided my study asked about the teachers' perceptions of the Tribes program to address behavioral issues and the training and support needed to implement an effective program to reduce the number of the behavioral problems in the classroom. The analysis software Quirkos displayed the data and showed the nine themes. I used the software, Quirkos, and thematic analysis to group the nine themes into four major themes (see Table 5). The themes that emerged from the interview include teacher buy-in, school support, consistency, and training. These were the four most frequent themes that occurred throughout the interviews. Theme 1, which is teacher buy-in, includes subthemes such as teachers' knowledge and teachers' priority. Some of the responses from the interviews describe knowledge and priority as factors that affect teacher buy-in. Responses also revealed that challenges and benefits of the Tribes program also affect teacher buy-in. Theme 2, which is school support, does not include a subtheme. However, school support is a major theme because it represents the participants' needs, which provides an answer to the second research question that asks what training and support the K-1 teachers need to implement an effective program to reduce the number of

behavioral issues in the classroom. Theme 3, which is consistency, includes the subtheme SEL. Some responses include the importance of consistently using an SEL program across grade levels. However, there is inconsistency in the school. Theme 4 is training. The subthemes include the amount of training received, PD, and collaboration.

**Table 5**

*Themes*

| Major theme | Code/phrases | Number of occurrences in interview | Example |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Teacher buy-in | Teacher buy-in | 7 | Participant 1 mentioned that training and support is needed, but teacher buy-in is just as important. |
|  | Teachers' knowledge | 6 | Participant 2 mentioned that she is not well-informed in the Tribes program. |
|  | Teachers' priority | 10 | Participant 4 expressed her priority to use the Tribes program to manage the classroom. |
| School support | School support | 8 | Participant 3 mentioned the lack of school support and expectations about the Tribes program. |
| Consistency | Consistency | 8 | Participant 6 mentioned that all grade levels should be consistent with the Tribes program. |
|  | SEL | 5 | Participant 3 mentioned the importance of a consistent SEL program for students. |
| Training | Training | 14 | Participant 6 mentioned the need for more training on the Tribes program. |
|  | Professional development | 6 | Participant 1 described the need for professional development for not only new hires, but all teachers. |
|  | Collaboration | 4 | Participant 5 the benefits of collaborating with other teachers to learn about effective strategies to implement and use the Tribes program. |

**Themes**

**Theme 1: Teacher Buy-In**

Teacher buy-in refers to the teachers' commitment and willingness to implement the Tribes program. Five out of six participants used words or phrases that mentioned teacher buy-in in the interview. The subthemes within this theme include teachers' priority and teacher's knowledge. The teachers' priority refers to their level of importance for using the Tribes program. The teacher's knowledge refers to the participants' perception of how knowledgeable they are about the Tribes program. Both of these subthemes were mentioned throughout the interview as being possible reasons that may affect teacher buy-in.

*Teachers' Priority*

One teacher described that using the Tribes program is an individual choice. Participant 1 described the importance of self-motivation to implement the Tribes program. Participant 1 shared,

> I feel almost at times it's the buy-in by the teacher. If they're open to it, so I don't
>
> know how much you can make someone do that. I might've unfairly said that the
>
> teachers that have been around a long time and are stuck in their ways might not
>
> be using it. And that there are other teachers that are brand new and have other
>
> sorts of engaging activities and so they don't really use the Tribes program at all.
>
> But I think it has to be self-motivation from the teacher.

Because the Tribes program is not enforced, some teachers are choosing not to implement the program. Two of the participants described their priority for using the Tribes program

as low. One of the participants feels that helping the child feel confident, valued, and essential is a higher priority than implementing the Tribes program. The other participant described that because the school does not require it, it takes a lot of effort and time to learn about the program and tweak lessons on their own.

Four participants feel that they place the Tribes program as a higher priority, but they would like to use the lessons more often. All four of the participants that place the Tribes program as a higher priority described that lessons are not used regularly in the classroom and would like to incorporate them more. Participant 5 feels that she would like to place her priority on the Tribes program at a higher level, but when she observes others not teaching the Tribes program, she does not feel the need to either. Participant 5 shared,

> I think one of the biggest challenges is that I need to do it, but I don't see other people doing it. So, sometimes, I tend to brush it aside. I was going to do it, but nobody else is doing it…It's kind of like a side thing…I have nothing else to do, so let me fill it with the Tribes program, when it really shouldn't be, but that's how it is.

### Teachers' Knowledge

All of the participants mentioned their knowledge of the four core principles of the Tribes program. However, two of the participants mentioned their lack of understanding of the Tribes program beyond the principles. Participant 2 described her level of knowledge of the program. Participant 2 shared,

It's not like I do a Tribes program activity, but the principles of it as far as the

mutual respect and the right to pass and that type of stuff, definitely. But not the

specific activity. I don't consider myself an expert or well-informed in the Tribes

program.

Participant 3 also described her perceptions of how knowledgeable she is about the

Tribes program. She described herself as a teacher with "limited understanding and

information about the Tribes program." Throughout the interview, she mentioned her

inability to fully answer some questions due to the limited knowledge of the Tribes

program. The lack of knowledge contributes to her buy-in of the program because of the

time and effort to learn and practice the lessons. Participant 4 described the significance

of being knowledgeable about the program. She stated, "I think initially, it's

remembering the agreements and internalizing the meaning of each agreement, and until

you can do that, you can't implement and maintain the program."

All of the participants shared their knowledge of the benefits and challenges of

the Tribes program. The participants recognize that the purpose of the Tribes program is

to manage behaviors in the classroom. One teacher expressed that when the students are

exposed to the core principles and engage in lessons and activities from the Tribes

program each year, there will be an understanding of their expectations. Another teacher

expressed that the Tribes program activities are more beneficial for older grades and that

the activities do not seem appropriate for younger grade levels. However, the core

principles should be unified amongst the school. Other benefits of the Tribes program

that the participants mentioned are that it provides students with tools to help them

develop into good people, including caring for others, being respectful, and being considerate to others.

The participants included challenges of implementing the Tribes program such as lack of school emphasis, limited knowledge, and inconsistency of the program across grade levels. Participant 1 described that she does not feel like it is a challenge to implement the Tribes program. She can implement the lessons with ease because she and her students enjoy the activities. However, Participant 1 has heard other teachers express concerns about not having enough time to incorporate the Tribes program because of the demands to complete other curricula such as math and language arts.

One participant described that the Tribes program is challenging to implement because of the other expectations that need to be completed. Participant 6 expressed that finding a balance between academic expectations and the Tribes program can be helpful. Participant 6 shared,

> I think a lot of it is you are so caught up into what you need to do, what is expected of you as a teacher, to find the time to incorporate different activities, the Tribes program activities, which I feel is really good, but I guess the demand for what we need to cover outweighs the Tribes program agreements. If there is a balance, if we set aside every Friday or something, at least to do one or two Tribe activities a month, then I think it would be better.

**Theme 2: School Support**

All six participants mentioned words or phrases related to school support in the interview. Throughout the interview, the participants mentioned a lack of emphasis from

the school to implement the Tribes program. Participant 2 said, "if you told me that the Tribes program is mandatory, I would be shocked because I honestly don't think we touch on that at all." Participant 3 furthered the lack of school support. Participant 3 shared,

> I was introduced to that program with the title and four principles. That is all I think I was trained for…There is no clear role or expectations from the school. What is it that the school wants teachers to do? I would say that is an important thing to know.

Participant 5 mentioned that if there were more support from the school, she would find a way to incorporate the Tribes program into the program. Participant 5 shared,

> I think that if we had more support or it was brought to our attention more from the school, then I would maybe use it through every cycle that I have the students…There's no reminders. There's no push for using the Tribes program all the time.

GHJCN Elementary School does not require teachers to implement the Tribes program and emphasizes other school programs. Participant 2 shared her thoughts about this perception. Participant 2 shared,

> We have some different programs here now…we seem to be focusing more on that than having people who are specialists in early childhood…So I think the school needs to makes sure they're bringing people who specialize in that because at that age, being able to handle them is way more important than making sure

they can recite the Greek alphabet or whatever…We kind of have a sense of that

because we're focusing more on the program than the child.

There is a lack of emphasis, training, and consistency of the Tribes program amongst the

grade levels. However, all participants would like there to be more emphasis and support

from the school because most of the participants believe that the program can be

beneficial for students and produce a positive behavioral outcome and school climate

with consistency and training.

**Theme 3: Consistency**

All six participants mentioned words or phrases related to consistency in the

interview. The Tribes program should be a unified and consistent program used

throughout the grade levels. Participant 6 described the significance of being consistent

with the Tribes program across the grade levels. Participant 6 shared,

To me, I feel that since this is a step-by-step program, it should be established in

kindergarten and each year have the teachers reinforce what the students that are

in the lower grades are doing and get more detailed. It all starts from the

beginning so that the students know exactly what the Tribes program is and they

know the rules, they follow the rules, and they bring those rules with them as they

get older and older. If everybody is on the same page, this is going to work, but if

some teachers do not do it and some do, then I do not think it is going to work.

A consistent effort from the whole school can help children develop SEL skills such as

respect, which is essential for success in school and life.

***SEL***

Five of the six participants described the importance of using an SEL program

consistently across grade levels to ensure that behavioral issues are reduced, and positive

outcomes may occur. Participant 3 described her perception that the Tribes program is a

form of SEL that can improve behaviors, such as learning to work through conflicts. But,

without consistent learning experiences, children will not understand the necessary skills

for social-emotional development.

The participants in the interview observe the inconsistency of the use of the

Tribes program across grade levels. Participant 4 mentioned the difficulty of speaking

with other grade levels. Participant 4 shared,

> So, if the entire school is on the Tribes program, then you're all using the same
>
> language. So, if you go into a different grade level program, then you do not know
>
> what they are talking about. And if you bring up the core principles from the
>
> Tribes program, then the other grade level will not know what you are talking
>
> about.

Participant 1 also expressed that all faculty members should embrace the Tribes program

because implementing and maintaining the Tribes program can produce beneficial

behavioral results.

**Theme 4: Training**

All six participants mentioned the theme, training throughout the interview. The

subtheme includes the amount of training received, PD, and collaboration.

***Amount of Training Received***

The amount of training that the participants received varied. Some participants

received extensive training before their 1st year teaching the Tribes program, and some

did not. However, what is shared among all participants is that after their 1st year

teaching the Tribes program, they received little to no training on the Tribes program.

The participants who worked at GHJCN Elementary School for over 15 years received

more training than those who began working at GHJCN Elementary School for less than

15 years. Another commonality between all participants is that they would like to receive

more training and support on the Tribes program. Participant 2 described the difference in

the amount of training received at the start of the Tribes program and after the 1st year

teaching the Tribes program. Participant 2 shared,

> Way back when I first started in the grade school, it used to be in a different
>
> capacity. They actually had trainers that did the Tribes program training and they
>
> actually pulled us out of teaching for 3 days to attend a specific the Tribes
>
> program workshop…It was a lot of role playing all the different activities in the
>
> book, so I guess it was pretty extensive, but I don't know why they stopped doing
>
> that.

After the 1st year teaching the Tribes program, Participant 2 described how much training

she received. Participant 2 explained,

> If anything, when we had a full faculty meeting…whoever was in charge of doing
>
> it would share an activity and they were really good about emailing suggestions to

us, but then it was on your own to actually read that and go into it…but training

actually required to be there, none…

### *Professional Development*

All six participants mentioned that they would like to receive more PD training. Because of their lack of training, the teachers lost some knowledge and skills to effectively implement the program. One participant mentioned that having PD training during days that teachers are free of distractions can be helpful. Often, teachers have PD days after a full day of teaching, making it difficult for teachers to absorb the information. Another participant expressed that having PD days that teach teachers about reaching all students, including students with learning disabilities through the Tribes program, would also be beneficial. Collaborating with other teachers can also increase teacher buy-in and knowledge of the Tribes program.

### *Collaboration*

One of the participants feels that collaborating with other teachers is a great way to learn how the Tribes program is being used in similar grade levels. Participant 4 shared that "it would be nice to see an engaged classroom and see how that teacher works in the Tribes program." Observing other teachers is beneficial for teachers to develop new best practices. Participant 6 described that seeing and sharing what the kindergarten teachers teach and how first grade teachers are advancing the program is necessary. Participant 6 explained,

> If we can have a meeting where during the training, we can sit down and discuss
>
> with other teachers and how the Tribes program lessons work in their classes

would be a good thing. I think sharing among colleagues is very important

because it can give helpful ideas or lessons that can be successful.

**Discussion of the Evidence**

Six K-1 teachers and coteachers participated in a one-on-one semistructured

interview. The participants provided answers to the following research questions:

1.  What are the K-1 teachers' perceptions of the Tribes program to address

    behavioral issues at GHJCN Elementary School?

2.  What training and support do the K-1 teachers need to implement an effective

    program to reduce the number of behavioral issues in their classrooms?

After reading through the transcripts several times to help me get a good grasp of the

information and using structural coding and thematic analysis, I organized the findings

into four themes. The four themes are Teacher Buy-In, School Support, Consistency, and

Training.

**Salient Data and Discrepant Cases**

One of the interview questions did not fit into the pattern or understanding of the

data, which is considered discrepant data. Question number 1 asked how often the

teachers teach the lessons from the Tribes program. The responses did not generate

relevant information or add to the pattern of the analysis. Five out of six participants do

not use the program regularly. One participant expressed that the program is regularly

used but would like to do more. This discrepant case prompted me to rethink whether this

information was of quality data that would add to the research. I concluded that the

information would not add to my research, so it is not included in the data analysis.

**Evidence of Quality**

One of the validation strategies used to ensure evidence of quality was the use of member checks. The purpose of the member check was to ask participants to read and identify any biases or misinterpretation of the datum (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Member checks helped the study to be more accurate and valid. All six of the participants were notified through the informed consent form, and the interviews, that one of their responsibilities was to read my interpretations of their responses and ensure the accuracy of the analysis. I emailed the participants their part of the analysis and asked each of the teachers to read it and let me know if I misinterpreted anything. I also let the teachers know that we could schedule a meeting if we needed to meet to discuss the data. All six of the participants expressed that the interpretations were accurate and reflected their perspectives.

Other strategies used to ensure evidence of quality was by using a peer debriefer and through reflective journaling. The peer debriefer read through the interview questions and analysis to assess the data and interpretations critically. An early childhood educator outside of GHJCN Elementary School, with experience using the Tribes program, did not identify biases in the questions or analysis. She stated that the questions were well-balanced to generate all possible viewpoints, and the analysis and reflective journaling did not reveal biases. The reflective journaling process helped me keep track of and improve the quality of the understanding and interpretations of the data throughout the study. For example (see Appendix C), one of the participants expressed that she would like her priority of the Tribes program to be higher. I asked if she feels her priority is

lower and why she feels that way. She clarified that her priority of the Tribes program is high. Because of the pandemic that is occurring, and the difficulties of navigating online learning, the focus of providing children and families with support is a higher priority right now than implementing the Tribes program.

**Outcomes**

The problem is that there is an increase in the number of behavioral issues in the classroom at GHJCN Elementary School. GHJCN Elementary School uses the Tribes program, a behavioral management program that should reduce behavioral issues. However, there is still an increase in behavioral issues. The data analysis provided in-depth responses from six K-1 teachers and coteachers about their perceptions of the Tribes program to address the behavioral issues in their classrooms. The data analysis thoroughly answered the research questions of this study.

RQ1 explored the K-1 teachers' perceptions of the Tribes program to address behavioral issues. Most of the participants see the potential of the Tribes program to reduce behavioral issues in the classroom. Participant 5 described the potential of the Tribes program to reduce behavioral issues if there are follow-up and consistency at home. Participant 5 was the only participant to express the need for the Tribes program beyond the school walls to ensure further positive effects of the Tribes program. Participants 1, 4, and 6 expressed that the Tribes program is an effective way to manage the classroom. For example, participant 4 described that with an understanding of the program and the children and the consistency of the program; the Tribes program could be an effective program that will reduce behavioral problems. Alternatively, participant 2

described that the Tribes program is a tool that could reduce behavioral issues if the program is used consistently alongside other behavioral management methods. She expressed that the program could encourage students to help each other, listen, participate, and different fundamental values that children are expected to demonstrate in the classroom. Participant 3 mentioned that she could see this program as being beneficial. Since she views this program as a social-emotional learning program, there are benefits of the program, such as managing behaviors and reducing behavioral issues. However, it is essential to note that the participant expressed a lack of knowledge about the program.

In the literature, teachers have expressed the significance of implementing an SEL program. Humphries et al. (2018) and Conroy et al. (2019) described the lack of early childhood teachers' perceptions of SEL programs. Early childhood educators' perceptions of SEL programs were explored and found that teachers' beliefs and attitudes influence the implementation and longevity, which is what teachers at GHJCN Elementary School have also expressed (see Conroy et al., 2019; Humphries et al., 2018). Teacher buy-in of programs can affect teachers' use of the program. Conroy et al. furthered the research by examining the perceptions of teachers who participated in the training of an SEL program called BEST in CLASS. The training helped teachers develop best practices in managing behaviors, increased their self-confidence, and improved the classroom's quality (Conroy et al., 2019). The teachers at GHJCN Elementary School and in the larger body of literature expressed the benefits of SEL programs for both teachers and students (see Bilir Seyhan et al., 2019; Conroy et al.,

2019; Humphries et al., 2018). The overall consensus of SEL programs is positive, with teachers expressing the positive effects. However, teachers need training and support to implement these programs effectively.

RQ2 explored what training and support the K-1 teachers need to implement an effective program to reduce behavioral issues. All six of the participants described the need for more training on the Tribes program and the support from the school. Even the participants who feel knowledgeable about the Tribes program expressed more PD training, collaboration, and teacher observations of effective lessons. For example, participant 1 received extensive training, and uses the Tribes program in the classroom, expressed the need for ongoing PD training and extensive PD training for new hires. School emphasis was also identified throughout the interviews. For example, participant 2 described the school's need to emphasize the Tribes program to ensure consistency across grade levels. Because of the lack of training and requirements and the focus on other programs within the school, she does not feel that the Tribes program is a high priority. Similarly, participant 5 expressed that because others do not consistently use the Tribes program, this influences her motivation to incorporate it, which she believes should not be the case. Participant 4 and 6 shared that observing other teachers and collaborating is needed as well. Participant 4 would like to observe early childhood teachers that utilize the Tribes program throughout the year and effectively implements the program to gain perspective and learn new things about implementation strategies. Participant 6 addressed the same need. Additionally, participant 6 described the need for

collaboration among grade levels to plan for the Tribes program units appropriate for each grade level.

Similarly, in the literature, educators expressed the need for more training to implement an effective program to reduce behavioral issues. Teachers have reported a lack of training to develop strategies that support children's behavioral and emotional needs (Post et al., 2020). There are various reasons teachers lack training, such as funding issues or emphasis on other educational aspects (Post et al., 2020). However, consistent and ongoing training on managing behavioral issues and programs that enhance positive behaviors are necessary for teachers and students (Edwards, 2017; Lees & Kennedy, 2017; Prins et al., 2019). Post et al. (2020) examined four kindergarten teachers' perceptions of their training program that allows teachers to learn to manage the relationships between the teacher and child who show low achievement and behavioral problems. Post et al. found that teachers lack training in responding to children who have experienced trauma. Because of the lack of training, the teachers feel stressed and burnt out. The training program helped teachers develop skills that can help teachers respond to children better, which reduced their stress levels and positively impacted their classrooms because of the support received (Post et al., 2020). The teachers felt that the training was beneficial (Post et al., 2020). Conners-Burrow et al. (2017) also found that teachers view behavioral management programs as beneficial. Still, the teachers' ongoing training, consistency, and motivation are needed to produce both teachers' and students' positive outcomes (Conners-Burrow et al., 2017). Teachers at GHJCN Elementary School expressed the need for more training, consistency, and teacher buy-in of programs to

reduce behavioral issues. Teachers have also reported the need for more training in managing challenging behaviors in the classroom (Stormont & Young-Walker, 2017). Teachers do not feel prepared or knowledgeable enough to effectively handle negative behaviors, which is consistent with the findings of my study (see Stormont & Young-Walker, 2017).

The findings relate to the conceptual framework of Sugai and Horner's (2006) SWPBIS, which emphasizes redesigning the school environment to implement best practices in the classroom and schoolwide. The participants described their needs for training to redesign their environment and gain new knowledge and strategies to reduce behavioral issues.

**Conclusion**

Teachers at GHJCN Elementary School have different perceptions of the Tribes program. However, the commonalities of the responses in training and supports they need to implement the Tribes program to reduce behavioral issues were consistent. The participants want more knowledge and PD training of the Tribes program, more collaboration, and effective implementation. In section 3, the project, which is a 3-day PD training, will be described. The PD training will include details from the literature review to implement effective training sessions that describe the Tribes program and provide strategies and skills that the participants revealed in their responses, which relates to the themes.

**Summary**

This basic qualitative research study examined K-1 teachers' perceptions of the use of the Tribes program to address behavioral issues at GHJCN Elementary School. This section demonstrated a qualitative approach to answer each of the research questions fully. The K-1 teachers' perceptions of the Tribes program and procedures for data analysis are described. The findings from the teachers at GHJCN Elementary School allow for the development of the PD project that may promote positive social change.

Section 3: The Project

**Introduction**

I chose to complete a 3-day PD session for the project of this study (Appendix A). In this section, I present the rationale of the project, review of the literature, project description, project evaluation plan, and project implications. The goal of this project was to provide training for K-1 teachers of the Tribes program to address behavioral issues.

**Rationale**

The PD project was chosen to enhance the K-1 teachers' knowledge of the Tribes program and strengthen their skills of implementing the program effectively. The purpose of a PD is to reestablish, develop, and expand the knowledge and skills of the teacher (Tantawy, 2020). The K-1 teachers at GHJCN Elementary School are the target audience of the full 3-day PD sessions, where they will learn about the purpose, strategies, benefits, addressing and overcoming challenges, and engaging in discussion about the Tribes program. Teachers who participate in PD sessions have the opportunity to not only learn and grow as an educator but also to provide children with necessary experiences that maximizes children's positive development (Bove et al., 2018; Jensen & Rasmussen, 2019; Ring et al., 2019; Schachter et al., 2019). PD sessions provide teachers with tools and strategies to use in the classroom that may benefit students' development. Educators can also improve practices that will enhance their teaching performance after attending PD sessions. The need for more training and PD revealed through the findings from the participants' interviews led me to choose to complete a PD training.

The K-1 teachers at GHJCN Elementary School shared their perceptions of the Tribes program through interviews. GHJCN Elementary School has a Tribes program, which is used as a behavioral management tool to reach the goals of the strategic plan to implement a program to develop necessary qualities of social-emotional development such as managing feelings and emotions, as well as improving behavior.

The data analysis revealed that teachers would like more training and PD to help develop knowledge and implementation strategies to use the Tribes program effectively and consistently. The newer teachers reported the lack of training before starting their 1st year teaching the Tribes program. In contrast, the teachers with more years at GHJCN Elementary School reported receiving extensive training from a formal trainer before starting their 1st year teaching the Tribes program. However, 100% of the participants said that training has become minimal. One hundred percent of the participants also revealed that they would like to use the Tribes program more. The participants stated their knowledge of the four core principles of the Tribes program but mentioned that no specific lesson is being used. Teachers also described the support and training they would like to receive that would help them gain more knowledge and the motivation to learn implementation strategies. Some of the suggestions included having PD days during a free day, observing a successful the Tribes program lesson where students are engaged, including time for teachers to have discussions about what works and what does not work, and including time for teachers to collaborate. Other suggestions included learning to use and adapt the program for students who may have other behavioral issues or learning disabilities.

The PD project (Appendix A) was chosen because I can use the 3 full days of training to address the needs of the K-1 teachers in implementing and gaining knowledge of the Tribes program to address behavioral issues in the classroom. The PD project provides components, activities, notes; and research for GHJCN Elementary School teachers, administrators, and other schools to use as a guide to increase teacher buy-in and motivate and build confidence in teachers to use their skills and knowledge to use an effective program to reduce behavioral issues.

**Review of the Literature**

The review of the literature includes ways to support the needs of the K-1 teachers at GHJCN Elementary School in the form of a PD project. The data revealed a need for more PD training on the implementation and information about the Tribes program to address behavioral issues. The major themes of the literature review are teachers' perceptions of PD, effective PD characteristics, face-to-face versus online PD, PD for behavioral management, and need for ongoing PD training. Throughout the exhaustive search of the literature, when no new studies or articles to support the themes were available, I determined that saturation for this review was reached.

An electronic search was used to develop a review of the literature. The databases included Walden University's library, Education Source, EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, Academic Search Complete, and APA PsycInfo. The search terms used in the study included *professional development, effective professional development, characteristics, teachers, educators, elementary, primary school, grade school, teacher perceptions, teacher views, obstacles, barriers, challenges, weaknesses, strengths, benefits,*

*advantages, behavior, training, workshop, student outcomes, student achievement,* and *online professional development.*

**Teachers' Perceptions of PD**

Understanding teachers' perceptions of an effective PD training session is essential for trainers to implement an engaging and valuable session. Without knowing the teachers' perspectives on PD, trainers will not understand the teachers' needs to become more effective (Owens, Sadler et al., 2018). Gathering information about teachers' perceptions of PD can strengthen the session, which can help teachers improve. Additionally, understanding the teachers' perception of PD can identify potential obstacles (Tantawy, 2020). Identifying potential barriers allows trainers to plan more efficient PD. Researchers have agreed that collecting and analyzing teachers' perceptions of PD is essential in developing valuable and useful training for the teachers (Owens, Sadler et al., 2018; Tantawy, 2020).

PD is vital for teachers' growth in their professional careers. Owens, Sadler, et al. (2018) described limited research on teachers' perceptions of PD training. Owens, Sadler, et al. explored various teachers' perceptions of their PD needs, including format, time, and topics. The study's participants consisted of a statewide sample of 800 elementary and secondary teachers with a range of years of experience (Owens, Sadler, et al., 2018). The MO-STEM PD Needs Assessment Survey was used to collect data about teacher preferences and formats (Owens, Sadler, et al., 2018). The teachers preferred a half-day or full-day training that did not include the weekend or summer workshops and liked having training during school hours (Owens, Sadler, et al., 2018). Different PD formats

should also be made available, which includes on-site, off-site, and virtual formats. Teachers also shared eight essential aspects of PD, including ready-to-use materials, collaboration, innovative strategies, expert trainers, new ideas, networking with other professionals, feedback, and meeting PD requirements (Owens, Sadler, et al., 2018). Most of the teachers had an agreement that PD can improve instructional practices, which can benefit students (Owens, Sadler, et al., 2018). Williford et al. (2017) investigated 150 early childhood teachers' perceptions of a PD course and their improvements. Scales such as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System, the Ideas about Children, and Teacher Stress Inventory scales were used to collect data (Williford et al., 2017). Implementing effective PD training by understanding the components of PD helps teachers improve in areas such as teacher and child interactions. Owens, Sadler, et al. and Williford, et al. reported their positive perceptions of PD. Abdul-Majied et al. (2017) explored student teachers' perceptions of PD issues. Questionnaires were used to collect data, which revealed issues in course content and pedagogy, student empowerment, and enablers and barriers to learning (Abdul-Majied et al., 2017). Even though the participants in Abdul-Majed et al. study were early childhood student teachers, there is a similar idea across the authors that effective PD sessions allow novice and veteran teachers to build content knowledge and pedagogy. The authors also agreed that understanding teachers is essential to creating effective PD that is beneficial for educators' growth (Abdul-Majied et al., 2017; Owens, Sadler, et al., 2018; Williford et al., 2017).

*PD Outcomes*

PD training can include many strengths that are crucial for teachers' professional growth. Ongoing PD training can improve teachers' skills and knowledge in education (Faraclas, 2018; Owens, Sadler, et al., 2018; Parsons et al., 2019; Tantawy, 2020). Faraclas (2018) found that teachers' performance skills with PD training are higher than teachers who do not participate in PD. A randomized pretest and posttest control group was examined to monitor the PD training effects on teacher performance over 15 weeks (Faraclas, 2018). A demographic survey and classroom observations were used to provide information about teachers' experiences and training and their education (Faraclas, 2018). The Performance Assessment for Coteachers was an instrument that assessed the performance in areas such as coplanning, classroom management, instruction, behavior management, and assessment (Faraclas, 2018). Faraclas showed that teachers who participated in the PD training had significantly higher posttest scores than the teachers who did not attend the PD training. The teachers felt more confident in the classroom because of newfound knowledge and skills (Faraclas, 2018). Tantawy (2020) furthered the study by providing in-depth responses from teachers. Tantawy explored the teachers' perceptions of the impact of PD and teachers' readiness of PD sessions that may affect career progression, students' and teachers' performance, increased commitment to career, and personal and professional qualities. Semistructured interviews were used to collect information from three English as a Second Language teachers (Tantawy, 2020). The three teachers revealed the positive impact that PD training has on teachers (Tantawy, 2020). However, more research on whether there is a relationship between

teachers' PD and improved students' performance is needed to further implement PD training. Parsons et al. (2019) offered another perspective on teachers' views of PD outcomes and included perceptions of both in-person and online PD sessions. Surveys were used for data collection, which revealed that the outcomes of PD whether they are conducted online or in-person have the same goals (Parsons et al., 2019). The goals included teachers' growth of knowledge and skills that are beneficial for the teachers and students (Parsons et al., 2019). The researchers shared the similarities of the teachers' perceptions of the outcome of PD sessions, which is that they make a positive impact on teachers' growth and ability to apply what they learned (Parsons et al., 2019). When teachers use skills they learned during PD training sessions, there may be improvements in student outcomes.

### *Student Outcomes*

When teachers attend PD training and workshops, new strategies may be implemented to produce positive student outcomes. Students can make gains in their behaviors when teachers attend training (Ascetta et al., 2019; Singh et al., 2017; Wermer et al., 2018). Singh et al. (2017) trained three teachers on the mindfulness-based program. They measured whether their implementation of the program helped decrease students' physical (e.g., hitting, biting, scratching) and verbal (e.g., yelling, cursing, threatening) aggression (Singh et al., 2017). Three students were observed to determine the effects of the training (Singh et al., 2017). The teachers were trained to utilize the Meditation on the Soles of the Feet, including verbal instructions, modeling, and demonstration (Singh et al., 2017). Once the teachers were trained in Meditation on the Soles of the Feet, the

program was used with the students (Singh et al., 2017). Singh et al. found that using and effectively teaching the Meditation on the Soles of the Feet program significantly reduced children's physical and verbal aggression. Wermer et al. (2018) researched students' improvements in communication after professionals attended the training. The training package provided the professionals with opportunities to respond and initiate communications through the systematic prompting hierarchy (i.e., correct responding; Wermer et al., 2018). A teacher, student, and paraprofessional were the participants in the study (Wermer et al., 2018). The communication of the student improved after the professionals were trained (Wermer et al., 2018). Ascetta et al. (2019) examined the effectiveness of PD through feedback from teachers after training. The purpose of the teachers' training was to enhance students' language skills (Ascetta et al., 2019). After teachers completed language enhancement modules, the teachers needed to implement the strategies and report on the findings (Ascetta et al., 2019). Ascetta et al. revealed that teachers' frequency of language strategies increased, and the children improved on overall language skills. The researchers used different approaches to training. Singh et al. conducted training on a program with various skills, Wermer et al. focused on training for just one skill, which was improving students' communication, and Ascetta et al. included teachers' self-reported feedback of their improvements. Even though the ideas of what should be included in a PD session varies, the authors agree that teachers need ongoing training to produce positive student outcomes (Ascetta et al., 2019; Singh et al., 2017; Wermer et al., 2018). Although there are benefits to implementing PD training, there are also obstacles preventing trainers from successfully presenting a PD session.

***PD Obstacles***

There are obstacles such as different formats of PD, lack of funds, and inconsistency that may hinder the presentation of an effective PD. Martin and Mulvihill (2020) researched teachers' perceptions of the effective Professional Development Schools PDS models and current PDS problems and concerns. Martin and Mulvihill found that ongoing support and difficulties sustaining the program due to lack of funds contribute to challenges in implementing PD. Other obstacles include buy-in issues, lack of clear expectations and communication, and lack of resources and time constraints (Martin & Mulvihill, 2020). Sezgin (2020) explored a different type of PD, which are the massive open online course. Sezgin interviewed 58 pre-service teachers and eight teacher trainers to discuss the obstacles of the massive open online course. Some challenges included cost, lack of confidence, and language constraints (Sezgin, 2020). Stair et al. (2017) explored teachers' perceptions of their knowledge of the common core state standards (CCSS) after completing a professional development training program. One hundred and seventy teachers participated in the CORE Community training, which helps teachers implement CCSS and develop a support system that integrates CCSS strategies through collaboration and refining already used skills (Stair et al., 2017). A survey instrument was used for data collection (Stair et al., 2017). Stair et al. revealed the need for more training and resources. Even after the professional development training, teachers felt unprepared to implement CCSS (Stair et al., 2017). Because of the limited training opportunities, resources, formal training, and lack of consistency, teachers could not comprehensively teach and assess the standards (Stair et al., 2017). Although the

researchers had various responses to the challenges of implementing PD, all authors

presented possible obstacles that trainers may face when developing teachers' training

(Martin & Mulvihill, 2020; Sezgin, 2020; Stair et al., 2017). Learning about all the

potential barriers to developing PD sessions can help trainers plan more effective PD.

**Effective PD Characteristics**

There are many characteristics of effective PD. Incorporating significant PD

features is beneficial for the teachers attending the training because of the optimization of

engagement, learning, and growth (Abu-Tineh & Sadiq, 2018; Owens, Sadler, et al.,

2018; & Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2020). Teachers are more likely to improve their skills

from a PD session that incorporates significant characteristics. Abu-Tineh and Sadiq

(2018) explored the characteristics of an effective PD session through teachers'

perceptions. Surveys were used for data collection, which discovered the attributes of an

effective PD: (a) enhances knowledge, (b) promotes collaboration, (c) based on

individual and school improvement, (d) models high-quality instruction, (e) site-based,

(f) focuses on teachers' identified needs, (g) ongoing follow-up and support, (h) various

formats, (i) observation of effective teaching and learning, (j) accommodates diversity

and equity, (k) procedures for evaluation, (l) builds leadership, (m) appropriate time and

resources, (n) ongoing, (o) promotes inquiry and reflection, (p) research-based, (q) based

on student learning data, and (r) involves families and stakeholders (Abu-Tineh & Sadiq,

2018). The participants revealed that those mentoring models are the most effective, and

online PD is rated the least effective (Abu-Tineh & Sadiq, 2018). Sims and Fletcher-

Wood (2020) also explored the characteristics of effective PD. There were some

similarities and differences in features. The similarities included ongoing PD training and encouraging collaboration (see Abu-Tineh & Sadiq, 2018; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2020). Some differences in an effective PD include sessions being subject-specific, having teacher buy-in, and are practice-based (Abu-Tineh & Sadiq, 2018; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2020). Owens, Sadler, et al. (2018) also included similar significant features such as a sufficient amount of time, different formats of PD (e.g., online), and PD design (e.g., teachers' needs). There were a few other ideas of the authors' views of effective PD characteristics, but most of the characteristics described in the studies are consistent (Abu-Tineh & Sadiq, 2018; Owens, Sadler et al., 2018; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2020). The characteristics should be applied to all formats of PD, such as face-to-face and online sessions.

**Face-to-Face Versus Online PD**

Currently, online learning is prevalent; technology continues to evolve, which allows for different formats of PD training, such as online, which can be as effective as face-to-face sessions. Online PD sessions provide more accessibility for teachers to attend sessions (Parsons et al., 2019; Powell & Bodur, 2019; & Rice, 2017). If PD sessions are across the world, teachers cannot attend training, or teachers prefer online PD sessions, online options help make PD widely available. However, information on teachers' preferences for attending face-to-face sessions or online sessions is limited (Parsons et al., 2019). Parsons et al. (2019) used surveys to address the research questions, asking about the teachers' perceptions of the different PD formats and their experiences. Parsons et al. revealed that most of the participants found online PD sessions

to be beneficial. Some of the reasons include convenience, mandatory participation, and the inexpensive cost (Parsons et al., 2019). Powell and Bodur (2019) examined teachers' perceptions of effective online PD. Useful online PD formats include information that is relevant, authentic, useful, and provides interaction and collaboration (Powell & Bodur, 2019). Wynants and Dennis (2018) also explored teachers' perceptions of online PD. Ten faculty members participated in a 45-minute interview where the participants discussed their experiences regarding online PD on disability awareness (Wynants & Dennis, 2018). The data analysis revealed that the participants indicated the benefits of online PD sessions, such as control of pace, flexibility, and continued access to resources (Wynants & Dennis, 2018). However, Wynants and Dennis also revealed the opposite results: teachers did not prefer the online PD format and disadvantages to online PD.

Online PD training can miss some elements that face-to-face sessions have. Online PD sessions may lack social interaction, discussion, and other necessary characteristics of an effective PD (Parsons et al., 2019; Wasserman & Migdal, 2019; & Wynants & Dennis, 2018). Online formats of PD training can be challenging because social interactions are not as easily accessible as face-to-face sessions. Wasserman and Migdal (2019) explored the attitudes of teachers who were enrolled in online PD training. Four hundred and sixty-nine teachers were the participants in this study (Wasserman & Migdal, 2019). Teachers filled out questionnaires, which contained two parts (Wasserman & Migdal, 2019). The first part of the questionnaire included 26 statements of the teachers' attitudes towards online training (Wasserman & Migdal, 2019). The second component of the questionnaire was the demographics (Wasserman & Migdal,

2019). Some of the disadvantages of online courses were feelings of isolation or feeling

disconnected, feelings of frustration because of the lack of immediate and effective

responses to questions, inability to express themselves through body language or facial

expressions, and technological issues (Wasserman & Migdal, 2019). Another study

described that many professionals drop out of online PD (Luz et al., 2018). Many study

participants who dropped out of the online PD training experienced technical issues,

conflicts in schedule, and family and personal matters (Luz et al., 2018). Some teachers

feel that online PD training is not beneficial for reasons including lack of interaction, lack

of motivation, and accountability (Parsons et al., 2019; Wynants & Dennis, 2018).

Teachers who need face-to-face PD training to experience social interaction and increase

intrinsic motivation and accountability to complete the PD training successfully may not

thrive in an online PD format. Rice (2017) described the need for more effective PD

sessions because teachers do not receive opportunities to engage in comprehensive and

structured online PD training. More information about the significant characteristics of an

online PD is necessary to ensure that each online session is beneficial for teachers. The

authors described various perceptions and preferences of which format (face-to-face or

online) is most effective (Luz et al., 2018; Parsons et al., 2019; Rice, 2017; Wasserman &

Migdal, 2019; Wynants & Dennis, 2018). All authors agree that there are advantages and

disadvantages to both formats (Luz et al., 2018; Parsons et al., 2019; Rice, 2017;

Wasserman & Migdal, 2019; Wynants & Dennis, 2018). The different PD training

options allow individuals to choose the most effective format for themselves, especially if

teachers need additional PD to assist in areas of need, such as managing behaviors.

**PD for Behavioral Management**

With recent studies of the increase in children with behavioral issues, teachers are participating in training to effectively identify and address behavioral issues. Teachers participating in PD training can improve their skills to manage various levels of behavior (Carroll et al., 2020; Chaparro et al., 2020; Horner et al., 2018; Von der Embse et al., 2018). Chaparro et al. (2020) investigated the teachers' and district leaders' training on the Effective Behavioral and Instructional Support Systems (EBISS) to discover whether improvements on student and teacher outcomes were made. The purpose of the EBISS was to improve instruction and student behavior to support students with challenges in both learning and behavior (Chaparro et al., 2020). Twenty-five school districts participated in the study (Chaparro et al., 2020). Teachers and other faculty participated in PD, which focused on training the participants to effectively use features of EBISS such as leadership, commitment, action planning, coaching, training, assessment and evaluation, support, and funding (Chaparro et al., 2020). Several tools were used to gather data (Chaparro et al., 2020). The school-level data summary, School-Wide Evaluation Tool, literacy screeners, DIBELS, easyCBM, and the Oregan Assessment of Knowledge and Skills assessed students' progress (Chaparro et al., 2020). Chaparro et al. revealed that ongoing and extensive PD optimizes the improvements of teacher and student outcomes in behavior and learning. Von der Embse et al. (2018) also explored whether training positively impacts teacher outcomes using screening tools to identify students who are at for mental and behavioral issues. Ninety-one teachers participated in training on universal screening and learned about various behavioral risks through video

examples (Von der Embse et al., 2018). Teachers completed the Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener following training and expressed their willingness and confidence to utilize universal screening tools (Von der Embse et al., 2018). Although the EBISS and universal screening tools in the studies were beneficial for teachers and children, Carroll et al. (2020) described that effective programs do not mean that all children will significantly benefit from the program. A universal SEL program called *KooLKIDS Whole of Class* was used in the study (Carroll et al., 2020). The students who completed the program, and the teachers who administered the lessons were participants (Carroll et al., 2020). The Carroll et al. indicated that children's characteristics might influence the outcomes of an SEL program, which is why working collaboratively with other professionals such as the school psychologist may maximize the effects of an SEL program for different students. Teachers need to have the skills to transform their knowledge into action (Carroll et al., 2020; Horner et al., 2018). The authors described the significance of the training and ongoing PD to improve teachers' skills and strategies and improve their motivation and self-confidence (Carroll et al., 2020; Chaparro et al., 2020; Von der Embse et al., 2018). However, there is a lack of PD in behavioral management in schools, which may negatively impact teachers and students.

**Need for Ongoing PD Training**

There is a lack of PD training on managing behavioral issues, contributing to teacher stress and burnout. Teachers in studies have expressed the need for more training on developing the skills to handle various behavioral problems in the classroom (Chuang

et al., 2020; Corona et al., 2017; Kanjere, 2017; Opiola et al., 2020; Pilgrim et al., 2017).

Consistent PD training should be provided for teachers because they need to be equipped

with strategies and confidence to teach students effectively. Corona et al. (2017)

investigated school professionals who work with students with autism spectrum disorder

(ASD). The researchers investigated the factors that contribute to teacher burnout, teacher

self-efficacy, teachers' beliefs of their abilities to promote positive student outcomes, and

the impact of training on ASD (Corona et al., 2017). Ninety-three school professionals

from ten schools participated in the study (Corona et al., 2017). The participants

completed training on ASD; then, data was collected through surveys and questionnaires

(Corona et al., 2017). Corona et al. described the need for providing teachers with quality

training to work with students with behavioral concerns such as ASD. Similarly, Kanjere

(2017) and Opiola et al. (2020) discovered that PD training positively impacts teachers'

outcomes, so more training is necessary. Chuang et al. (2020) and Pilgrim et al. (2017)

examined different PD programs that train teachers to meet the students' behavioral

needs. Chuang et al. and Pilgrim et al. described the significance of the components of

both PD programs that helps teachers manage the classroom and reduce behavioral

issues. All of the studies explained how the training helped the teachers to implement

effective strategies to reduce behavioral problems. The authors also mentioned that

teachers lack the knowledge and skills to manage behavioral issues effectively (Chuang

et al., 2020; Corona et al., 2017; Kanjere, 2017; Opiola et al., 2020; Pilgrim et al., 2017).

Because of teachers' lack of knowledge and skills, ongoing PD training is needed since

teachers may benefit from the training.

## Project Description

The proposed project was chosen to address the K-1 teachers' perceptions of the Tribes program to reduce behavioral issues at GHJCN Elementary School. The PD project will be presented to the K-1 teachers at GHJCN Elementary School. Through the data analysis, the participants shared their perceptions of the Tribes program, which included the need for more PD training to gain new knowledge about the Tribes program, the implementation of the Tribes program, and collaboration with other grade levels. The K-1 teachers will benefit from attending the 3-day PD training because they will have the opportunity to learn more about the Tribes program (e.g., the purpose of the Tribes program) and ideas to implement the program effectively. The results of the one-on-one interviews will be shared, including the themes of the data. The themes are teacher buy-in, school support, consistency, and training. The principal will also be invited to attend the PD training. Because one of the themes is school support, the principal can learn more about what the teachers need to implement the Tribes program effectively.

### Needed Resources

The resources that the participants need for the 3-day PD training include a large room with a projector to present the PowerPoint and videos, the Tribes program textbook, markers, pens, blank sheets in a binder to jot down ideas, and a copy of the PowerPoint presentation with a section to take notes. There will also be an option for teachers to attend the PD training online on a videoconferencing platform, if necessary.

**Existing Supports**

GHJCN Elementary School is a private Catholic school, so the existing supports come from the school president, pastor, and administration. A media center for general use is available for teachers to have ongoing training, collaboration sessions, and other meetings to discuss and make positive changes that will benefit the teachers and students. Funding can also be provided by the school to bring in formal trainers for consistent PD training for all grade levels in the grade school.

**Potential Barriers**

Currently, the world is experiencing a pandemic, and teachers are heavily utilizing technology, especially when attending training sessions. The participants in the interview described that collaboration and discussions with other teachers is one support necessary in PD training. However, online PD sessions may make the connection and discussion between the teachers more challenging. Also, the lengthy amount of time sitting in front of a computer screen may be difficult for some teachers. If participants can have face-to-face PD training, a potential barrier includes finding the time to schedule the 3-day sessions. If all the K-1 teachers and coteachers attend a 3-day PD training during school hours, substitute teachers will need to be hired, which may be difficult for the school.

**Potential Solutions to Barriers**

A possible solution to online PD training is to allow longer breaks throughout the day. Because of the concern of the lack of discussion between the teachers, we could have small group break-out sessions to have discussions and return to the whole group for

a larger group discussion. If PD training is not available during school hours, a possible

option would be to schedule the training a week or two before school starts or a week or

two after school ends, which will be during the summer break. GHJCN Elementary

School also schedules days for full-day PD training during the school year where students

do not come to school, so another option would be to organize the days into the calendar

before school starts.

**Proposal for Implementation**

Attending PD sessions before the start of a school year allows teachers to have a

better understanding of the Tribes program and may implement their newfound

knowledge of their plans. Face-to-face sessions are preferred. However, if the summer

PD sessions need to be postponed, the sessions may be scheduled for another date. If the

planned face-to-face PD days need to be postponed, online sessions may be implemented.

Meeting with the school administrators to prepare for possible PD dates before or during

the school year is essential to ensure the school and teachers' commitment. An invitation

email, which will include details about the PD sessions and the expectations of the

sessions, will be sent to the K-1 teachers.  The objectives and learning outcomes of the

training, presentation of the data from the interviews, discussion of the purpose and role

of the Tribes program, and completion of the day one reflection will be presented on the

1st day of PD. The PowerPoint presentation on the Tribes program lessons,

implementation strategies, and ideas for lesson integration, and reflections will be

completed on day 2. On the last day, the PowerPoint presentation will conclude, and

teachers will collaborate and plan what and how they will implement the Tribes program. There will be many discussions, some videos, and activities throughout the 3 days.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

I will be taking on the role of a researcher. I will communicate with the administrators about scheduling the PD days and keeping the invitees informed about any changes to the schedule or format of the training. My other responsibilities include facilitating the 3-day PD training for the K-1 teachers at GHJCN Elementary School. The teachers' responsibilities are to engage in the PD training and discussions and actively listen and brainstorm ideas about the implementation of the Tribes program. If the principal is unable to join the PD days, a follow-up meeting will be requested to discuss the data findings that include what the teachers believe is essential (i.e., school support).

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**Project Evaluation Plan**

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The data collected from the interviews presented four themes: teacher buy-in, school support, consistency, and training. The teachers expressed the need for more training and collaboration to enhance their knowledge of the Tribes program and improve their implementation strategies. The goal of the PD training project is to equip teachers with knowledge and skills to feel confident and excited to incorporate the program into their lesson plans. Having a formative evaluation plan, which includes an open-ended questionnaire (Appendix D) for reflection throughout the 3 days of training, is the most appropriate evaluation choice. The questionnaire asks K-1 teachers about the effectiveness of the PD training. The 1st day of the open-ended questionnaire includes questions about the teachers' newfound knowledge about the Tribes program, what the

teachers already knew, what they did not know, their most significant takeaway from the session, and whether the session was helpful or not. The 2nd day of the open-ended questionnaire includes questions about new Tribes program lessons and implementation strategies that the teachers' learned and are interested in applying, their most significant takeaway from the session, and whether the session was helpful or not. On the last day of PD training, the open-ended questionnaire includes their perceptions of the valuable information they have received, suggestions for improvement, and whether the 3-day sessions increased their motivation and confidence to implement the Tribes program more effectively. The findings from the questionnaires allow me to discuss future plans with the administration about scheduling consistent training that provides teachers with quality information and skills that students can benefit from.

## Project Implications

The PD training sessions equip teachers with more knowledge and understanding of the Tribes program to address behavioral issues. Providing teachers with the tools and strategies through engaging in lessons, observing successful Tribes program lessons in various grade levels, and allowing collaboration time to plan for program implementation can make a positive difference for both teachers and students. When teachers can manage behaviors more effectively, the classroom climate and school climate may improve. The 3-day PD training sessions may also inspire teachers to find time throughout the year to collaborate consistently and develop accountability and increase teacher buy-in. Sharing the teachers' perceptions of the Tribes program with administrators about the K-1 teachers' needs of more training and collaboration time can motivate them to place more

emphasis on the program, which can strengthen the consistency of behaviors and expectations across all grade levels.

Local stakeholders such as teachers and administrators in other schools and districts may benefit from this study because discovering teachers' perceptions of their needs can strengthen best practices to improve behaviors in the early childhood educational setting. Encouraging communication between the stakeholders is necessary to learn more about the strengths and areas of improvement. Even if other schools do not use the Tribes program as a behavioral management tool, the project can provide stakeholders with new ideas about managing challenging classroom behaviors. Other administrators may also reflect on what their school is or is not doing and may motivate them to gather teachers' perceptions of what is needed. If other schools would like to use the Tribes program to reduce behavioral issues, the PD training can be used as a resource to begin implementation. The PD training may also be used as a guide if an alternative behavioral management program will be implemented in the schools. The project provides tools and strategies to reduce behavioral issues in the classroom.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Through this study, I examined the K-1 teachers' perceptions of the use of the

Tribes program to address behavioral issues at GHJCN Elementary School. Six

participants completed a one-on-one interview. The data that were analyzed from the

interview provided information to answer the research questions of this study, which

asked about the K-1 teachers' perceptions of the Tribes program to address behavioral

issues and what training and support the K-1 teachers need to implement an effective

program to reduce the number of behavioral issues in their classrooms. The themes that

emerged from the interviews were teacher buy-in, school support, consistency, and

training. In Section 3, I described the PD project, the rationale, the literature review, the

project evaluation plan, and the project implications. In Section 4, I discuss the project

strengths and limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches, scholarship,

project development, leadership and change, reflection, implications, applications,

directions for future research, and the conclusion.

## Project Strengths and Limitations

### Project Strengths

The data from the interviews revealed the K-1 teachers' need for more training,

which includes increasing knowledge and strategies for implementation of the Tribes

program. The 3-day PD training sessions focus on presenting in-depth information about

the purpose of the Tribes program, the benefits and challenges of the Tribes program, and

ways to incorporate the lessons into the program. The PD training also encourages

discussion and collaboration among the K-1 teachers. Collaboration among teachers

improves best practices and allows teachers to share resources and ensure that they are implementing developmentally appropriate lessons that align with the program's goals and standards and foster teachers' professional growth (Mowrey & King, 2019). Not only will teachers gain new ideas through collaboration, but teachers can also provide support and reassurance through the training. Support and reassurance are necessary to help teachers feel confident and able to use the program, which may also increase teacher buy-in. The presentation of results may also encourage administrators to place more emphasis on the program and provide ongoing training. The school may also benefit from this project because the administrators may learn that teachers in K-1 value consistency of the Tribes program across grade levels. Most importantly, learning more about the Tribes program and ways to use resources and strategies gained from the PD training can improve students' behavioral outcomes because teachers will understand and consistently use the Tribes program in their classrooms. If all grades are using the program consistently, an increase in a positive school climate may occur.

**Project Limitations**

A limitation of the project is the cost and lack of materials. The school budget may not cover the cost of what is needed at the 3-day PD sessions or for trainers. Another limitation of the project is the commitment from the school and teachers to attend the training. Teachers need a lot of time outside of class to prepare for the school year and lessons each day. It may be challenging for teachers to commit to 3 full days outside of school to attend the training. In addition, the data gathered from the interviews do not represent the overall perceptions of the Tribes program at GHJCN Elementary School.

Having more participants may have provided other perspectives of the Tribes program

that could have helped develop the PD training.

### Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The 3-day PD training was the most appropriate project created from the findings

of this study. However, there are alternative approaches to this study. One alternative

method may be writing a program plan. The K-1 teachers expressed the need to have

information about implementing the Tribes program, so the program plan could provide

guidelines, resources, activities, and other essential aspects of the program that could help

teachers incorporate lessons more. However, this plan may not reach the teachers with

limited information about the Tribes program. Teachers will also not have the

opportunity to discuss with one another about successful lessons, what does not work, or

support and accountability for each other to be consistent with the program.

Another alternative approach may be a white paper report, which may be

beneficial for this project. Writing a white paper from the viewpoint of the K-1 teachers

at GHJCN Elementary School with descriptions of their needs, including more

knowledge, ongoing training, school support, and consistency may be presented to the

school administrators where these changes can be made. Another benefit of the white

paper is that the report will conserve teachers' time and therefore would be more

convenient for them. However, the white paper report will not provide the necessary

hands-on learning experiences that the PD training will provide. The white paper report

will also not offer collaboration and discussion opportunities that the K-1 teachers

wanted. The 3 days of PD training can provide in-depth information about the Tribes

program. The PD addresses the teachers' needs and gives the opportunity to share the results with administrators about the teachers' needs, which will hopefully promote positive change within the school.

## Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

Throughout the research and development of the project, I have learned and grown through this program's challenges and rigor. I have a better understanding of identifying evidence-based issues in early childhood education, which helped me research various aspects of the problem and gather in-depth data to promote positive social change. This process took a lot of time, effort, and patience to refine and narrow the project's focus. I have also learned to observe data, readings, and other components of the project objectively. Having my biases and ensuring neutrality through the interview questions, the interview, and the project study was challenging. I found myself wanting to add my thoughts throughout the process, but I did my best to remain objective.

The review of the literature process was also a challenging yet eye-opening experience. Completing the review of the literature helped me realize that there are no clear-cut answers to a problem. Discovering academic journals with conflicting information and findings further allowed me to remain neutral. Reading about other similar studies and conclusions may help researchers, but I learned that it does not necessarily mean it will have the same outcome in another location. Different factors may affect the study, so it is essential as a researcher to have a deep understanding of the problem, which also includes information that conflicts to make better decisions about the study and ensure that the research is valid, credible, and trustworthy.

Conducting interviews and gathering information about the K-1 teachers' perspectives of the Tribes program provided me with insight into the significance of communicating with stakeholders. Listening to each teacher's views of the Tribes program, whether positive or negative, helped me better understand what is needed to improve teacher and student outcomes.

Developing a PD training in response to what the teachers expressed were their needs was a challenge. I have only attended PD training and have not created one. Using the information gathered in the literature review, which explained the characteristics of an effective PD, as well as my experiences attending PD sessions that I found helpful, guided my planning process. One of my biggest worries of the PD sessions is whether the training is useful and engaging. If the sessions are not engaging, the teachers will not learn or apply the training skills and knowledge. Feedback from teachers is crucial to continuously improve best practices, the program, strategies, resources, and many other significant aspects of education that benefits the children, families, and teachers.

I decided to further my education to continue growing my knowledge and skills to be a more effective teacher. Through this experience, I have achieved that and more. I learned what it takes to be an effective researcher and scholar who promotes positive social change. I have also learned more about becoming a stronger leader who can identify an issue, research more about the issues, gather evidence, and plan ways to guide others to become a part of the positive change.

**Reflection on Importance of the Work**

The Tribes program has been a part of the program at GHJCN Elementary School for about 8-10 years. Within that amount of time, there has been little feedback about the program from teachers. A few informal feedbacks have been expressed about the lack of time to implement the program. However, other than the few informal feedbacks, no other feedbacks have been given. This study helped me to understand the significance of teacher feedback as a way to make improvements. I was not aware of the positive perceptions that the K-1 teachers had about the Tribes program. I was also not aware of the extensive training that some of the other teachers have received. The information gained from this study was surprising to me and may also be surprising to the administrators. I hope that this study can improve the communication between the teachers and administrators. New programs within the school are currently developing, so promoting frequent and open communication between the teachers and administrators can strengthen the programs. Strengthening various programs, such as the Tribes program, can enhance the school climate, improve behaviors, and provide children with a high-quality education through collaboration and communication.

**Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

This project study has the potential to impact positive social change because the K-1 teachers expressed in-depth perceptions about the Tribes program. The SWPBIS guided the project study to discover the supports and training that the teachers needed to reduce behavioral problems. Presenting the results of the data analysis to both the teachers and the campus administrators provides awareness of the teachers' needs, which

were lacking throughout the years. Having this awareness may improve the communication between the campus administrators and teachers in the school to enhance programs like the Tribes program to reduce behavioral issues. Implementing the 3 full days of PD training may impact social change by providing teachers with the tools and knowledge of a behavioral management program to improve behaviors. Students will benefit from the project because teachers will have the opportunity to self-reflect, learn, and collaborate to implement the Tribes program to address behavioral issues effectively.

Social change will initially affect the local setting. The project study provided K-1 teachers with a platform to discuss their perceptions about the Tribes program. The problem presented in this study is that there is an increase in the number of behavioral issues in the classroom at GHJCN Elementary School. The K-1 teachers will be provided with their needs, such as training and collaboration time through the PD project guided by the SWPBIS. During this time, teachers will be planning the implementation process of the Tribes program throughout the school year. Hopefully, other schools may learn about the significance of gathering teachers' perceptions and applying their needs to continue to improve.

Future research may expand their studies by including perceptions about the Tribes program from teachers of a broader range of grade levels to see the differences and similarities of the teachers' perception as a whole school. It would also be interesting to compare the outcome of the Tribes program with teachers who are trained versus teachers who are not trained. Another recommendation is to have a study with students as

the participants. Discovering the effect that the Tribes program has on the students may generate new data about the Tribes program or other behavioral management programs.

**Conclusion**

This project study examined K-1 teachers' perceptions of the use of the Tribes program to address behavioral issues at GHJCN Elementary School. After interviewing K-1 teachers and coteachers, I developed four themes from the codes. The participants expressed the need to acquire more knowledge and training of the Tribes program to reduce behavioral issues. The participants also expressed the need for consistency of the program, as well as teacher buy-in. All of the teachers described varying amounts of time spent on using the classroom program.

The project created from the findings of the study was a full 3-day PD training session for K-1 teachers. The sessions provide detailed information, activities, videos, and discussions about the Tribes program and implementation of the program. The project equips teachers with best practices to address the problem of the increase in behavioral issues.

I am grateful that I have had this opportunity to complete a challenging and rigorous program. I have improved my skills as a researcher, including my ability to remain neutral and compare different points of view in the literature. I have improved my skills as a professional, which includes my abilities to set goals, work towards those goals, and complete them. I feel that my strength and confidence as an educator and researcher have grown. I have learned so many new things that will help me to become a better educator. The most important skill I have learned through this process is

discovering an issue in the local setting, finding the evidence to support that there is an

actual problem, and finding and implementing the ways to promote positive social

change that benefits the community and, hopefully, the world.

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Appendix A: The Project

The project for this basic qualitative study is a 3-day PD training for K-1 teachers

and coteachers at GHJCN Elementary School. The data analysis findings revealed the

teachers' needs for more training and knowledge of the Tribes program and

implementation. The first goal for this PD training is to equip teachers with knowledge

and strategies to implement the Tribes program to address behavioral issues in the

classroom. The second goal is to increase teachers' confidence and motivation to

implement the Tribes program. The third goal is to increase collaboration among teachers

to ensure consistency between grade levels. And the final goal is to present findings to

the campus administrators to understand teachers' needs and plan for ongoing PD

training and provide other necessary support and resources.

**3-Day PD Training: Understanding and Implementing the Tribes program to**

**Address Behavioral Issues**

**Target Audience:**

K-1 teachers and coteachers at GHJCN Elementary School. Campus administrators will

be invited to hear the data analysis findings, which includes what the teachers' needs are

from the school.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of the 3-day PD training is to provide K-1 teachers and coteachers with

more knowledge about the Tribes program to implement the program effectively.

**Goals:**

1. Equip teachers with knowledge and strategies to implement the Tribes program to address behavioral issues in the classroom.

2. Increase teachers' confidence and motivation to implement the Tribes program.

3. Increase collaboration among teachers to ensure consistency between grade levels.

4. Present findings to the campus administrators to understand teachers' needs and plan for ongoing PD training and provide other necessary support and resources.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Campus administrators will understand the teachers' needs, including more ongoing training, emphasis on the importance of the program, and consistency among the grade levels.

2. Teachers will understand the background and purpose of the Tribes program.

3. Teachers will learn the components that make up the Tribes program.

4. Teachers will understand the importance of consistently implementing the Tribes program into the classroom.

5. Teachers will be able to plan for the implementation of the program more effectively.

6. Teachers will learn new best practices that will benefit their students.

7. Teachers will increase their collaboration level to strengthen the support and accountability needed to implement the Tribes program effectively.

**Timeline:**

The PD sessions from this study may be presented during the summer before starting the school year. Scheduling the PD sessions with the school administrators, such as the principal, to plan for possible PD dates during the school year is another option. Concluding the PD sessions, a meeting will be scheduled with the administrators to prepare for ongoing training.

**Materials:**

1. Continental breakfast, lunch, and snacks/drinks for 3 days

2. Equipment for audio and videos

3. Tribes program textbook

4. Sticky notes

5. Blank sheets for notetaking in a binder

6. Poster paper

7. Pencils, pens, markers, crayons

8. Printed PowerPoint slides/notes

9. Planbook

<center><b>Day 1 (8:00am-3:30pm)</b></center>

8:00-9:00- Continental breakfast, welcome, introductions, purpose (slide 1 & 2)

**Notes:** As attendees are signing in, they may go to the continental breakfast area. The tables will have the printed PowerPoint slides for the day, pens, markers, crayons, and a binder with blank sheets for notetaking. Welcome all attendees and do a Tribes program introduction activity (Finding All We Have in Common). After the introduction activity,

discuss the things the teachers had in common, why attentive listening is important, why commonalities are a good way to start relationships and conclude with appreciation statements. Sit at the tables and describe the purpose of the 3-day PD session, which is to provide K-1 teachers and coteachers with more knowledge about the Tribes program to implement the program effectively. The expectations of the attendees are to participate, share, learn, and have fun.

9:00-9:30- Presentation of data analysis results, goals, outcomes (slide 3 & 4)

**Notes:** Present the four themes of the data analysis- teacher buy-in, school support, consistency, and training. Describe the goals of the PD sessions and the learning outcome of the day one session, which is that teachers will understand the background and purpose of the Tribes program and that teachers will learn the components that make up the Tribes program.

9:30-10:30- KWL chart on the Tribes program in pairs, present posters (slide 5)

**Notes:** A kindergarten teacher and a first grade teacher will pair up. Each team will receive a blank poster paper. On the poster, the pairs will write K, for what you know, W, for what you would like to know, and L for what you learned. They will jot down what they know and would like to know about the Tribes program. After the attendees complete their posters, each team will present. The posters will be revisited at the end of the sessions, where they will write in the L column.

10:30-10:45- Break (slide 6)

**Notes:** Dismiss attendees for a snack/bathroom break and ask them to come back at 10:45 for the next activity.

10:45-12:00- Background and purpose of the Tribes program (slide 7, 8, & 9)

**Notes:** Welcome the teachers back and begin with a short Tribes program activity

(Extended Nametags). Teachers will write about themselves (e.g., the happiest time in

their lives), and in groups, they will share. At the end of the activity, teachers will discuss

how they felt when their group was listening to them, how they felt when they were

listening to their group, and how this activity helped them feel more acquainted with one

another. After the activity, explain that what we discussed, learned, and felt during the

activity is part of the background and purpose of the Tribes program. Begin presenting

the background and purpose of the Tribes program.

12:00-1:00- Lunch break (slide 10)

**Notes:** Dismiss attendees for a lunch break and ask them to come back at 1:00 for the

next activity.

1:00-2:00- Tribes program agreements (slide 11 & 12)

**Notes:** Welcome teachers back and begin reviewing the four agreements, (a) Attentive

listening, (b) Appreciation/no put-downs, (c) Mutual respect, and (d) The right to pass.

The teachers will begin the Tribes program activity (Jigsaw). Split the teachers up into

four groups and assign an agreement. Pass out a poster to each group. The teachers will

begin by writing the agreement in the middle of the poster. On the top half of the poster,

the teachers may write and draw pictures of what the agreement looks like in their

classroom, some examples of what they would like to see, or the positive experiences. On

the bottom half of the poster, teachers will write and draw pictures of what the agreement

does not look like and their negative experiences. On a blank sheet of paper, teachers will

brainstorm ideas of lessons or strategies that have worked or would like to try in their

classroom to improve the quality of the agreements. After the activity, teachers will share

their posters and ideas.

2:00-3:00- Developmental process (slide 13)

**Notes:** Presentation on the developmental process of the Tribes program- (a) student

development and learning, (b) a caring culture, (c) the community of learners, and (d)

responsive education- student-centered active learning (pg. 32 of the Tribes program

book).

3:00-3:15- Break (slide 14)

**Notes:** Dismiss attendees for a snack/bathroom break and ask them to come back at 3:15

for the final activity.

3:15-3:30- Reflection (slide 15)

**Notes:** Welcome teachers back and do a short appreciation activity. Ask questions such

as what they appreciated about the day and what they appreciated about each other. Pass

out the day one questionnaire and ask teachers to fill it out. When they are done filling

out the questionnaire, the teachers will be free to go.

<div align="center">

**Day 2 (8:00am-3:30pm) (slide 16)**

</div>

8:00-8:30- Continental breakfast, welcome, goals, and outcomes (slide 17 & 18)

**Notes:** As attendees are signing in, they may go to the continental breakfast area. The

tables will have the printed PowerPoint slides for the day, pens, markers, crayons, and a

binder with blank sheets for notetaking. Welcome all attendees. Describe the goals of the

PD sessions and the learning outcome of the day two session: teachers will understand

the importance of consistently implementing the Tribes program into the classroom, and that teachers will learn new best practices that will benefit their students.

8:30-9:30- "Reaching Students who Learn in Different Ways" (slide 19)

**Notes:** Read "Reaching Students who Learn in Different Ways" on page 57 of the Tribes program book. Discuss the purpose of the story (e.g., encouraging strengths and providing differentiation to improve weaknesses). Briefly discuss multiple intelligences and have a poster up for each: verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, body/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, existential, naturalist. Have the teachers think about the Tribes program activity we did on day one (Finding All We Have in Common). Hand out sticky notes (color-coded for grade level) and have teachers write down an idea about how they can transform the activity for each intelligence, and post on the poster.

9:30-10:00- Tribes program activity (Gallery Walks, pg. 254) (slide 19)

**Notes:** Teachers will have their notetaking binders and have the time to look through the ideas of each poster. The teachers may write down any idea that they would like to try in their classroom. When teachers are done writing notes, we can discuss what ideas they liked and what they would like to implement.

10:00-10:15- Break (slide 20)

**Notes:** Dismiss attendees for a snack/bathroom break and ask them to come back at 10:15 for the next activity.

10:15-12:00- Integration (slide 21)

**Notes:** Welcome teachers back and put up posters with each subject area (Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science, and Religion). Have teachers look through their Tribes program books and think about ways to use the Tribes program lessons for each subject area. Teachers will write their ideas on the sticky notes and post up the notes on each subject. After teachers are done, they may take a gallery walk and write down any ideas they would like to try in their classrooms. When teachers are done writing notes, we can discuss what ideas they liked and what they would like to implement.

12:00-1:00- Lunch break (slide 22)

**Notes:** Dismiss attendees for a lunch break and ask them to come back at 1:00 for the next activity.

1:00-2:00- Collaborative skills (slide 23)

**Notes:** Welcome teachers back and present the PowerPoint on implementing collaboration in the classroom and developing collaborative skills. Review the teaching collaborative skills, (a) engage students in identifying the need for the skill, (b) teach the skill, (c) practice the skill regularly, and have students give feedback on how well it was used, (d) transfer the responsibility to the Tribes program to remind each other to use the skill, (e) ask reflection questions about the use of the skill in the Tribes program, the class, the playground, at home, etc., (f) point out times when you notice people using the skill well, and (g) notice and celebrate when the skill is "owned" as a natural behavior in the classroom or school (pg. 91 of the Tribes program book).

2:00-3:00- Observations (slide 24)

**Notes:** Watch some videos on teachers who consistently teaches the Tribes program lessons to their students. While watching the video, teachers should write down in their notetaking binder whether the lessons were student-centered or not, what made it a positive learning environment, how interactive it was, if the students engaged, what skills and strategies were used, etc. When we are done with each video, we will discuss the strengths of the lessons, how the teachers know the lessons are being taught consistently, and how the teachers would use what they learned in their lessons.

3:00-3:15- Break (slide 25)

**Notes:** Dismiss attendees for a snack/bathroom break and ask them to come back at 3:15 for the final activity.

3:15-3:30- Reflection (slide 26)

**Notes:** Welcome teachers back and do a short appreciation activity. Ask questions such as what they appreciated about the day and what they appreciated about each other. Pass out the day two questionnaires and ask teachers to fill it out. When they are done filling out the questionnaire, the teachers will be free to go.

**Day 3 (8:00am-3:30pm) (slide 27)**

8:00-8:30- Continental breakfast, welcome, goals, and outcomes (slide 28 & 29)

**Notes:** As attendees are signing in, they may go to the continental breakfast area. The tables will have the printed PowerPoint slides for the day, pens, markers, crayons, and a binder with blank sheets for notetaking. Welcome back all the attendees. Describe the goals of the PD sessions and the learning outcome of the day 2 sessions: teachers will plan to implement the program more effectively, and teachers will also increase their

collaboration level to strengthen the support and accountability needed to implement the Tribes program effectively.

8:30-9:00- Tribes program for students with learning disabilities (slide 30, 31, & 32)

**Notes:** Teachers can use their Tribes program book (pg. 172) for more information. There will be a presentation about the importance of incorporating the Tribes program for students with a disability: the Tribes program establishes a positive and safe environment for students with disabilities. The Tribes program can also teach students skills such as problem-solving, social skills, decision-making, leadership, and relationships. Some strategies to incorporate the Tribes program for these students is by introducing the agreements one at a time through different ways (e.g., posters for visual learners) and implementing community circle and energizers.

9:00-9:45- Pair Share (slide 33 & 34)

**Notes:** Provide teachers with a list of activities that are appropriate for students with a disability. Have the teachers pair up, and they will receive a card with the name of the activity and what page of the Tribes program book it is on. The pairs will read through the activity and write down ideas about what makes the activity appropriate for the children with a disability. Each pair will present.

10:00-10:15- Break (slide 35)

**Notes:** Dismiss attendees for a snack/bathroom break and ask them to come back at 10:15 for the next activity.

10:15-11:30- Group rotation (slide 36)

**Notes:** Welcome teachers back. Split teachers into two groups. All of the kindergarten teachers will be in one group, and all of the first grade teachers will be in the second group. The kindergarten teachers will have their plan books and plan what topics they will cover each quarter, how often the lessons will be taught, and brainstorm the lessons and activities that may be used. The kindergarten teachers will be creating a PowerPoint of their ideas. While kindergarten teachers are planning, first grade teachers will be listening to a presentation about disruptive behaviors. Teachers can follow along in their Tribes program book on page 97. Together, we will read the poem "A Safe Place." Then, teachers will discuss what makes a safe place for a child and how we can help our students feel safe. Ideas will be written down on a poster. Discuss some strategies to redirect and reduce disruptive behaviors, such as time out and I-messages. Have teachers partner up and give scenarios of different disruptive behaviors, and teachers can discuss strategies from the Tribes program to stop the behaviors.

11:30-12:00- Kindergarten presentation (slide 37)

**Notes:** Kindergarten teachers will present their plans for implementation. First grade teachers will be taking notes.

12:00-1:00- Lunch break (slide 38)

**Notes:** Dismiss attendees for a lunch break and ask them to come back at 1:00 for the next activity.

1:00-2:15- Group rotation (slide 39)

**Notes:** Welcome teachers back. First grade teachers will plan their implementation of the Tribes program, building upon what kindergarten teachers are planning to do.

Kindergarten teachers will be engaging in the presentation about managing behavioral issues.

2:15-2:45- First grade presentation (slide 40)

**Notes:** First grade teachers will present their PowerPoint on the Tribes program implementation.

2:45-3:00- Recap (slide 41)

**Notes:** Review the goals and outcomes of the 3-day PD sessions. Discuss the next steps (e.g., having a meeting with campus administrators about ongoing training).

3:00-3:15- Break (slide 42)

**Notes:** Dismiss attendees for a snack/bathroom break and ask them to come back at 3:15 for the final activity.

3:15-3:30- Reflection (slide 43)

**Notes:** Welcome teachers back and do a short appreciation activity. Ask questions such as what they appreciated about the day and what they appreciated about each other. Pass out the day three questionnaires and ask teachers to fill it out. When they are done filling out the questionnaire, the teachers will be free to go.

**3-Day Professional Development PowerPoint**

# Understanding and Implementing the Tribes Program to Address Behavioral Issues

Day 1

# Welcome!

▶ Introduction- Tribes Program Activity: "Finding All We Have in Common" (pg. 243)

▶ Purpose

▶ Expectations

# Data Analysis Results

- Themes: Teacher Buy-In, School Support, Consistency, Training

# Goals and Outcomes

## Goals

- Equip teachers with knowledge and strategies to implement the Tribes program to address behavioral issues in the classroom
- Increase teachers' confidence and motivation to implement the Tribes program
- Increase collaboration among teachers to ensure consistency between grade levels
- Present findings to the campus administrators to understand teachers' needs and plan for on-going PD training and provide other support and resources that are necessary

## Outcomes

- Teachers will understand the background and purpose of the Tribes program
- Teachers will learn the components that make up the Tribes program

# KWL Chart on the Tribes Program

- ▶ Partner up
- ▶ List what you know about the Tribes program in the 'K' column
- ▶ List what you would like to know about the Tribes program in the 'W' column
- ▶ Present posters

# Break ☺

- ▶ Please come back at 10:45

## Background and Purpose of the Tribes Program

▶ Tribes Program Activity: "Extended Nametags" (pg. 237)

## About the Tribes Program

▶ Jeanne Gibbs
▶ "Fix-it" programs
▶ Research-based
▶ United States, Australia, Canada, and other countries

## Purpose of the Tribes Program

- ▶ Safe and caring environments
- ▶ Improve behaviors
- ▶ Healthy development
- ▶ Success in life

## Lunch Break ☺

- ▶ Please come back at 1:00

# Tribes Program Agreements

- ▶ Attentive Listening
- ▶ Appreciation/no put downs
- ▶ Mutual respect
- ▶ The right to pass

# Tribes Program Activity

- ▶ "Jigsaw" (pg. 267)
- ▶ Top half of poster- Write and draw what agreement looks like, examples, positive experiences
- ▶ Bottom half of poster- Write and draw what agreement DOES NOT look like, examples, negative experiences
- ▶ Blank sheet- lessons and strategies
- ▶ Present posters

## Developmental Process of the Tribes Program

▶ Student development and learning

▶ A caring culture

▶ The community of learners

▶ Responsive education- Student centered active learning

## Break ☺

▶ Please come back at 3:15

# Reflection

- ► Appreciation
- ► Day 1 Questionnaire
- ► See you tomorrow for Day 2! ☺

# Understanding and Implementing the Tribes Program to Address Behavioral Issues

Day 2

# Welcome!

- ▶ Purpose
- ▶ Expectations

# Goals and Outcomes

## Goals

- ▶ Equip teachers with knowledge and strategies to implement the Tribes program to address behavioral issues in the classroom
- ▶ Increase teachers' confidence and motivation to implement the Tribes program
- ▶ Increase collaboration among teachers to ensure consistency between grade levels
- ▶ Present findings to the campus administrators to understand teachers' needs and plan for ongoing PD training and provide other support and resources that are necessary

## Outcomes

- ▶ Teachers will understand the importance of consistently implementing the Tribes program into the classroom
- ▶ Teachers will learn new best practices that will benefit their students.

## Reaching Students who Learn in Different Ways

▶ Tribes Program Book- pg. 57
▶ Multiple Intelligences (pg. 58)
▶ Tribes Program Activity: "Gallery Walks" (pg. 254)
▶ Discussion

## Break ☺

▶ Please come back at 10:15

## Integration

▶ Look through Tribes program book

▶ Write an idea for an activity for each subject area

▶ "Gallery Walks"

▶ Discussion

## Lunch Break ☺

▶ Please come back at 1:00

# Collaborative Skills

- ▶ Engage students in identifying the need for the skill
- ▶ Teach the skill
- ▶ Practice the skill regularly, and have students give feedback on how well it was used
- ▶ Transfer the responsibility to the students to remind each other to use the skill
- ▶ Ask reflection questions about the use of the skill in the Tribes program, the class, the playground, at home, etc.
- ▶ Point out times when you notice people using the skill well
- ▶ Notice and celebrate when the skill is "owned" as a natural behavior in the classroom or school (pg. 91 of the Tribes program book).

# Observations

- ▶ Student-centered?
- ▶ Positive-learning environment?
- ▶ Engaged?
- ▶ Skills and strategies?
- ▶ Discussion

# Break ☺

▶ Please come back at 3:15

# Reflection

▶ Appreciation
▶ Day 2 Questionnaire
▶ See you tomorrow for Day 3! ☺

# Understanding and Implementing the Tribes Program to Address Behavioral Issues

Day 3

# Welcome!

- ▶ Purpose
- ▶ Expectations

# Goals and Outcomes

## Goals

▶ Equip teachers with knowledge and strategies to implement the Tribes program to address behavioral issues in the classroom

▶ Increase teachers' confidence and motivation to implement the Tribes program

▶ Increase collaboration among teachers to ensure consistency between grade levels

▶ Present findings to the campus administrators to understand teachers' needs and plan for ongoing PD training and provide other support and resources that are necessary

## Outcomes

▶ Teachers will plan to implement the Tribes program more effectively

▶ Teachers will also increase their collaboration level to strengthen the support and accountability needed to implement the Tribes program effectively

# The Tribes Program for Students With Learning Disabilities

▶ Tribes program book- Pg. 172

▶ Importance of the Tribes program for students with a learning disability

▶ Positive environment

# The Tribes Program for Students With Learning Disabilities- Skills

- ▶ Problem-solving
- ▶ Social
- ▶ Decision-making
- ▶ Leadership
- ▶ Relationships

# The Tribes Program for Students With Learning Disabilities- Strategies

- ▶ Introduction of one agreement at a time
- ▶ Introduce lessons in various ways (e.g., poster for visual learners)
- ▶ Community circles
- ▶ Energizers

## Pair Share

- Community Circle
- Two on a Crayon
- Fuzzyland Map
- Creative Storytelling
- Warm Fuzzies
- Warm Fuzzybag
- Five Tribles
- Brainstorming
- Sharing from a Sack
- Bumper Sticker
- Spider Web
- Life Map

- Kitchen Kapers
- Cooperation Squares
- One, Two, Three
- Thumbs Up-Thumbs Down
- Where Do I Stand?
- Put Yourself on the Line
- Peer Response Huddle
- Love My Neighbor
- I Love You, Honey
- Zap!
- Snowball

## Pair Share

- Look up the activity in the Tribes program book
- What makes this activity appropriate for children with a disability?
- Present

# Break ☺

▶ Please come back at 10:15

# Group Rotation

▶ Group 1- Kindergarten teachers (planning)
▶ Group 2- First grade teachers (Presentation on Managing Disruptive Behaviors)

# Kindergarten Presentation

▶ Please present your PowerPoint

# Lunch Break ☺

▶ Please come back at 1:00

# Group Rotation

- ▶ Group 1- First Grade teachers (planning)
- ▶ Group 2- Kindergarten Teachers (Presentation on Managing Disruptive Behaviors)
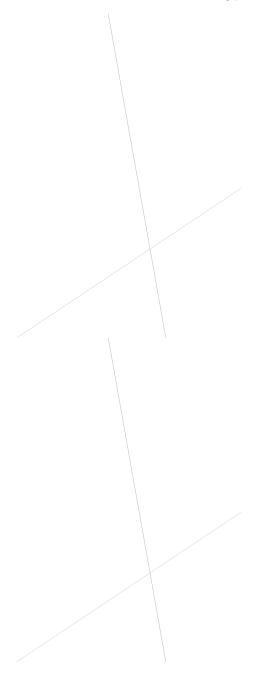
# First Grade Presentation

- ▶ Please present your PowerPoint

# Recap

- ▶ Goals
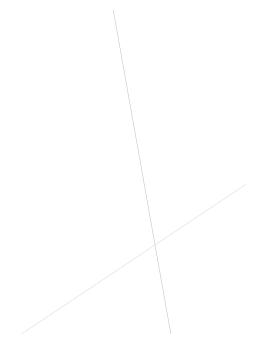- ▶ Outcomes
- ▶ Next steps

# Break ☺

- ▶ Please come back at 3:15

# Reflection

- ▶ Appreciation
- ▶ Thank you!!! ☺
- ▶ Day 3 Questionnaire

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

- The location of the interviews will be in a quiet room at the site or at another location, if requested.

- Timeframe for the interview is about 45-60 minutes.

- Pseudonyms will be used in all interviews.

- There will not be any information that may identify the participants.

Introduction

- Introduction of the researcher.

- Review informed consent.

- The purpose of the study is to examine teachers' perceptions of the Tribes program to address behavioral issues.

- Estimated time of the interview.

- Transcriptions will be sent to the interviewees for accuracy.

Interview Questions

- How long have you been teaching in early childhood education?

- How long have you been teaching at GHJCN Elementary School?

- Are you using the Tribes program in your classroom?

- How long have you been using the Tribes program?

1) How often do you teach lessons from the Tribes program?

2) What training and support have you received before starting your 1st year teaching the Tribes program?

- Follow up question: What training have you received after your 1st year until now?

3) What are some benefits of the Tribes program?

4) What are some challenges of implementing and maintaining the Tribes program?

5) What training or support would you like to have to increase your understanding of an effective program to reduce behavioral issues?

6) What training and support do you need to implement an effective program to reduce the number of behavioral problems in the classroom?

7) What would you describe as your priority for using the Tribes program?

8) What is your perception of the Tribes program in terms of reduction of behavioral problems?

9) Is there anything else that you would like to add about the Tribes program?

Conclusion

- Thank the participant and explain what will happen next.

Appendix C: Sample Reflective Journal

Reflective Journals

Date: August 19, 2020

My reflection:

- I completed an interview with participant 5. One of the interview questions were

  what would you describe as your priority for using the Tribes program?

- Participant 5: I would like it to be a high priority because I think especially in the

  situation we're in now, I think the kids need something to remind them that there

  is still good…if we do the hands-on lessons and the kids see their friends doing it,

  I think it helps to remind them…

- Participant 5 mentioned that she would like the Tribes program to be a higher

  priority. I need to clarify if the priority is lower and why is it not higher.

Clarification:

- On August 20, 2020, I emailed participant 5 to clarify the response to the

  interview question. She clarified that her priority of the Tribes program is high,

  but because of the pandemic that is occurring and the difficulties of navigating

  online learning, the priority of providing children and families with support is a

  higher priority right now than implementing the Tribes program.

Appendix D: Open-Ended Questionnaire

<u>Day 1</u>

1. What did you already know about the Tribes program?

2. What is some newfound knowledge you have acquired about the Tribes program?

3. What was the biggest take-away from our PD session today?

4. Was our PD session helpful? Why or why not?

<u>Day 2</u>

1. What new Tribes program lessons are you interested in applying?

2. What new implementation strategies have you learned?

3. What was the biggest take-away from our PD session today?

4. Was our PD session helpful? Why or why not?

<u>Day 3</u>

1. What information do you perceive as valuable following our 3-day PD sessions?

2. What are some suggestions to improve the 3-day PD sessions?

3. Did the 3-day PD sessions increase your motivation and confidence to implement the Tribes program more effectively? Why or why not?