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Effects of School Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports in an African American All-Boys Urban School

Theresa Thomas
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Theresa J. Thomas

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Walden University
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Abstract

Effects of School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports in an African
American All-Boys Urban School

by

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human Services

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Abstract

Teachers and administrators spend a great deal of time addressing minor to moderate school discipline behaviors with punitive actions such as suspensions and expulsions from school. Past research has revealed that such punitive actions do not correct the unwanted behavior, and extensive use of punitive disciplinary actions have been linked to negative outcomes such as repeated suspensions, repeating grades due to time missed from school, increased likelihood of dropping out of school, or potential involvement in the juvenile justice system. This single case study design addressed the following research question: How school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) affected the academic achievement of boys attending an all-male Grade 6 through 12 urban school. The conceptual framework for this study was grounded in applied behavior analysis. Data were collected through semistructured interviews from 10 teachers and administrators. Results revealed that school-wide PBIS resulted in improved student behavior by decreasing use of punitive behaviors such as office referrals and school suspensions, and resulted in positive behaviors from students such as increased school attendance and motivation to learn. Results also highlighted the need to prepare educators for implementation through involving them in the initial implementation, providing training and professional development, and providing follow-on support meetings. Findings from this study contribute to social change by presenting evidence of how the successful implementation of school wide PBIS can be used to curb negative school behavior and lead to positive educational outcomes in schools.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background of the Study	2
Problem Statement	5
Purpose of the Study	6
Research Question	7
Conceptual Framework.....	7
Nature of the Study	8
Definitions.....	9
Assumptions.....	10
Scope and Delimitations	10
Limitations	11
Significance of the Study	11
Summary	12
Chapter 2: Literature Review	14
Literature Search Strategy.....	15
Theoretical Foundation	15
Literature Review.....	18
School Discipline	19
Zero Tolerance Policies	20
Racial Disparities in School Discipline	22

Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports.....	24
The Impact of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports on the Lives of African Americans	33
Summary.....	39
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	41
Research Design and Rationale	41
Research Question	44
Role of the Researcher	44
Methodology.....	46
Instrumentation	48
Participant Recruitment	50
Data Collection	50
Interviewing	51
Reflexive Journal	52
Recording Device.....	52
Exit Strategy.....	53
Follow-up.....	53
Data Analysis Plan.....	54
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	56
Credibility	57
Transferability.....	57
Dependability	58

Confirmability	59
Ethical Procedures	60
Summary	62
Chapter 4: Results	64
Setting	64
Demographics	65
Data Collection	65
Data Analysis	67
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	70
Credibility	70
Transferability.....	70
Dependability	71
Confirmability.....	72
Results.....	72
Definition of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports	73
Definition of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports System	73
Motivation for Implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports	75
Action Taken to Motivate Educators	76
Prior Strategies Used for Inappropriate Behavior.....	77
Impact of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports on Students’ Behavior.....	78

Challenges Encountered with Implementation	80
Steps Taken to Overcome Challenges	82
Advice and Recommendations to Others for Implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.....	83
Composite Description.....	85
Summary	88
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations	89
Interpretation of Findings	89
Definition of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports	89
Motivation for Implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports	90
Actions Taken to Motivate Educators.....	91
Prior Strategies Used for Inappropriate Behavior.....	92
Impact of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports on Students' Behavior.....	93
Challenges Encountered with Implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports	95
Steps Taken to Overcome Challenges	96
Advice and Recommendations	97
Theoretical Framework and Finding Interpretations	98
Limitations of the Study.....	100
Recommendations for Future Research	101

Implications.....	102
Implications for Positive Social Change.....	102
Implications for Professional Practice	103
Theoretical Implications	103
Conclusions.....	104
References.....	106
Appendix: Interview Questions	130

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant Demographics..... 66

Table 2. Themes Based on Interview Questions..... 74

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Research has revealed that schools experience many inappropriate and disruptive student behaviors in classrooms (Allen & Steed, 2016; Childs et al., 2016; Närhi et al., 2015). Teachers spend much of their time trying to combat behavioral problems during instructional time, and as a result, valuable time is lost and student learning does not take place (Allen & Steed 2016; Childs et al., 2016; Närhi et al., 2015). Teachers and administrators are taxed with taking deliberate action to ensure a safe and positive school climate conducive to academic excellence and student success (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013; Dendron & Kearney, 2016). Noltemeyer et al., 2015). Most teachers and administrators would agree that misbehavior and discipline issues take up much of their time (Felesena, 2013). Suspensions are used as a measure to curb behavior; however, researchers have discovered that suspensions do not benefit students, nor do they improve behavior (Chin et al., 2012; Fenning et al., 2015). The American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health (2013) postulated that out-of-school suspensions and expulsions can cause significant financial deficits and are unproductive.

Racial disparities also exist in rates of suspensions in New York State Public Schools K-12 (Kline, 2016). Six percent of all K-12 students experience one or more out of school suspensions; however, the rate for young Black boys is 18%, while only 5% of White boys encounter school suspensions (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016). School suspensions are problematic because students who are suspended are more likely to be suspended again, they are less likely to graduate on time, they may

repeat a grade, they may drop out of school, or they may become involved in the juvenile justice system (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Suspensions and expulsions are not the solutions for disruptive classroom behaviors. In addition, several students are removed from the classroom environment for minor infractions of school rules, which result in harsh discipline practices (Kline, 2016; Rasmussen et al., 2018).

The purpose of the study was to determine educators' perspectives of the impact of a school wide positive behavior interventions and support (school-wide PBIS) program. Included are the academic outcomes for students in an all-male Grade 6 through 12 urban school. This chapter also presents the background of the study, the problem statement, and the purpose of the study. In addition, I discuss the research question, the nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope, delimitations, and limitations. I also address the significance of the study, the summary, and transition to the literature review.

Background of the Study

The New York City Department of Education (2019) stated that to improve school climate and to provide a strong learning environment, it is imperative that educators create positive climates that will reduce the need for disciplinary interventions. Educational leaders of New York City have recently recommended that schools administer positive support that instills knowledge in students about the social, emotional, and behavioral skills that have been associated with learning. The guiding principles of the Department of Education (2014) reveal social and emotional learning should be promoted as a means to encourage leaning. Social and emotional learning

includes self-awareness, self-management, resilience, social agility, and responsible decision-making (United States Department of Education, 2014).

Students who need behavioral modification strategies may need evidence-based interventions such as tiered supports to encourage positive student behavior. Mahvar et al. (2018) revealed that the most successful way to address negative classroom behaviors is through problem-solving and cooperative strategies among teachers. PBIS is a tiered support program where educators implement positive interventions for disruptive student behaviors with the goal of preventing suspensions, preventing expulsions, and preventing students from dropping out of school (Freeman et al., 2016). When PBIS is implemented on a school-wide basis, the practice is called school-wide PBIS, which is a process that involves all faculty and staff members assigned to the school (Fairborn et al., 2016).

The U.S. Department of Education (2014) published a resource guide that outlines best practices and strategic ways to maintain safety and improve discipline in public schools. The first principle is that a positive school climate helps eradicate unsafe and inappropriate behaviors. The second principal entails communicating clear, consistent school-wide expectations. These expectations consist of rules and procedures that each school should implement to provide for a positive teachable school climate. Principle 3 involves analyzing ways in which school discipline and policies are used. Advocates for these principles have called for alternative disciplinary approaches such as social and emotional learning as well as PBIS. The premises of PBIS and other more positive interventions can be used to provide a safe, instructive environment so all students are afforded the opportunity to succeed academically and socially.

PBIS is a framework used to improve the integration and implementation of behavioral practices (Sugai & Simonson, 2012). This framework may include systems that are data driven for making decisions, evidence-based instructional interventions, and professional development opportunities for teachers (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Technical Assistance Center, 2021). Positive behavioral interventions and supports have been associated with positive outcomes for students such increased academic achievement (Pas & Bradshaw, 2012, Simonsen et al., 2012), reduced office discipline referrals (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Kelm et al., 2014), and increased attendance (Freeman et al., 2016; Noltemeyer et al., 2019; Pas & Bradshaw, 2012).

Närhi et al. (2015) conducted a study in which they gathered information about ways to reduce disruptive behaviors and how to improve learning climates with class-wide positive behavior in middle schools. The results indicated that when teachers used positive behavior interventions, teachers were better able to teach their students because there were fewer disruptions and more time for a positive learning experience. There were significant improvements in the students' learning during this study. This research is important to this study because the findings revealed that if teachers are able to deliver more effective instruction without having to address student behavioral issues, students in turn can learn.

Freeman et al. (2016) investigated the relationships between the use of school-wide PBIS, academic improvement, attendance, and student classroom behavior. Data from high schools in 37 states were used in the research. Their results revealed that there were statistically significant, positive effects on attendance at the high school level. This

study is relevant to the research study because findings showed that use of school-wide PBIS may generate positive outcomes for students. The present study differs from the Freeman et al. (2016) study because the it looked at educators' perspectives in a school with all African American young students from one state while Freeman et al., researched high school students from 37 states.

Problem Statement

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (2016) discovered that because of crude school disciplinary interventions, students of color and those with disabilities were disproportionately disassociated from school and were subsequently at risk of academic failure. For instance, Black students represent 16% of the student body in the United States; however, they make up 32%-42% of the students who are suspended or expelled from schools. In contrast, White students represent 51% of the student population, but their suspension rate is only 5% (U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2014, 2016).

Some researchers have found that techniques associated with positive behavior interventions can be instrumental in curbing negative school behavior (Colcord et al., 2016; Freeman et al., 2016; Närhi et al., 2015). Rumberger and Losen (2017) researched the negative impact of strict suspension rates in California. High rates of suspensions can become an economic burden of \$2.7 billion dollars. This amount represents the cost of suspending students from a single graduating class. If suspensions can be decreased by 1%, \$180 million can be saved. The researchers also concluded that simply changing

forms of school discipline would decrease most educational costs (Rumberger & Losen, 2017).

While there is ample research on the detrimental effects of school suspensions and expulsions on students, I found only a few studies that addressed alternative interventions to suspensions for classroom management. I could not locate any studies that addressed the use of positive behavioral interventions to address negative classroom behaviors of Black students attending an all-male school. Findings from my study on a positive discipline method may promote positive social change for students regardless of racial or ethnic background or disability.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to determine educators' perspectives of the impact of a school wide PBIS program on the academic outcomes for students in an all-male Grade 6 through 12 urban school for African American young men. The U.S. Department of Education (2014) postulated that the initial step to providing a safe and supportive school environment is to foster academic excellence and create positive school climates. Positive climates prevent problematic outcomes before they occur and lessen the need for disciplinary interventions that can hinder student learning in a large urban area in the Northeast. Suspending or expelling students can lead to the loss of instructional time at least and even life-threatening situations in the worst-case scenarios (Cornell, 2015). Programs with positive behavioral interventions have demonstrated much success in terms of decreasing negative behaviors and preventing

dropping out of school (e.g., Colcord et al., 2016; Cornell, 2015; Freeman et al., 2016; Närhi et al., 2015).

Research Question

RQ: How did school-wide PBIS affect the academic achievement of young boys attending an all-male Grade 6 through 12 urban school?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual frame for this study was grounded in applied behavior analysis (ABA). Premises of ABA were first introduced in 1959 by Ayllon and Michael. ABA is based on the science of learning and behavior. ABA can change behavior by means of applying positive principles to bring about targeted changes (Furman & Lepper, 2018). The science of ABA comprises basic laws about how behavioral treatments are used to produce desired behavioral outcomes (Albright et al., 2017; Finn & Watson, 2017). Principles of ABA are generally applied to correct behavior in the fields of education, social work, and medicine for students and patients with disabilities such as autism and behavioral problems (e.g., Albright et al., 2017; Finn & Watson, 2017; Haymes et al., 2015; Leaf et al., 2016; Mohammadzaheri et al., 2015; Shawler et al., 2018).

The premises of PBIS provide a framework that a school team uses to guide the adoption of practices and design of a continuum of support to address problematic student behavior (Flannery et al., 2013; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). The premises of PBIS are that all schools should develop basic disciplinary systems. Such practices should be used to respond effectively to student misbehaviors and implement the disciplinary systems on a school wide basis. Behavioral issues that lead to problems in schools are of

strong social importance. Still, innovative interventions such as PBIS have the goal of preventing academic failure and school leaving. Researchers have demonstrated that decreases in suspensions and expulsions can lead to a positive school-wide environment and achievement of academic success (Hirschfield, 2018; Ramírez & Rosario, 2018). PBIS in the context of ABA was a good fit for the study. ABA does not focus only on behavior changes and assessments; instead, ABA also targets the functional analysis that makes the changes possible. This study may provide administrators, educators, health professionals, and therapists to have a better understanding of how ABA helps to change behavior related to PBIS.

Nature of the Study

This study was a qualitative case study that explored administrators and teachers' perceptions of how the use of school wide PBIS impacted the educational outcomes for a cohort of young Black male students in an urban middle to high school setting. A qualitative case study was most appropriate because a case study can provide an in-depth descriptive account of educators' perspectives. In addition, a case study allows the most efficient means to gather data (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015).

The sample consisted of 10 professionals who have had experience applying school wide PBIS for students who have been suspended from school as well as those with low academic performance. This number of educators allowed for thick (as in quantity) and rich (as in quality) data regarding the phenomenon of interest. Data saturation is a main guiding doctrine to determine sample size in qualitative research. Hennink et al. (2017) explained that data saturation also depends on a range of

characteristics of the study. However, Hennink et al., revealed that code saturation was achieved after interviewing nine participants. They also agreed that a small number of interviews can be sufficient to capture a comprehensive range of issues in the data.

I used purposeful sampling to recruit participants. Purposeful sampling involves recruiting participants in a deliberative way. It is the most likely method of sampling to be used by a qualitative researcher (Ritchie et al., 2013). Data were collected during face-to-face semistructured interviews of school professionals. I analyzed the data by first transcribing the interviews, and then manually coding them on detailed Word tables, from which categories and themes eventually rose.

Definitions

Applied behavior analysis (ABA): Leaf et al. (2016) described ABA as a scientific method that uses progressive methods that lead to advanced outcomes.

Positive behavioral intervention and supports (PBIS): PBIS is a conceptual framework that addresses the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students with challenging behaviors and decreases suspensions and referrals. Such an intervention aims to prevent academic failure and school leaving, which can lead to a positive school-wide environment and academic success (Hirschfield, 2018).

School-wide PBIS: School-wide PBIS is implemented on a school-wide basis where the intervention is applied consistently throughout the school and supported by all educators and staff (Carter et al., 2018).

Assumptions

Assumptions are aspects of the study that the researcher believes to be true in the absence of concrete evidence (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). There are several assumptions associated with the research. Firstly, I assumed that all participants in the study would have a history of engagement with middle-school aged children who have had disruptive classroom behavioral issues. Such issues must have led to referrals and suspensions that have impacted the students' education negatively. Secondly, I assumed that the participants would answer the interview questions with honesty and in detail. I further assumed that the participants' authentic answers would be a result of their reflections of having been involved in a school-wide disciplinary program. The fourth assumption was that the participants carried out each of their roles in school wide PBIS in a professional manner and followed the program according to the guidelines.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study involved educators' perspectives on the effects of school wide PBIS on the behavioral and academic outcomes of African American young males. The PBIS program had already taken place; therefore, I chose to determine the teachers' and leaders' perceptions of whether the program was successful, what made it work, what could be improved, and recommendations for the future of this all-male public school in a large urban center in the Northeast. The sample was delimited to teachers and administrators who were involved in school-wide PBIS from one school. Excluded from the study were the students themselves and their parents. Only one intervention program,

school wide PBIS, was investigated and described and no other interventions that have been used at the school.

Limitations

Limitations in a study are ways in which the study may have weaknesses (Simon, 2011). The first limitation of the study was that information that the participants give may not be recalled accurately, which might impact the result. To minimize this limitation, I rephrased questions to identify similarities of answers. Secondly, even though the identities of the educators were confidential, they may have been concerned about details they gave that may identify them, which could impact their sense of anonymity. To minimize this limitation, I first indicated on the informed consent form that their responses would be completely confidential and private. I informed them that no individually identifying information would be published or disseminated. I assured concerned participants that anything with which they are uncomfortable saying could be removed from the transcripts of their interviews and not used in the final analysis of data. Thirdly, all research is subject to the researcher's interpretation, especially qualitative research; to minimize this limitation, I asked a colleague to review the transcripts for bias and inconsistencies.

Significance of the Study

Several researchers postulated that a school with fewer disruptions and with a positive social climate produces students who are more active in school events and less inclined to be involved in disruptive behaviors (Colcord et al., 2016; Palinkas, 2015). The principal significance of this study would be contributing knowledge regarding how

school-wide PBIS affects student outcomes. The data may provide evidenced-based support regarding how positive, alternative programs to school suspension could be used to address and correct disruptive classroom behavior.

Administrators, human services professionals, and educators may be able to use findings from this study to present evidence-based research to be applied in the classroom. As evidenced in the background of the study, schools that use punitive measures to control student behavior like zero-tolerance policies, corporal punishment, excessive suspensions/expulsions, and judicial referrals still see disruptive behavior from students (Colcord et al., 2016; Freeman et al., 2016; Gregory & Fergus, 2017). Therefore, there is growing literature regarding the positive outcomes associated with the use of positive intervention programs to address disruptive school behaviors among students, including school wide PBIS (Barrett, 2018; Freeman et al., 2016; Madigan et al., 2016; Noltemeyer et al., 2019). Educators could potentially use findings from this study to gain knowledge of how to benefit from positive interventions and support programs. PBIS may increase student success and elicit more positive behaviors. The results from this study may be used by administrators, educators, human services providers, and therapists to advocate the need for social change by promoting school wide PBIS to address disruptive classroom behavior.

Summary

Chapter 1 introduced the purpose of the study, which is to determine educators' perspectives of how school-wide PBIS helped the academic achievement and behavioral outcomes of young middle-school aged-boys attending an all-male Grades 6 through 12

urban school. Although researchers have shown the negative effects of punitive discipline, such as in school and out of school suspension and expulsions for minor infractions, there are no federal laws that exist against them. These authoritarian practices persist, and due to accountability, they are used more than ever in many schools (Kennedy et al., 2017). The background of the study involved the issue of increasing disruptions in U.S. schools and how the issues are addressed. Zero tolerance practices have led to higher suspensions and judicial referrals that aid and abet the school to prison pipeline.

The theoretical or conceptual framework for this study was ABA, which addresses changing behavior through positive interventions (Collier-Meek et al., 2017). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine educator's perceptions of the impact of school-wide PBIS on student behavior and academic achievement. This study may contribute information on how school-wide PBIS affects student outcomes. It might provide information on evidenced-based alternatives to school suspension when students become disruptive in school. Chapter 2 presents a detailed review of the theoretical framework and the literature related to disciplinary interventions, student behaviors, practices, processes, and assessment of PBIS including single sex classrooms and discipline issues.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

School suspensions are frequently used as a disciplinary tool for disruptive behavior (Noltemeyer et al., 2015). However, findings from several studies have revealed that school suspensions are related to negative outcomes such as increased school dropout rates, juvenile delinquency, and juvenile incarceration (Allen & Steed 2016; Bear et al.; Childs et al., 2016; Närhi et al., 2015). As an alternative to adverse school discipline, positive behavioral interventions have been shown to curb negative school behavior (Colcord et al., 2016; Freeman et al., 2016; Närhi et al., 2015). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to determine educators' perspectives of the impact of a school-wide PBIS program on the academic outcomes for students in an all-male Grade 6 through 12 urban school for African American young men. These interventions have been implemented on a schoolwide basis to improve student behavior and academic achievement in a middle school with a student population composed only of young Black boys.

The first section of Chapter 2 presents the strategy I used for conducting the literature search. Herein is a more detailed explanation of ABA. The literature review covers topics such as single-sex classrooms as well as student behavior in the classroom, especially disruptive behavior. I also review the history and applications of PBIS and school-wide BPIS. Next, I present the disparate treatment of student offenders according to race, ethnicity, and gender. Finally, I discuss the positive effects of PBIS on students based on peer-reviewed studies.

Literature Search Strategy

I explored different databases in the Walden University online library to find research studies and other literature related to the effect of PBIS on student behavior and academic outcomes of middle and high school students. Most of my online searches were from major databases such as Eric, Psych Info, ProQuest Central, PsycArticles, and www.pbis.org. I also scanned and reviewed peer-viewed journals and published literature on PBIS published within the last decade. The journals that I searched included the *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *Journal of School Violence*, *Journal of Applied Behavioral Analysis*, and *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*. I searched the databases using such key words as *all-boys classrooms*, *applied behavior analysis*, *racial disparities in discipline*, *same-gender classrooms*, *school-to-prison pipeline*, *single sex education*, and *PBIS*, among other search words and phrases. Finally, I used the Google search engine using the same key words as well as *scholarly articles* and *government documents* to narrow the search for documents on policies and programs. As a result, I found many peer-reviewed articles through Google and the databases. Many of the scholarly documents I summarized and downloaded had been published in the past 5 years.

Theoretical Foundation

The foundational framework of this study was ABA. ABA is the process of systematically applying interventions that are based on the principles of the learning theory to improve socially significant behaviors to a meaningful degree and to demonstrate that the interventions employed are responsible for the improvement in

behavior (Collier-Meek et al., 2017; Johnston et al., 2017). The history of ABA suggests that as early as 1953, behavior has been influenced from the early works of researchers such as Skinner (1953), Sidman (1960), Millenson (1967), Baer et al. (1968), Kazdin (1977a, 1977 b), Bandura (1977), Deitz (1978), Hayes (1979), and Birnbrauer (1979) in the field of ABA, which provided behavioral analysis researchers the scientific groundwork of their studies.

Sidman (1960) postulated that ABA was a single subject based research. However, Baer et al. (1968) explained that ABA is not only used for a particular behavioral change, but ABA can also be used to focus on a variety of behavioral modifications. Malott et al. (1995) confirmed that ABA may be used to decrease or increase any behavior. ABA is based on seven dimensions, the applied dimension, the behavioral dimension, the analytic dimension, the technological dimension, the conceptually systematic dimension, the effect dimension, and the generalization dimension. The applied dimension depended on the nature and the significance of the targeted behavior, as well as the treatment method (Baer et al., 1968). If the behavioral dimension was used, the treatment included approaches such as reliable tests as well as scientifically sound instruments to measure, record, and observe physical events related to the target behavior (Baer et al., 1968). The analytic dimension established the correlational effect that behaviors need for said behaviors to function (Skinner, 1953). The elements of the technology dimension provided methodologies and applications that target the behaviors such as self-efficacy principles as well as motivational principles that added to the conceptual nature of the field (Baer et al., 1968; Bandura, 1978; Hayes,

1978; Millenson, 1967). The efficacy dimension of ABA provided a toll to measure the success of treatment of the targeted behavior (Bandura, 1978) and to define the generalization dimension time, environment, and the type of target behavior needed for reliability purposes. Critchfield, T., & Reed, D. (2017).

ABA is used for behavioral interventions, consultation, and assessment in the school setting and is generally applied in the fields of education, social work, and medicine, especially for students and patients with disabilities such as autism and behavioral problems (e.g., Albright et al., 2016; Collier-Meek et al., 2017; Critchfield & Reed, 2017; Finn & Watson, 2017; Haymes et al., 2015; Leaf et al., 2016; Mohammadzaheri et al., 2015).

Professionals have debated whether ABA should be part of behavior analysis or a field by itself. They have been especially concerned about how ABA should be defined in the field of education and psychology and how practitioners should be credentialed. Furman and Lepper (2018) argued that ABA needs a more intentional definition. Thus, they defined ABA as “the scientific study of behavior change, using the principles of behavior, to evoke or elicit a targeted behavioral change” (p. 104).

Collier-Meek et al. (2017) posited that using an ABA approach to behavior involves practitioners’ awareness of the stimuli and conditions of the environment that came before and after certain behaviors take place. The precedents to behavior are known as antecedents, which might or might not cue the specific behavior. Consequences are those environmental stimuli or conditions that follow the behavior. Consequences vary—they might have little influence on future behavior happening again or they might have a

significant influence on reoccurrence (Collier-Meek et al., 2017). Morris et al. (2013) used the principles of ABA to prevent three stages of disruptive classroom behavior: antecedent, behavior, and consequences of classroom disruptions. For example, the antecedent is when the teacher asks the student a math question. The student gets frustrated, and her behavior involves throwing classroom materials across the aisle. The consequence is that the teacher sends the student to the principal's office.

From a positive point of reference, the antecedent is the student's disruption, the teacher's behavior is to remove the student, and the consequence is a quieter, not disruptive classroom, which is the goal of student discipline. The subject of the study is the effects of positive behavior intervention and supports. My study employed the theory of ABA to research the effects of school wide PBIS in an all-boys school environment Grades 6 through 12. The theory of ABA has been used by many behavioral analysis researchers in the past and is currently being used (e.g., Baer et al., 1968; Collier-Meeks et al., 2017; Noltemeyer et al., 2015; Skinner, 1953). ABA theory may enable behavior modification by applying the seven dimensions of behavioral changes.

Literature Review

The initial step to providing a safe and supportive school environment that fosters academic excellence is to create a positive school climate. Such an environment can prevent problematic outcomes before they occur and lessen the need for disciplinary interventions that can hinder student learning (Bottiani & Bradshaw, 2017). This section of Chapter 2 is divided into the following general topics: (a) school discipline, (b) zero tolerance policies, (c) disruptive class room behavior, (d) racial disproportionality in

discipline policies, (e) adverse impact of school suspensions, (f) racial disparities in school discipline, (g) positive behavior intervention and supports, (h) historical review of PBIS, (i) implementation of PBIS, (j) practices, processes and assessments of PBIS, and (k) teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards PBIS.

School Discipline

In my literature search of school discipline, most peer-reviewed articles from 2016 focused on the topics of zero-tolerance policies and racial disparities in how students are disciplined in the United States and how they result in referrals and exclusionary consequences. The website for the U.S. Department of Education (2017) leads with articles about rethinking discipline and ending corporal punishment. According to King (2016), it is still legal in many U.S. states to use ineffective, harmful consequences as discipline methods to deal with problematic behaviors. King, who was the Secretary of Education in 2016, urged school leaders to provide a supportive school that would lower punitive discipline such as expulsions and suspensions to address all students' emotional, social, and behavioral needs. King advocated for schools to use principles of PBIS to correct inappropriate school behavior rather than punitive measures.

Fergus and Bradshaw (2018) noted that there have been a number of recent shifts in school discipline policies at the state and federal levels. The city and state discipline codes and regulations are gearing towards more positive interventions such as PBIS instead of harsh discipline methods like zero tolerance. School discipline practices have been a controversial topic for the past few decades, and zero tolerance policies have emerged as a primary form of school discipline (Rodríguez Ruiz, 2017)

Zero Tolerance Policies

Zero tolerance is a discipline method that is inflexible and often ineffective. Students are given severe punishment such as suspension or expulsion for any form of physical confrontation. To maintain order and discipline for learning to take place, the student has to feel safe (Fergus & Bradshaw, 2018; U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

As a school discipline policy, zero-tolerance has been implemented widely in the United States (Boccanfuso & Kuhfield, 2011). The zero tolerance conduct codes allow no flexibility in school discipline beyond suspension and expulsion (Mallett, 2016a). Though the zero-tolerance policy looks good in theory, it has negative consequences when implemented in practice (Kincaid et al., 2016; Närhi et al., 2015). This policy has had a strong impact on what school administrators and staff can do regarding disciplinary alternatives for student who break school rules (Mallett, 2016b). Many of the punishments administered by the schools such as corporal punishment, suspensions, and expulsions turn into risks for referrals to the juvenile justice system (Mallett, 2016b). Rodríguez Ruiz (2017), in a law review, outlined the development of such punitive zero-tolerance policies and assessed how effective they were. The American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health (2013) postulated that out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, as part of zero tolerance practices, have been unproductive attempts to resolve behavioral problems.

Disruptive Classroom Behavior

Teachers and administrators are responsible for ensuring a safe and positive school climate conducive to student success (Noltmeyer et al., 2015). However, many

teachers spend a great deal of their time trying to manage behavioral problems (Allen & Steed, 2016; Childs et al., 2016; Närhi et al., 2015). Most teachers and administrators do agree that misbehavior and discipline issues take up a great deal of their time (Felesena, 2013). Närhi et al. (2017) noted that disruptive classroom behavior poses a challenge to learning and negatively affects both academic achievement on the part of students and causes job-related stress on the part of teachers.

Adverse Impact of School Suspensions

Suspending students do not lead to desired outcomes. Suspended students are more likely to be suspended again and are less likely to graduate on time (Allen & Steed, 2016; Childs et al., 2016; Närhi et al., 2015). Suspensions are inappropriately being used as a disciplinary tool for decreasing problematic behaviors in and out of the classroom (Okonofua et al., 2016). Suspension becomes a reinforcer of the problematic behavior when a student views a suspension as a school holiday (Chin et al., 2012). Students who are suspended are less likely to have supervision in the home and they are more likely to belong to homes that are at or near the poverty level (Närhi et al., 2015).

Childs et al. (2016) discovered that suspensions were being used by schools as a means of avoiding the real problems. Many administrators believe that suspensions can be a quick fix, but suspensions can also alarm parents with information that may not be true (Childs et al., 2016). Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC; 2016) also revealed that students were suspended for violating a variety of discipline codes. Researchers conducted a study regarding discipline codes of a total of 120 high schools. They discovered that students were suspended for all kinds of behaviors, including minor

offenses. The researchers recommended that to improve school discipline, all schools must resort to reviewing and changing discipline policies to allow alternatives to traditional school suspensions. CRDC recommended that schools consider proactive and creative methods to address disruptive behavior such as PBIS, conflict resolution, social-cognitive intervention. Findings from the CRDC 2016 survey are relevant to my research because it explains why current trends of discipline are not effective.

Moreover, the severe punishments put students at risk for becoming part of the juvenile justice system (Mallett, 2016b). The United States Commission on Civil Rights (2016) discovered that because of crude school disciplinary qualities, students, especially those of color and students with disabilities, were disproportionately disassociated from school and transferred to the juvenile justice system. The Commission's findings revealed that those discipline policies, especially regarding suspension and expulsion, were most detrimental to non-White students: African American, Latino, and Native American (Hirschfeld, 2018). During the 2011-2012 school year, the proportion of Black students who were arrested was 31% compared to only 16% of other racial groups including Whites, Asians, Native people, and Latinos (Hirschfeld, 2018).

Racial Disparities in School Discipline

The review of literature revealed that racial disparities exist in school suspensions. Black students represent 16% of the student body in the United States; however, they make up 32-42% of the students who are suspended or expelled from school (U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2016). In contrast, White students represent 51% of the student population but only 5% of white boys are suspended. On a

national level, 2.8 million students received one or more out of school suspensions, which included 1.1 million Blacks; 610,000 Latinos; 700,000 students with disabilities; and 210,000 English Learners. Students at all Black secondary school students were suspended from school in the academic year, and 49% of Black secondary students had experienced suspensions at least once in an academic year as opposed to Whites at 18% (Bottiani et al., 2018). Black students, particularly males, are suspended at the rate of two to three times the rate of White students (Cook et al., 2018; U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2016).

Regarding ethnic disparities in the rate of suspensions, Jimenez et al. (2018) compared two large school districts for ethnic reason in New York City (NYBOE) and Los Angeles (LAUSD). The two districts had a combined 47,558 days lost from suspensions in the 2016-2017 school year. In New York, White students made up 15% of the school population and had an 8% loss in school days due to suspensions. In Los Angeles, Black students made up 27% of the student population but experienced 47% of the lost days. Jimenez et al. found racial disparities existed both for minor and serious student offenses. Other racial and ethnic groups of students who experienced loss of school days due to suspensions included American Indian, Alaska Native, Latino, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and multiracial boys who are also disproportionately suspended. They represent 15% of K-12 students. No less than 19% of K-12 students received one or more out-of-school suspensions (Jimenez et al., 2018).

Some of the disparities in discipline for racial and ethnic minorities may result from teachers' lack of experience, and teachers are the primary disciplinarians in schools.

The U.S. Department of Education (2016) reported that 11% of African Americans, 9% of Latinos, and 7% of American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN) students are taught by teachers teaching for the first time, while white students are taught by more experienced teachers. Only 5% of White students are taught by new teachers in their first year of teaching. Students of color who are taught by new teachers often experience discipline disparities. Students of color are over 200% more likely to get an office discipline referral (ODR) than Latinos and almost 300% more likely to receive an ODR than White students. African American students are being expelled at 1.14 times the rate of White students suspended. African American students are taught at 1.24 times the rate of Latino students by less experienced educators (Brown & DiTillio, 2013, as cited in Gion et al., 2018).

Students who are suspended experience disruptions to their academic success. Suspensions have been proven to defeat the purpose of providing a remedy for discipline; instead, suspensions invite more harm to students and provide environments that are not conducive to learning (Boccanfuso & Kuhfield, 2011). In the 2015-2016 academic year, school officials in the United States suspended 2.7 million students (Blad & Mitchell, 2018). Even though Black students, boys and girls, were 16% of the population (each at 8%), Black boys experienced 25% of the suspensions and Black girls 14% (Blad & Mitchell, 2018).

Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports

The New York City Department of Education (2019) reported that to improve school climate and provide an environment that is conducive to learning regarding city

wide behavioral expectations, students facing disciplinary allotment should not be faced with punitive methods. Instead, city educational leaders recommended that schools should administer positive support that instills knowledge in students about their social, emotional, and behavioral skills associated with learning. The groups further recommended that such positive support could be implemented in the form of PBIS.

PBIS can also be referred to as school-wide PBIS when applied on a school-wide basis (Kim et al., 2018). In this study, PBIS was utilized for consistency. Researchers in the past have used the term PBIS interchangeably and sometimes just the acronym PBS. The following sections elaborate on the history of this intervention; how it is practiced, explanation of its process, and how it is assessed; how educators perceive the practice and feel about it; and how single-sex education contributes to positive support for disciplinary issues.

Historical Review of PBIS

PBIS has been identified as a behavioral response to discipline issues. It was implemented during the reendorsement of the Individuals with Disabilities Act in 1997 (George, 2016). The concept of PBIS was designed to encourage positive academic, social, and behavioral outcomes for school children. PBIS can be implemented by (a) ensuring the use of evidence-based practices to inform decision making and the monitoring of edited progress during implementation and (b) organizing the resources and systems to enhance sustainability (Sugar & Simonsen, 2015).

Educators during the 1990s called for better ways to document and intervene effectively when addressing behavioral disorders in students (e.g., Gresham, 1991; Sugai

& Horner, 1999; Walker et al., 1996), which led to the adoption of PBIS. Hunter et al. (2017) used PBIS in a self-contained classroom of students with behavioral disorders. A new schoolteacher used these strategies of PBIS to transform the classroom environment to prevent problem behaviors before students engaged in them. The procedures targeted the environment of the classroom, the classroom schedule, and teaching protocols. PBIS resulted in decreasing the challenging behavior issues of three students in the elementary classroom who had been diagnosed with emotional behavior disorders (Hunter et al., 2017). Hunter et al., concluded that the consistency of PBIS when applied to the physical classroom; using the procedures and rules, the explicit timing, and the transition helped first-year teachers to identify, remember, and implement PBIS research-based strategies. These strategies were designed to improve academic and behavior outcomes. Student with or without disabilities benefited from the PBIS program (Hunter et al., 2017).

Masser et al. (2015) conducted a quantitative study to determine whether the use of PBIS affected school suspensions. The results revealed that with the implementation of positive interventions, there were fewer suspensions compared with the previous year. Therefore, a new wave of alternatives to suspensions such as PBIS was introduced (Massar et al., 2015). The sample size in Masser et al.'s study was 553 students from pre-school to sixth grade.

Implementing PBIS

Principles of PBIS are used in 26,000 schools across the United States (Horner & Macaya, 2018). Evanovich and Scott (2016) have written about various aspects of implementing PBIS in schools. The researchers 'goal in their study was to improve the

environment toward better student behaviors and academic success. The researchers developed four steps of PBIS implementation. The first step in PBIS implementation is *prediction*, administrators decide on where students are most likely to fail and then they analyze the failures to predict the questions they need to ask to encourage implementation success. The second step is *prevention*, unwanted behaviors are replaced with modified behaviors that are learned. The third step to implementation is *consistency*, which is where fidelity comes into place. Administrators must maintain a school-wide agreement on strategies for prevention in addition to fidelity. The final step of PBIS is implementation, which is an evaluation based on evidence, data, and outcomes of PBIS (Evanovich & Scott, 2016).

During the implementation stage of PBIS, teachers receive instructions on social skills development. A team of professionals including administrators and educators are selected to man the implementation stage of the program. Professional development training is also an important component of the PBIS implementation stage (Biliias et al., 2017). Biliias et al. (2017) condoned universal support for PBIS within a school. They suggested that the posting of behavioral expectations around the schools as well as teaching matrixes that support positive outcomes should be placed in hallways and all classrooms. To further support positive outcomes, Biliias et al. suggested that the best way to avoid any ethnic disparities in school discipline is to provide employees with culturally responsive learning labs that encourage professional and community development.

Outcomes Associated With PBIS

The PBIS Implementation Blueprint, which was created as a guide for leadership teams, is used to evaluate, develop, and accomplish action plans for education (Horner et al., 2017). If the PBIS Blueprint is used correctly, teachers should be able to sustain the program in an appropriate cultural context (Sugai et al., 2015). Experts in the application of PBIS recommend that schools implement procedures that effectively address student misbehaviors (Horner et al., 2015; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). These procedures include (a) identifying and analyzing data outcomes for student learning and behavior, (b) providing an organizational system that will adequately support and maintain SWPBS practices, (c) launching practices that promotes a positive social climate and learning environment, and (d) using data to monitor student progress on a school wide basis (Horner et al., 2015; Sugai et al., 2015).

For PBIS to work as intended, the PBIS Implementation Blueprint framework must be executed with fidelity. During the process critical aspects of PBIS are followed and accomplished (Kim et al., 2018). To confirm researchers Kim et al', conducted a quantitative study of 477 schools across 10 states. The results indicated that most schools exhibited a decrease in office discipline referrals (ODRs) and out-of-school suspensions (OSS) in a 3-year period when implementing PBIS with fidelity. Their study focused on the use of ODRs that concerned severe infractions involving administrators. Then, to analyze the data, Kim et al., counted the total ODRs in one school year divided by each school's enrollment and number of learning days.

Scientists in the field of PBIS claimed that implementation with the use of fidelity was important to the study; however, the degree of fidelity depended on the manner in which the most significant parts of the PBIS were rolled out (Kim et al., 2018). The results from the study showed that although there was not a statistically significant correlation among PBIS, fidelity, and reading achievement, the schools which had used the intervention for a minimum of 3 years had an increase in student reading achievement when compared to previous reading achievement (Kim et al., 2018).

Freeman et al. (2015) noted a positive outcome of PBIS involves reducing high school dropouts. The researchers examined the effects of PBIS on dropout rates. The dependent variables in the study were dropout rates as the primary variable, the average number of days students attended class, and the students' academic achievement in language arts, math, and reading (Freeman et al., 2015). Results from the study revealed positive behavioral effects on secondary school attendance, and reduced dropout rates.

Students need to know about the kind of pro-social actions that lead to positive reinforcement in schools (Freeman et al., 2016). All staff and students will feel reinforced when students have early access to reinforced supports that will be there when they need them. Freeman et al. (2016) found no direct relation of time varying school wide PBIS on school leaving but discovered that PBIS activities improved students' attendance in schools when implemented with fidelity. Statistics show there is a direct and close association of good attendance with staying in school. Data analysis results showed marginal improvements statistically (Freeman et al., 2016).

Although there is established literature supporting the efficacy of a variety of prevention programs, there has been less empirical work on the translation of such research on everyday practice (Freeman et al., 2016). Programs such as PBIS when practiced with fidelity over time in individual schools or scaled-up state-wide schools often render successful outcomes in academic subjects and behavioral improvements. However, there is a considerable need for more research on factors that enhance implementation of programs and optimize outcomes, particularly in school settings. Freeman et al. (2016) examined the effect of school-wide implementation of PBIS with fidelity. Investigators discovered that related students' outcomes in a state-wide scale-up school is determined by one of three fidelity measures. The three fidelity measures in the state-wide scale up school when PBIS is implemented with fidelity resulted in higher math achievement, higher reading achievement, and lower truancy.

Teachers' Perceptions and Attitudes toward PBIS

For PBIS to work effectively, teachers must work collaboratively as a team (Evanovich & Scott, 2016). Otherwise, the teachers' attitudes would likely have negative attitudes toward implementing all of the steps required for transforming their school into a more positive environment. Professional educators with positive attitudes and being equipped with such knowledge can help lead the way to better school outcomes (Evanovich & Scott, 2016). Rosario and Ramirez (2018) discovered that teachers with a positive attitude towards PBIS were able to foster better student teacher relationships, their actions became proactive, the number of disciplinary actions decreased, and their

grades in language arts, mathematics and enrollment in advanced placement courses increased.

Ennis et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of teacher expectations as an integral part of effectively implementing the principles of PBIS. To maximize teacher knowledge and attitudes on PBIS, researchers suggested making videos of the classes taught as a teaching tool for classroom management and other significant skills such as behavior and social skills along with academic outcomes. Ennis et al. (2018) perceived videos as a successful tool to promote PBIS because the PBIS program is not only standardized but also research based regarding its effectiveness. Ennis et al. argued that effective PBIS videos help teachers to understand the core principles. The researchers provided a rubric so educators could evaluate their own videos along with a sample of a screening schedule.

Ennis et al. (2018) explained that teaching schools' expectations is an essential component of schoolwide PBIS. In addition, creating PBIS videos is an essential tool for teaching expectations and other targeted skills within a schoolwide PBIS framework. Ennis et al. offered the why, how, when, where, and what of producing and screening PBIS videos. They announced that to effectively support schoolwide prevention efforts, educators must (a) demonstrate the core PBIS principles and (b) meet technical video production standards. Ennis et al. offered a rubric for self-evaluating teachers' own videos considering these two key elements. To support the use of PBIS videos, they also presented a sample screening schedule and a tip sheet with questions to ask before, during, and after PBIS video production (Ennis et al., 2018).

Fairborn et al. (2016) conducted a qualitative study to determine what PBIS meant to middle and high school teachers. The results revealed eight themes. The first three themes were related to teachers' concerns about the following: (a) low collaboration on discipline issues; (b) not having enough funding, time, or training to fully implement the program; and (c) believing the PBIS philosophy might merely be a reward system. The next three themes were as follows: (a) teachers' fear of the unknown; (b) feelings of lack of adequate knowledge; and (c) anticipating possible failure. Teachers also felt that they were not part of the change process and some educators did not believe that PBIS would last. The final two themes were (a) teachers' doubts about whether students would understand a school-wide initiative and (b) whether parents would be involved in planning and implementing PBIS (Fairborn, 2016).

Overall, teachers were concerned about collaborating among staff members who did not cooperate or offer their support with the idea of implementing PBIS. Teachers also expressed concerns about the extrinsic rewards that were affiliated with the implementation of PBIS. Educators were giving out irrelevant rewards which had little value to adolescents because some teachers failed to understand the PBIS framework. Educators who did not understand the positive reinforcement component of PBIS; they believed that PBIS is all about giving gifts to encourage good behavior (Fairborn, 2016). Ramirez and Rosario (2018) explained that the implementation of PBIS improved students' behavior in class, teachers become happier and were able to teach and encouraged their students. Students displayed less violent acts and attendance improved as well as academics. Student enrollment in advanced placement courses increased and

more students passed their classes. Indian Springs High School experienced the highest state rating for English Learner Progress in 2017 the year PBIS was implemented (Ramirez & Rosario, 2018).

Simonson et al. (2019) suggested that although students' benefits from the implementation of proactive, positive behavior support, teachers can also benefit when they receive professional development linked to PBIS. Simonson et al. (2019) noted that implementing PBIS can be complex during the coaching process, record keeping, and training. Therefore, PBIS programs in the classroom should always be backed by evidence-based studies to guide the decision-making process. Practices, using available data, should guide putting the practices into effect for supporting students, which in turn will produce systems to support the teachers (Simonson et al., 2019).

The Impact of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports on the Lives of African Americans

Buckley (2019) explored how positive behavior interventions and support (PBIS), counseling, and mentoring impacted disruptive classroom behavior that resulted in office referrals pre-K to fifth grade African American male students. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, multiple regression, and logistic regression analysis. Results from elementary school teacher's interviews indicated that participating in PBIS and in mentoring did not indicate that there was a reduction in the number of disruptive behaviors that ended up in office referrals for African American male students in Pre-K through fifth grade. However, findings from the study showed that mentoring was the only significant predictor of reading scores. Limitations of the Buckley et al. (2019) study

made it difficult to generalize because the researchers only focused on teachers and principals in one Pre-K through fifth grade school. In addition, the researchers did not report data based on gender, nor did they differentiate the data by race or ethnicity. Findings from the Buckley et al. (2019) study are relevant to the present study because the researchers examined the effects of PBIS on the behavior and achievement of African American Males. However, this research is different because Buckley et al. focused on a Pre-K through fifth grade school. The present study explored educators' perceptions of the effects of PBIS on African American young males in an urban school, grades 6 through 12.

Noltemeyer et al. (2019) discussed achievement outcomes associated with school wide positive behavioral interventions and supports at the implementation level. Noltemeyer et al. conducted a quantitative study to investigate educators' beliefs and assumptions of the effects of school wide PBIS. The study was conducted in 153 schools based in Ohio. The researchers used multivariate analysis of co-variance (MANCOVA) to determine whether there were differences in discipline and academic performance. The independent variable in the analysis was the implementation level while the dependent variables included minority students, economically disadvantaged students, students with chronic absenteeism rates, and the percentage of teachers who were rated as accomplished. The overall results indicated that when PBIS is implemented with high levels of fidelity, there is a significant association with positive student outcomes such as improved classroom behaviors as well as higher grades. This study investigated the discipline and achievement outcomes of students who experienced the implementation of

school wide PBIS. However, my study focused on the effects of PBIS on African American young men in an all-boys' urban school, serving Grades 6 through 12.

Barrett (2018) explored the effects of a PBIS data platform on students' academic and disciplinary outcomes. They used a quasi-experimental method to examine the effectiveness of PBIS using a data driven system called Kickboard. Barrett used this electronic device with the help of professional development training. The study took place in public schools in Louisiana. The software provided a menu of positive behavioral categories as well as a range of training for teachers and administrators. Teachers were able to input behavioral data in real time with the use of their cell phones, tablets, and computers. This system can also generate rewards to students using a built-in points system. Data were analyzed by using electronic dashboards that allowed teachers to view data patterns for individual students and the whole class. School administrators could study and track behavioral outcomes at the school level by classroom and teacher.

To further analyze the data, Barrett (2018) compared students in treatment schools before and after the schools adopted the kickboard system. A comparison group was matched to the treatment group at the individual student levels and the school levels. Results indicated that the effects of Kickboard reduced the number of suspensions by year per student to 26% to 72%. Reduction in the number of days suspended yielded 52%. Academic outcomes for schools that were performing at low grades achieved fewer positive outcomes in mathematics, English language, arts, science, and social studies; compared to high performing schools. This study is relevant to my study because it investigated the effects of PBIS using a software platform to examine student behavior

and academic achievement. However, my study focused on an urban all-boys school from the sixth to the twelfth grades.

Letterlough (2018) investigated the impact of PBIS on academic achievement and frequencies of office referrals (ODR) of students in middle school. The sample consisted of 54 eighth grade Black male students; 24 attended a PBIS middle school and 30 other students attended a non PBIS middle school. The study was a quantitative, causal comparative study. Data were collected and analyzed from two alternative schools for comparison. One school implemented principles of PBIS, and the other school did not. Findings revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the academic achievement and frequency of ODRs for eighth grade Black male students who attended a school of PBIS activities when compared to a non PBIS participating school. A major limitation of this study was that the study focused only on Black male students in eighth grade, which makes it difficult to generalize results by gender or to other racial/ethnic groups of students. The researcher did not reveal any information on a specific grade. Therefore, other researchers would be unable to generalize by grade.

Findings from the Letterlough (2018) study are relevant to the present study because this study researched student behavior and academic achievement. However, the present study is different in an all-boys middle and high school. Madigan et al. (2016) investigated the association between schoolwide behavioral interventions and supports and academic achievement in a 9-year evaluation. The purpose of the present study was to examine the long-term impact of schoolwide behavioral interventions and supports on students' academic achievement. The quasi experimental study took place in 21

elementary and high schools in Kentucky. The data were analyzed using a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA). Findings revealed that students who were exposed to positive behavioral discipline programs in school had higher academic achievement in elementary, middle, and high schools when compared to the pre-intervention in comparison to other schools, Findings from the Madigan et al. study are relevant to the research because the researchers studied the impact of school wide PBIS on students' academic outcomes. This research study is different from my study, which focused on the effects of school wide PBIS in the all-boys school.

Coulibaly (2017) examined whether students' gender and age, which is also referred to as grade level of students, could affect their performance based on a PBIS program. The setting was in a suburban middle school in the Midwest in the United States. Data were analyzed by use of the analyses of variance test (ANOVA) software. Information from a prior PBIS program was utilized for comparison. The PBIS program included components such as safety, openness to diversity, and respect (to self and to others). The findings of the study showed that age does affect the performance of students when a PBIS program is utilized. According to Coulibaly, there was a significant difference among academic achievement of sixth graders, seventh graders, and eighth graders. However, the safety and respect for self and others were not positively implemented according to the design development and implementation of PBIS. Openness to diversity were also not positively implemented because this element required the commitment of the community involvement and ample monitoring of the fidelity of PBIS. The study is relevant to my study because the effects of PBIS on sixth

graders, seventh graders, and eighth graders using gender and age showed significant improvement. My study differed from the Coulibaly (2016) study in its focus.

Miller (2016) examined the effects of the “Leader in Me” program, a school wide PBIS program based on student achievement and office discipline referrals for the fifth-grade students in a rural elementary school in North Central Washington State. Miller conducted a quantitative study to examine the effects of a school wide PBIS system on student achievement and office discipline referrals. The data analysis was from data that had been archived over 3 years. The results indicated that there was no significant statistical change in the number of office referrals after the implementation of PBIS. Secondly, there was no differentiation of results by race or ethnicity. Miller’s study makes it difficult to generalize to other groups of students. My study differs from the Miller’s research in its focus on an urban school.

Welch (2015) explored the impact of PBIS on academic achievement among African male students diagnosed as emotionally disturbed (ED). Welch used a quantitative study to examine three school districts that belong to the same Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) in Southern California to determine whether the behavior of African American males referred to special education programs with an ED diagnosis of emotionally disturbed could be positively affected with exposure to positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). Data were collected from aggregated archives across three school districts. The data were analyzed using analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) to compare the means scores from the three school districts. Findings of the study revealed that the math achievement scores of African American

male students; compared to students in school districts where PBIS was not implemented had significantly lower scores in mathematics than the students in the two school districts where PBIS was implemented. This study is relevant to my study because the study investigated the impact of PBIS on African American male students. However, this study is different because my study explored the effects of school wide PBIS on African American boys without an ED diagnosis.

Researchers in the field of PBIS confirmed that when PBIS is implemented in African American schools, results indicate that there are significant academic improvements in mathematics (Madigan et al., 2016; Welch, 2018) and improved classroom behaviors (Noltemeyer et al., 2019), as well as academic achievements in middle and high schools (Barrett, 2018; Coulibaly, 2016; Letterlough, 2018). Other researchers such as Buckley (2019) disagreed with the positive indications of PBIS. Buckley's study results showed that there was no significant reduction in disruptive behaviors in a Pre-K through fifth grade school when PBIS was implemented (Buckley, 2019). Letterlough (2018) revealed in their study that schools participating in PBIS compared to non-participating schools did not have a difference in academic achievement and office referrals (Letterlough 2018; Miller, 2016).

Summary

Teachers lose too much productive instructive time when they are forced to address disruptive classroom behavior (Allen & Steed, 2016; Childs et al., 2016; Närhi et al., 2015). Negative classroom behaviors distract students who exhibit them as well as their peers who do not have sufficient time to meet their learning goals. Students who

often disturb the learning process may not get optimal grades on state assessment tests. Even though students are removed from the classroom due to negative behaviors, researchers have found that these out-of-classroom suspensions do not improve behavior or benefit the students in any other way (Allen & Steed, 2016; Childs et al., 2016; Närhi et al., 2015).

In exploring the literature further, there is evidence to show that suspensions and expulsions are not effective tools for correcting negative school behaviors (Kline, 2016; Rasmussen et al., 2018). Suspensions and expulsions have shown to be very ineffective (Mahvar et al., 2018) as in suspensions and zero tolerance policies. My conceptual framework was ABA. In Chapter 2, I also discussed teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards PBIS, racial disparities in school discipline, and the history of PBIS, effects of PBIS, why PBIS works and why it does not work. When PBIS is used on a school-wide basis, expectations and sustainability are raised. Effective implementation needs to be authentic, which generally means teachers buy in to good administrative support and same mind sets. Administrators may be needed to effectively endorse team cohesiveness and decision making. There is a gap in the literature on classroom implementation of PBIS, especially in single-sex education. Chapter 3 outlines the procedures for exploring this perspective through semistructured interviews of schoolteachers and administrators, document examination, and publicly available information.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to determine educators' perspectives of the impact of a school wide PBIS program on the academic outcomes for students in an all-male Grade 6 through 12 urban school for African American young men. This chapter consists of the research design and rationale, my role as the researcher, and how I proceeded to conduct the study. The methodology section includes details regarding participant selection logic; instrumentation; procedures for recruitment and participation; and data collection. Next in the methodology is the data analysis plan, after which I discuss matters of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, confirmability, dependability, and ethical procedures. Finally, I conclude with a chapter summary.

Research Design and Rationale

The research design for this qualitative study was a descriptive case study based on the research question:

RQ: How did school wide PBIS affect the academic achievement of young boys attending an all-male Grade 6 through 12 urban school?

Yin (2016) suggested that researchers may use qualitative designs to understand the development of a specific community. This qualitative research study allowed me the opportunity to examine this topic thoroughly and gain deeper insights into behavioral interventions and supports. In addition, I could discover how effective these discipline methods have been for young Black men in Grades 6 through 12 attending an urban school. Zainal (2017) explained that qualitative researchers can explore a phenomenon in a natural context. The focus of this study was to obtain information on the topic of

interest, which was the use of school-wide PBIS in a single-sex public school in a large urban area in the Northeast. Information from the educators' perspectives was assessed, rather than gathering numerical information from publicly available statistics like standardized test scores. Therefore, I would not need to use any quantitative methods that involved statistical analysis to get the in-depth data needed to address the research question.

Researchers use case studies because of the flexibility of the design for examining in-depth information about certain phenomena (Baškarada, 2014). Qualitative case study has been accepted as a valuable and a valid research tool in several different scientific realms (Baškarada, 2014). The case study methodology is a practical method for examining multifaceted problems in authentic situations (Harrison et al., 2017). Case study designs have been used across several disciplines, particularly the social sciences, education, business, law, and health to address a wide range of research questions (Baggett & Simmons, 2017). It is better to answer case studies questions of *who* and *when* if the question is related to a phenomenon (Baškarada, 2014; Yin, 2016). Yin (2016) noted that case study research can answer questions pertaining to present problems in the field of education with no urge to force the participants into answering all questions. The participants for this study were not required to conform to any preexisting rules and regulations (see Willig, 2016).

Within the qualitative paradigm, there are several other methods that include ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, and narrative inquiry (Astroth & Chung, 2018). Ethnographers study culture and the social life of people in groups who share

certain characteristics. The study of cultural and social life is typically used in the field of anthropology or in cases when researchers become observer participants; one goal of the researchers is to make such cultural practices understandable to their colleagues (Quintanilha et al., 2015). The study involved educators' perspectives of the effectiveness of a disciplinary approach rather than their social or cultural backgrounds. I was not conducting an anthropological study nor was I an observer participant, so I discarded the use of ethnography as a method of inquiry.

The narrative inquiry method involves storytelling from participants about their experiences rather than having an interviewer eliciting their opinions (Lenfesty et al., 2016). Narrative research is intended to grant researchers a vocabulary with which to tell a story from which come global meanings and sense making. Such a method is used for advocating for groups of people and giving a voice to those who often do not have an audience (Lenfesty et al., 2016). Because the study involved obtaining perspectives from participants on the effectiveness of school wide PBIS rather than on the personal experiences of the students with whom they work, I discarded narrative inquiry as a methodology.

Phenomenology would have given me a chance to explore a phenomenon from the lived experiences of the participants (see Lewis, 2015; Maxwell, 2012). Phenomenology involves exploring authentic experiences rather than personal perspectives on a phenomenon (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017). I did not interview students regarding their lived experiences. Instead, I sought the perspectives of the professionals who work with the students; therefore, phenomenology was not appropriate for guiding

this study. Lastly, grounded theory involves developing a theory based on the data collected and analyzed in a study (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017). I found that grounded theory was not appropriate for my study because I did not seek to develop a theory.

After eliminating the other qualitative traditions, I decided case study was most appropriate for my research because I was to examine educators' perceptions of how school wide PBIS influenced the behavior and academic achievement of African American male students in an all-boys public school in an urban area in the Northeast. As postulated by Willig (2016), a qualitative case study afforded me the opportunity to develop new meaning from the data that I collected. The case study approach can be used to explore and describe disciplinary issues from an in-depth perspective of educators who allowed me to explore the points-of-view of those who have experienced the development of a constructive climate to address student behavior in a Grade 6-12 urban all-male public school.

Research Question

The following research question guided this qualitative case study approach:

RQ: How did school wide PBIS affect the academic achievement and behavioral outcomes of African American young boys attending an all-male Grade 6-12 urban school?

Role of the Researcher

I was the sole researcher throughout the research process. As an observer, I collected, coded, and analyzed the data for relevant themes. I took note of the participants' vocal tone while I interviewed them by phone. My role as a researcher in

this study was different from all others. My role was strictly that of a sole researcher. I planned to conduct this study in my place of employment as a school counselor until the COVID-19 pandemic changed the venue from face-to-face interviews to interviewing the participants over the phone. However, because I do not teach in the classroom nor am I a school administrator, I did not have any contact with students in the classrooms themselves.

I ensured that my biases, beliefs, or personal feelings did not get in the way of data collection. Hyett et al. (2014) encouraged researchers to address all biases because biases can influence a case. My biases revealed that I believed PBIS works, and its implementation will resolve most academic and behavioral problems for African American young men. To monitor and reduce these biases; I remained conscious of my preconceived ideas, and I tried to control the intrusion of these thoughts. I also outlined and bracketed these biases so that I could continue to manage my biases. Bracketing is a methodological procedure that calls for the researcher deliberately putting away their own beliefs or preconceived notions about a phenomenon (Chan et al., 2013). The first step of bracketing takes place when researchers have mentally assessed their thoughts and the manner in which they prepared for the research model. The second step is when researchers decide the extent of the literature review based on the information already in the field. The third step is collecting the data through semistructured interviews guided by open-ended questions. The manner in which the questions are asked determines the way the participants tell their stories. In the final step of bracketing, data can be analyzed using Colaizzi's method (Chan et al., 2013).

I reserved my personal beliefs and opinions. However, I objectively presented questions that were necessary. I used a reflexive diary to record my personal assumptions, experiences, and preconceptions regarding my biases about PBIS as a way to lessen the impact those biases may have on my data collection and data analysis. A reflexive diary served as a self-assessment tool to identify and suspend any prior or existing knowledge about school-wide PBIS (see Tufford & Newman, 2012). I used these bracketing strategies to assist myself in maintaining objectivity and minimizing the interference of bias with the phenomenon. I constantly used bracketing during the research process. When I conducted the literature review, I gained a deeper understanding of the effects of PBIS; however, I was still curious to find out the effects of PBIS on young Black men in an all-boys urban school. Bracketing strategies enabled me to maintain objectivity and minimize the interference of bias with the phenomenon in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data (see Chan et al., 2013).

Methodology

The following subsections present the participant selection logic process. This selection process included participant criteria and number of participants as well as instrumentation. In this section, I discuss the methods that were used to identify, contact, and recruit participants. In addition, I discuss the collection and analysis of data.

I used purposive sampling to recruit participants for this study, which involves recruiting participants in a deliberate way (see Palinkas et al., 2015). I recruited only administrators or educators who have experienced the effects of PBIS in a school with Black male students in Grades 6 through 12. Purposive sampling is the most likely

method of sampling to be used by qualitative researchers (Ritchie et al., 2014). The main goal of any kind of sampling is to recruit sources that will yield rich, thick information regarding the topic of interest. Participants were purposefully recruited because of their work with students who have been removed from the classroom, suspended, or expelled. In addition, only educators who have implemented school-wide PBIS in their classrooms were eligible to participate in the study.

The sample size included 10 educators who were recruited based on their hands-on experience with school-wide PBIS in a middle school of young Black males. The sample size of 10 was ultimately chosen because this sample size is considered adequate for a small-scale case study in which participants are a fairly homogenous group of individuals with similar practices and stated skills (Galvin, 2015). Toma (2014) noted snowball sampling can be used by a researcher to ask each participant to identify and refer others who might give information about the study. The individuals could have referred other individuals who may have information about the case. I purposefully recruited individuals who have knowledge and experience about the effects of school-wide PBIS on African American young men in an all-boy's urban school.

Saturation is established when the researcher gathers enough data to the point when there are no new data (Galvin, 2015). Saturation is also achieved during the interview process when no new relevant information is forthcoming even if more people are interviewed (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Researchers found that saturation was "largely achieved" after interviewing 12 participants. Fusch and Ness (2015) agreed that saturation is not generic and therefore may differ depending on the design of the study.

Fusch and Ness concluded that saturation can be achieved depending on the design of the study. Researchers have also identified that the range for optimal sample size is 10-12 participants. Saturation in the present study was achieved with 10 participants. Saturation can also be achieved when data are transcribed and analyzed and no new codes are emerging (Fusch and Ness 2015).

Instrumentation

I was the primary instrument for this study. I was the only researcher collecting the data. Toma (2014) postulated that data for case studies can be collected through interviews, documents, observations, and historical documents. I used semistructured interviews and a demographic questionnaire to collect data. An interview protocol that included open-ended questions was used as a guide for the interviews. Such a guide allows the interviewer to remain focused by asking consistent questions to all participants (Chenail, 2013). Semistructured interviews give the investigators the capacity to focus on the phenomenon being studied by giving allowing participants to share their experiences with a phenomenon (Maxwell, 2013). Galletta (2013) explained that the semistructured interview is a flexible and essential tool for collecting data in qualitative research. Through semistructured interviews participants have the liberty to openly express their opinions, perceptions, or experiences, and researchers can also have the freedom to prepare questions curtailed towards the research question (Galletta, 2013; Maxwell, 2012).

The interview questions were developed based on the research question and covered the perceptions of the teachers with experience employing school wide PBIS. A

copy of the interview guide is located in the Appendix. All interviews ended up being conducted via telephone due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Electronic recording devices can be a personal preference (Baškarada, 2014; Oltmann, 2016). However, some interview methodologists believe that the use of recording devices during an interview may not be a good idea (Baškarada, 2014; Oltmann, 2016).

Recording devices may make interviewees uncomfortable as well as increase the time needed for transcription and analysis (Baškarada, 2014). For example, if the recording device malfunctions and the interviewer had not been taking notes then the entire interview may be lost (Oltmann, 2016). To adjust for these limitations, I ensured that I had an extra paper pad and several pens and pencils. I also used my iPad as a back-up device. Another possible disadvantage might include dropped telephone calls. To compensate for these limitations, I relied on pen and paper to record answers to interview questions. I also recorded observations on vocal tone in my notebook. By so doing I was able to enhance my collection of rich and thick data. On the other hand, electronic interviews can be less intensive as far as time and financial costs (Oltmann, 2016).

I used an audio recorder with a voice activator feature to capture participant's responses to the interview questions. Another cellular phone was also used as a method of recording. Furgerson (2012) insisted that researchers should have a plan in case there are any device failures with the main recording device. In addition to my cellular phone, I also had my apple iPad. O'Doody (2013) postulated that when conducting interviews, participants must agree to be recorded before recording takes place. Participants were informed during interview scheduling that their interviews would be audio recorded. At

the time of the interview, I again asked participants for their permission to record the interview. The informed consent form also advised participants that the interviews would be recorded. The content validity refers to the precision in which the findings accurately reflect the data (Smith & Noble, 2015). Instruments were established by expert review. I invited both of my committee members and two other experts who have extensive experiences in my field to review the questions to ensure content validity.

Participant Recruitment

The population from which the sample was recruited are educators and professional staff (e.g., classroom teacher and administrators) who have been employed in a school that has implemented school wide PBIS in an urban area in the northeastern United States. Participants were invited to participate by email. I informed them of the purpose of the research and of my desire to recruit participants who have worked in an all-boys school and have worked with students using PBIS as a discipline method. Flyers were posted on every floor. Announcements were made at professional development conferences. During the campus wide weekly meetings, announcements were made. In addition, I placed recruitment flyers in educators' mailboxes at the school.

I obtained a letter of cooperation from the principal of the school to recruit participants. Participants had access to my office phone number as well as my personal cellular phone numbers.

Data Collection

Collecting data for the study involved several parts: interviewing, keeping a reflexive journal, recording the interviews digitally, informing the participants of exit

strategies, and following up after the data were collected. The first four parts took place during the interviews. I informed the participants of their rights not to engage with any questions they choose not to answer, and they were to be debriefed at the end of the data collection process. The interviews were recorded from beginning to end, and each one took about an hour or less. I also took occasional notes to record my observations and thoughts. After the interviews were done, for follow-up, I contacted the participants by phone or email if I had any questions. When I transcribed all the data, I followed using member checking to ensure accuracy. The information in the next six paragraphs describes data collection in more detail.

Interviewing

Data were collected using semistructured interviews, which took approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Interviews took place over the phone due to the COVID-19 lockdown, though they were originally supposed to take place in a quiet place at the school or in a location of each participant's choosing. My goal was to obtain a location that is both private and free of noises and distractions; therefore, I asked the participants to find such a place within their own homes. I started each interview by addressing confidentiality and informed consent. Participants were also reminded that they had the right to withdraw from the interview at any time. They were given two consent forms to sign. I kept one signed copy for my records. The other copy was given back to the participants. I asked the participants' permission to record the interview, and all 10 participants agreed. I also asked the participants if they had any questions before starting the interview. Yin (2013) explained that interview questions should be open ended questions to enable the

researcher to ask the participants about facts and their opinions about the topic study.

Participants were questioned about school wide PBIS. I listened to the participants' responses with an open mind, free of biases or presuppositions about school wide PBIS.

In addition, during data collection, I used an interview guide to keep me focused and to align my research questions, the purpose and nature of the study, why the participant was recruited, and the details of the consent form (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). I also noted minute details not recorded in the interview guide information such as the date, time, length, and place of each interview along with observations of the participants (e.g., vocal tone) as well as any relevant information pertaining to the case study that may not have been captured by audio recording (see Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Reflexive Journal

I used a reflective journal to record my perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. Chenail (2011) recommended that researchers use the reflexive journal as a tool to jot down their feelings and opinions before and after the interview to recognize any thoughts that may lead to researcher bias in data analysis and interpretation. I also used my reflective journal to reflect on my interview experience and the responses to the participants.

Recording Device

I used an audio recorder with a voice activator feature to capture participants' responses to the interview questions. My cellular phone was also used as another method of recording. Furgerson (2012) insisted that researchers should have a plan in case there are any device failures with the main recording device. In addition to my cellular phone, I

used my apple iPad. O'Doody (2013) postulated that when conducting interviews, participants must agree to be recorded before recording takes place. Participants were informed during interview scheduling that their interviews would be audio recorded. At the time of the interview, I again asked participants for their permission to record the interview, which all 10 readily gave. The informed consent form also advised participants that the interviews would be recorded.

Exit Strategy

The exit strategy included a debriefing to remind participants of the purpose of the research (McShane et al., 2015). I reviewed the notes to ensure the information was correct as well as to affirm the participant's role in the research. Participants were asked if they had any questions and were made aware of the confidential nature of the study and thanked for their time and effort. I made sure we exchanged phone numbers for additional follow up questions and information.

Follow-up

I conducted at least one follow up with the participants to implement a member checking strategy, which was conducted for three reasons: (a) participants may have wanted to expand on the information given during their interviews by adding further explanations; (b) during the collection of the data, I may have discovered some form of inconsistency with my notes and participant information; or (c) I may have had follow-up questions for the participants. I also posed follow-up questions if I found any discrepancies in the data to clarify information. I expected follow-up sessions over the telephone to last no longer than half an hour, and they did not.

Data Analysis Plan

I utilized Colaizzi's 7-step approach to analyze the data collected from the interviews. Colaizzi presented a detailed description of every step that can be taken to thoroughly analyze data from qualitative research. The following paragraphs outline how I specifically used each step in my study on PBIS.

- Step 1: I read each transcript several times to understand the content. I was able to read the transcripts the first time on my computer screen, and I highlighted meaningful words and phrases. If any thoughts, feelings and ideas arose, I documented them in my bracketing diary as well as my reflective diary. This step allowed me to explore the impact of PBIS as expressed by each participant.
- Step 2: At this stage, I was able to extract information using significant statements and phrases about what measures were taken to ensure effective implementation of PBIS. First, I arranged the individual transcriptions of the interviews into one master file with all the interview questions in individual table boxes. Next, I moved all the participants' answers under each distinct question. I was then able to find additional phrases and patterns as I highlighted them in the document.
- Step 3: I continued to find meanings in significant statements. I grouped all the congruent phrases, sentences, or key words, and identified what the meanings were in relation to the research and interview questions. I gave labels to that which was similar throughout the data, which I then

documented. Carpendale et al. (2017) indicated that words and phrases that appear frequently in participants' transcribed interviews can be used to start seeing patterns during the coding process. This process is defined as open coding. Carpendale et al. claimed the open coding method can allow flexibility in finding the key words and phrases.

- Step 4: All meanings were processed and placed into groups, from which themes emerged. I assigned codes to these themes with letters to reflect unique clusters of themes. Each cluster of themes was coded to include all formulated meanings related to that particular group. Then, I reread the interviews to code different participant responses as they related to the codes I found previously, known as axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). If I had to reduce the themes, if there were too many, I planned to use selective coding to integrate the different categories from axial coding to make them more cohesive (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019).
- Step 5: All emergent themes were described thoroughly based on the effects of PBIS, which is the phenomenon of interest and which answered the research question. All themes were clearly described in a table and in a series of descriptive paragraphs.
- Step 6: At this stage, I concluded the paragraph with a two or three sentence description of the phenomenon. I also eradicated repetitive, misused, or overestimated descriptions.

- Step 7: To validate study findings, I used a “member checking” strategy. Research findings were shared with the participants and the results were discussed. This step was done via phone calls. After I got feedback from the participants on the findings, I added to the data analysis according to their feedback if there were any changes.

In short, I went over selected passages to find patterns to create a visual interpretation of the data (Sutton & Austin, 2015). After reading through all the data, I ensured data accuracy through triangulation, feedback from members on my dissertation committee, and acknowledgment of my biases when reporting the findings.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Amankwaa (2016) posited that trustworthiness in research provides rigor and strength to the study. It is a vital component which ensures the quality of the data. Amankwaa concluded that to establish rigor and trustworthiness in qualitative research, a protocol guideline needs to be created. Documentation of actions that a researcher takes for data collection analysis and data interpretation can be important for determining the trustworthiness of the research findings (Amankwaa, 2016). Anney (2014) recommended that researchers understand the trustworthiness criteria and adopt them to improve the believability of a study. If all the forms of trustworthiness such as creditability, transferability, dependability and confirmability are used, then a qualitative study would not attract the criticism toward qualitative researchers who use quantitative methods because they do not fully understand qualitative studies (Anney, 2014).

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research involves substantiating the internal validity of the research findings (Anney, 2014; Shufutinsky, 2020). Credibility is established when the researchers document how the findings were derived from the information given by the participants (Amankwaa, 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To ensure credibility I used member checks, which is a strategy used to improve the quality of qualitative data (Anney, 2014). Researchers are required to include the opinions of their respondents when data are analyzed and interpreted. Participants were given the opportunity to review their transcribed responses for truthfulness and feedback. After each interview was transcribed, I planned to email the participants with the transcript attached. Participants were able to identify any inaccurate information and they were able to make corrections if they found any inaccuracies. Participants were able to communicate any changes via email or phone (Birt et al., 2016). Member checks are the main ingredients of credibility (Anney, 2014). In addition to ensure internal validity, I used triangulation techniques. Triangulation refers to the comparison of different sources of data collection from different levels of people. Data were collected from two sources: administrators and educators. I compared their answers for similarities and or differences (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Transferability

Transferability or external validity in qualitative research can be defined as the degree to which the researcher is able to describe the phenomenon in such minute details that the conclusions drawn from the study can be easily transferred to other times,

settings, situations, and people (Amankwaa, 2016; Morse, 2015; Mosalanejad et al., 2018). I used an audit trail to enhance the transferability of findings from this research. An audit documents and describes the research step by step from the start of the research project to the development and reporting of the findings (Amankwaa, 2016; Morse, 2015). The audit trail also included copies of interview notes, interview recordings, and information from my reflective journal. I included details about why I chose the research design and method, how participants were recruited in addition to describing the procedure I used to collect, code, and analyze the data.

The other strategy I used to establish transferability was purposeful sampling, which allows the researcher to purposively recruit participants who can genuinely provide information about a phenomenon or event (see Anney, 2014; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Thus, purposeful sampling allowed me to recruit participants who have experienced the implementation of PBIS in an all-boy's urban school. These participants were able to provide rich, thick, and detailed responses to interview questions regarding PBIS and impact on the performance of students in this urban school. Purposeful sampling promotes transferability of the findings, especially because it is more decisive and selective than random or convenience sampling and can yield more in-depth data from participants (Anney, 2014).

Dependability

Dependability is accomplished when the findings from a study are consistent and could be repeated by future researchers (Amankwaa, 2016; Morse, 2015). To enhance dependability, I used an audit trail. Anney (2014) postulated that an audit trail can be

used to examine the inquiry process and to substantiate the data. Using the audit trail, I gave a detailed description of my methodological arrangement of the research design, my role as a researcher, and how I determined my recruitment preference to allow other researchers to duplicate the study (Houghton et al., 2013). To establish dependability, I also kept track of the entire research process. My audit trail consisted of all notes I collected, recorded, and analyzed as well as detailed written descriptions of the steps I took during the data collection and analysis stage.

I used member checking to enhance the dependability of the results from the findings. Member checking enhances the dependability of findings from a study in the following ways: (a) it is a process which requires compiling accurate, written, verbatim transcripts of what the participants actually said during the interviews; (b) it as a strategy of making sure that participants are presented the opportunity to check the transcripts to ensure the transcripts are true and accurate reflections of their comments; and (c) it gives participants the opportunity to correct inaccuracies or misrepresentations of their thoughts or comments (Houghton et al., 2013). I ensured through member checks that the findings were based on authentic data collected from the participants.

Confirmability

Confirmability is defined as the extent to which the findings of a study can be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers (Amankwaa, 2016; Anney, 2014). Confirmability is well connected to dependability and involves accuracy and neutrality in data analysis (Houghton et al., 2013). I enhanced the confirmability of the findings from this study through the use of a reflexive journal and an audit trail. I kept a reflexive

journal to document and record notes, personal thoughts, perceptions, and other forms of observations that occur while data were being collected. Researchers use a reflexive journal to document events that happen in the field related to the study; it can also be a tool for transparency in which the researcher's biases can be acknowledged in writing up the findings (Amankwaa, 2016; Anney, 2014; Morse, 2015).

I also used an audit trail to enhance the confirmability of results from this study. I maintained detailed documents of the methods used to collect data for this study (see Amankwaa, 2016; Morse, 2015). That way, another researcher would have details of every step of the way from data collection to analysis (Amankwaa, 2016; Morse, 2015). The audit trail was a compilation of all notes collected, recorded, and analyzed as well as detailed written descriptions of data collection and analysis stages of the study.

Ethical Procedures

In using human participants, there are many issues to consider, particularly when being affiliated with a university (Driscoll & Brizee, 2012). The first step was conducting ethical procedures to obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) permission to conduct the study (approval #03-30-20-0035854). The task of the IRB is to ensure that no ethical violations of human rights occur during the research process. In using human participants, researchers must ensure that ethical standards are followed through the entire data collection, analysis, and member-checking process (Driscoll & Brizee, 2012). I first secured the anonymity of participants by replacing participants' names with alphabetical/numerical letters and numbers. For example, the name of my first participant was changed to P1. I protected the participants' privacy and address issues of

confidentiality and I ensured that employees understood that participating is not mandatory and that they could have withdrawn their consent to participate at any point.

It is not enough to simply obtain verbal consent from those who have agreed to participate in the study; a written consent form must be used to address all ethical considerations (Driscoll & Brizee, 2012). In the study, I first obtained IRB approval to conduct the research, after which I got informed consent from all my participants. I reminded the participants that their participation was voluntary. Participants were aware that they could exit the study at any time. I also gave participants my personal contact information if any questions or concerns arose. When I submitted my IRB application, I attached my proposal, letters of cooperation addressed to the school administrator, the recruitment letter addressed to potential participants, the interview guide, the informed consent paper, and the interview questions.

I informed the participants in clear terms, both verbally and in writing at the start of the interviews, that I would not communicate any of their responses to other people or to the educational organization for which they worked. However, I offered the school in which they work an executive summary without any individually identifying information, and all data were to be reported in aggregated form. To maintain confidentiality, I identified participants by an alpha numerical code (e.g., P1, P2, etc.). I did not connect their answers to them in any way that might have jeopardized participants' identities. No identifying information was shared with professionals and peers. I did not have any power relationships or interest conflicts to prevent the participants from being honest about their perspectives and experiences.

I reminded participants that they could terminate the interviews at any time. In addition, participants had the right to strike off a specific response from the record. During debriefing, I informed participants that I would send them the transcripts of the interviews when the transcripts were completed. I used a password-protected device to transfer the data from the recorded interviews to the computer and then to the password-protected device, to assure data integrity. Only I had access to the data all through the stages of the study (See Appendix D). All materials related to the study, including my notes, transcriptions, informed consent forms, and electronic communications were to be stored in a secured location (keyed file cabinet) in my home office, accessible only to me. All electronic documents were transferred to a password protected device to be destroyed after 5 years. All physical documents in the keyed file cabinet would then be shredded.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I presented the method with which I planned to conduct the study. First, I gave a detailed explanation why my study was qualitative rather than quantitative and why case study was the most appropriate tradition to gather the perspectives of educators on school wide PBIS in an all-boys urban public school in the Northeast instead of phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, or narrative analysis. Then, I listed the steps I took to recruit the participants, get their informed consent and maintain their confidentiality, collect the data, interpret them, and triangulate them through examining documents and conducting member checking to ensure trustworthiness. After concluding the research, I wrote Chapter 4 to provide the results of the study and interpret

the data and offer conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further study in

Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to determine educators' perspectives of the impact of a school wide PBIS program on the academic outcomes for students in an all-male Grade 6 through 12 urban school for African American young men. The following research question guided the study:

RQ: How did school wide PBIS affect the academic achievement and behavioral outcomes of African American young boys attending an all-male Grade 6-12 urban school?

In this chapter, I provide a description of the research study setting, the demographics of participants, and data collection procedures, followed by evidence of trustworthiness. The results of the data collection and analysis are arranged by themes that emerged from data analysis. A summary completes the chapter.

Setting

I conducted the interview sessions in a quiet room in my home and the participants were also in their homes with few distractions. Originally, I intended to conduct face-to-face interviews. However, to remain in compliance with the social isolation requirements due to Covid19 restrictions, all interviews were conducted over the phone. I was able to make appointments and interview all 10 participants during a 2-week period. All the interviews were free of background noise. The interviews lasted about 35-45 minutes each.

Demographics

Table 1 presents details of the demographic data for the 10 participants. Participants included 10 administrators and educators who were involved in a PBIS program in an urban middle and high school. Four of the participants were men and six were women. Each participant had at least 2 years or more of teaching experiences and 2 years or more experiences with PBIS. The participants ranged in age from 25 to 64 years. Most of the participants were highly qualified African American educators and administrators who earned either a masters' degree or post-masters' degree.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semistructured interviews using an interview guide. Participants were asked to freely answer the interview questions to express their experiences using their own words. All interviews were conducted by this researcher. Participants were reminded at the end of the interviews to email me if they needed to discuss the findings.

The interviews were conducted by me in my home office via telephone with the aid of my apple iPad. The iPad that I used was an electronic recorder with a voice activator feature. I also used a second digital recording device to capture participants' responses to the interview questions. The targeted population of participants for this research study was 10 educators and administrators between the ages of 21 and 65. All participants resided in a large urban center in the Northeast.

Table 1*Participant Demographics*

Participant	Position	Age	Ethnicity	Years in education	Years PBIS	Gender	Education level
P1	Educator	25	African American	2	2	Male	Bachelor's
P2	Educator	36	African American	12	10	Female	Master's
P3	Educator	34	African American	6	6	Male	Master's
P4	Educator	27	African American	6	6	Male	Master's
P5	Administrator	33	European American	8	8	Female	Post master's
P6	Educator	45	African American	10	7	Male	Master's
P7	Administrator	64	African American	40	10	Female	Post master's
P8	Educator	60	African American	30	10	Female	Master's
P9	Educator	33	African American	7	6	Female	Master's
P10	Administrator	36	African American	16	6	Female	Post master's

I began the interviews by describing the purpose of the study, and I went over the consent form. The 10 participants gave verbal consent to participate in the study. I collected demographic data during the first part of the interview and recorded the data on a demographic information sheet. After obtaining all the demographic information, the participants were asked open-ended questions from the interview protocol. I completed the interview protocol while taking notes and recording the interviews, I recorded the interviews using my phone. I also used my iPad as a back-up recording device. The

interviews took between 35 and 45 minutes each. I offered to have the participants look over the transcripts to ensure they were accurate, but they all declined. I also told them I would contact them if I had further questions. Although, I did not have any questions from the participants, I told them I would share the results of the study as soon as they were available.

Data Analysis

I took an inductive approach to analyzing the data, which allowed the themes to emerge from the data (Jebreen, 2012). Jebreen (2012) stated that researchers who use an inductive approach focus on familiarizing themselves with the data instead of testing a theory. I used Colaizzi's (1978) method to conduct the data analysis. Colaizzi recommended that researchers read the transcripts several times in order to digest the content of the information to achieve descriptive statements. I first separated and organized the participants' responses according to the interview questions. Each question and response were read and reread several times, which allowed me to capture the main essence of the transcripts. I reviewed my notes concerning my thoughts, feelings, and ideas that were taken during the interviews and the interview responses. I documented my research in my bracketing diary as well as my reflective diary. I identified significant statements and phrases that were documented during the interviews and the interview responses, which I also recorded to identify and categorize recurring themes found in the interviews. Each descriptive statement was highlighted in orange, green, or yellow. The descriptive statements were grouped into word clusters and categorical themes. I then used an open coding approach to identify and create codes for recurring words and

phrases. The statements were then reorganized and coded into descriptive themes until no new themes emerged.

Participants responses from the interview questions were grouped under the following eight categories: (a) description of PBIS, (b) motivation for implementing PBIS, (c) actions to motivate educators on PBIS, (d) prior strategies used to address inappropriate behavior, (e) impact of PBIS on students' behavior, (f) challenges encountered with implementing PBIS, (g) steps taken to overcome challenges associated with implementing PBIS, and (h) advice and recommendations for implementing PBIS. Passages of text that corresponded to the themes derived from both axial coding and selective coding. Axial coding is met when core themes are broken down during qualitative data analysis. Selective coding is satisfied when a theme from the data is reread, transcribed, selected, and identified. All participants answered all 10 questions. The following steps constitute the Colaizzi's process of data analysis (Shosha, 2012).

Firstly, I read and reread the data several times to receive a sense of the effects of PBIS so that I could transcribe the interviews verbatim. I also took notes on the side such as words, theories, or short phrases, which I then summarized and entered any thoughts or feelings that arose in my reflexive diary.

Secondly, I was able to extract information using significant statements and phrases about what measures were taken to ensure effective implementation of PBIS. I arranged the individual transcriptions of the interviews into one master file with all the interview questions in individual table boxes. Then, I moved all the participants' answers

under each distinct question. I noted their pages and the line numbers. I was then able to find additional phrases and patterns as I highlighted them in the document.

Thirdly, I grouped all the phrases, sentences, or key words and identified what the meanings were in relation to the research and interview questions (e.g., “positive behavior,” “professional development,” “incentives and rewards”). I gave labels to similar phrases throughout the data, which I documented.

Fourthly, I placed similar highlighted color statements into groups from which themes emerged. I assigned codes to these themes to reflect each unique cluster of themes. Then, I reread the interviews of the different participant responses as they related to the themes I found previously.

At the fifth stage, all the analysis and all emergent themes were described thoroughly in descriptive paragraphs based on the effects of PBIS. I then reviewed Table 2 several times and used working themes for each interview question. Then, I reviewed the themes again and twice found similarities between two interview questions. All themes were clearly described in a table and in a series of descriptive paragraphs.

Sixthly, I concluded the final paragraph of Chapter 4 with two or three-sentence description of the phenomenon.

The seventh step was used to validate the findings through a “member checking” technique, which is achieved when the research findings are returned to the participants and the results are discussed (Anney, 2014). The participants were provided with a copy of their transcribed interview via email to ensure that I captured their experiences accurately.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Amankwaa (2016) explained that trustworthiness provides a study with rigor and strength, which is vital to the overall quality of the study. I followed the criteria established in Chapter 3 to assess the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the study. To ensure trustworthiness, I used the actual accounts of the participants and other data sources to enhance the elements of trustworthiness. (Anney, 2014).

Credibility

DeJonckheere and Voughn (2019) stated that credibility in qualitative research represents the accuracy of findings from a study. To enhance the credibility of my research I used transcript reviews and member checks. After the data were analyzed and interpreted, participants were given the opportunity to examine a summary of their transcribed responses for authenticity and feedback. After each interview was transcribed, I emailed a summary of the transcribed responses to all participants to make corrections if necessary and provide feedback. Participants were allowed to communicate any changes via email or phone. All participants agreed with the transcribed responses; no changes were requested. Member checks are strategies used to improve the quality of qualitative data, and they are also the primary elements of credibility (Anney, 2014).

Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research refers to the degree to which findings from a study are transferrable to other situations including times, situations, people, and settings (Mosalanejad et al., 2018) I used an audit trail, to enhance the transferability of

findings from the research. An audit trail describes the processes I took step by step from the start of the research project to the findings (Johnson et al., 2020). The audit trail includes details about why I chose the research design and method, how I recruited the participants, and how I went about collecting, coding, and analyzing the data. I also included copies of interview notes, interview recordings, summaries of each transcript, and information from my reflective journal.

In addition, I used purposeful sampling to recruit the participants who had experienced the implementation of PBIS in an all-boy's urban school. Such sampling enhances transferability of results from a study because it includes participants who can provide rich responses regarding the phenomenon of interest in a study (Widyawan et al., 2020). Purposeful sampling promotes transferability of the findings, for it is a more selective method than are convenience or random sampling (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I selected purposeful sampling because it allowed me the opportunity to recruit participants who have experienced the implementation of PBIS in an all-boys' urban school.

Dependability

Dependability is accomplished when the findings from a study are consistent and could be repeated by future researchers. (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Lemon & Hayes, 2020). I used an audit trail to increase the dependability of results from this study. I described in detail my methodological arrangement of the research design, my role as a researcher, and how I determined my recruitment preferences to allow others to duplicate the study (see Johnson et al., 2020). I also kept track of the collection and analysis phrases of the research in detail. Sharing the results of the study with the participants

before they were published is also a form of member checking which is used to validate the findings (see DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). I also used feedback from my dissertation committee to acknowledge any concerns in the study.

Confirmability

Confirmability is defined as the degree to which the findings of a study can be confirmed or authenticated (Amankwaa, 2016; Anney, 2014). I enhanced the confirmability of my findings from this study with the use of a reflexive journal and an audit trail. I used my reflexive journal to document and enter my notes, my personal thoughts, perceptions and various forms of observation that took place while I collected the data. I also maintained an audit trail of the interview notes, recordings (Amankwaa, 2016; Anney, 2014; Morse, 2015).

I also used an audit trail to enhance the confirmability of the results from this study (Amankwaa, 2016; Morse, 2015). The audit trail included detailed documentation of the methods used to collect data for the study so that another researcher would have details of every step of the way from data collection through analysis (Nyirenda, 2020). The audit trail includes a compilation of all notes collected, recorded and analyzed as well as detailed written descriptions of data collection and analysis stages of the study.

Results

I arranged the results section by topics and themes as presented in Table 2. The overall finding was that PBIS was a positive intervention that resulted in improved behavior from the students. The improved behavior was evidenced by increased

motivation, improved behavior, and decreases in disciplinary actions. A more detailed discussion of the results are presented in the paragraphs that follow.

Definition of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Participants were asked to define school-wide positive behavior. The two primary themes that emerged from the data were PBIS is an evidence-based intervention and that PBIS is predicated upon the use of rewards and incentives. Participants generally indicated that PBIS can be used to manage students' behavior by using rewards and incentives to encourage good behavior. Comments from Participant 8 captures the essence of how participants defined PBIS. According to Participant 8,

Schoolwide PBIS as I know it is an evidence-based rewards preventive process framework. It is a way to help manage behavior in the classroom. It keeps students engaged, keeps them focused and excited, and they buy into the lessons especially when they know that they will receive rewards for positive outcomes and participation. In this day and age when it is much of a struggle to keep students engaged and locked into a lesson, any carrot we can dangle that promotes learning will be beneficial to the classroom environment.

Definition of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports System

Several participants commented on the use of PBIS as a tool that could be used to improve student behavior. Participant 3 described how he used principles of PBIS to give students incentives for positive behavior. Participant 3 stated: "I feel like kids love praise and they will actually seek it. They want your attention negatively or positively. It is easier on you; it is better for their growth." Participant 4 also described how they use

Table 2*Themes Based on Interview Questions*

Major topics	Major themes	Subthemes
Description of PBIS system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preventive evidence-based intervention/reward system for good behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentives and awards Electronic points
Motivation for implementing PBIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage positive behavior Curb negative behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage students Student engagement Promote good behavior
Actions taken to motivate educators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School meetings Training sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Professional development
Prior strategies used for discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of students from the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students sent to reset Students were suspended
Impact of PBIS on student behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved behavior in students Increased attendance Decreased punitive measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students came to school motivated to learn
Challenges encountered with implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hesitation to comply Lack of understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not sure it would work Needed better education on PBIS
Steps taken to overcome challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team building strategies Training sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team meetings Professional development
Advice and recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove negativity Create endless positive outcomes Offer competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great way to actively engage students Teachers can then teach, students can learn Opportunities to redeem themselves

rewards and incentives to manage his classroom style. Participant 4 stated that rewards raise “their competitive edge; when one student gets a reward, it is an incentive for the other students to do the right thing.” Participant 5 described the rewards and incentives as “like having a carrot to dangle in front of our young men to keep them motivated and do the right thing.”

Motivation for Implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Participants were asked what motivated the school to implement PBIS. The primary theme to emerge was that PBIS was implemented in order to manage students’ behavior. The following comments from the school administrator Participant 10 captures the general motivation for the decision to implement:

As an administrator my staff and I decided to research to find out what can help to promote good behavior, so we researched PBIS. We tried everything in the past, so we went with PBIS so that families and students can benefit from this. We decided as a team to implement PBIS to set up the tone for good behavior as students came into our building; we let them know what our rules and expectations are.

Several participants indicated that PBIS is a deterrent to negative behavior.” Participant 4 communicated that the school implemented PBIS because there was a need to reward students who followed the rules and showed improvements in behavior. Another participant discussed that PBIS was implemented as a way to “curb negative behaviors as well as a means to reward students who displayed good behavior. Participant 8, in emphasizing the importance of good behavior noted “if behavior is under control, then we can get our young men to settle down and learn something.

Action Taken to Motivate Educators

Participants were asked to express to discuss the steps that were taken to prepare the school for implementing PBIS. The major themes related to this question revealed that school meetings and training sessions were held to prepare the school for implementing PBIS. Participants detailed some of the evidence-based materials used for the trainings, discussions, and planning meetings.

Participant 6 talked about the research and professional development that went into the PBIS training. He stated that his takeaway was that when PBIS is implemented with fidelity, schools can become safer and behavior can improve. Another participant stated

We received data and statistics from other schools which revealed that in order for PBIS to be effective PBIS has to be taught like any other subject like reading or math. Another relevant aspect at the implementation phase was the importance of everyone being on the same page and having live minds.”

Participant 8 and Participant 9 were concise in their description in how the teams “came together as a school to discuss the pros and the cons of PBIS before the roll out.”

Participant 10 talked about initial administrative meetings before PBIS was formalized. According to Participant 10, “We met as a group of administrators and decided that we should invite staff and educators into the discussions, and so we implemented additional professional development opportunities.”

Prior Strategies Used for Inappropriate Behavior

Participants were asked about the previous behavior modification measures used before the implementation of school wide PBIS. The primary themes that emerged were students were kicked out of the classroom, they were given detention, they would go through the “reset process,” or they were suspended depending on the level of the inappropriate behavior. Most respondents stated that prior to PBIS, students were first sent out of the classroom if, for example, they interrupted the teacher by name calling, swearing, or using discriminatory language like the “N word.” This sentiment was best described by Participant 8 who stated, “In order to discipline students, they had to be removed from the classroom. They would get detention and if necessary, depending on the infraction level, they would get in-house suspension.” Participant 5 also said that students were removed from the classroom as a means of discipline but added there were other forms of discipline for less serious infractions such as students not submitting any homework, coming late to class, and for inappropriate name calling which can lead to verbal altercations. According to Participant 3, for the less serious infractions other actions were taken such as “verbal warning, parents were called, then a parent meeting. Sometimes we would have detention, students would have to spend some time with their educators during their lunch break or after school meditating on ways to improve their behavior.” In cases of major infractions where a physical confrontation occur educator Participant 3 indicated that students would get a couple of days of suspension. One participant indicated that some of the biggest problems were resolved using the reset method. Participant 7 explained that the “reset method” involves reviewing r expectations

of behavior to remind students of what they are supposed to be doing according to set school policies and procedures. Participant 7 also stated:

Students were not only sent to detention or dismissed from the classroom; students were sometimes placed in reset. Reset is a way to pause and examine the behavior, however this is a negative approach. Students were not allowed to go on trips, or to parties, and all perks were taken away.

Participant 10 further clarified the used of reset as the situation.

When scholars are not behaving at their level of expectation, we take them back to reset; scholars are under strict watch to do their work and remain focus on their academic subjects; we offer them opportunities to correct their behaviors and if these expectations are violated there are consequences such as in-house suspensions or out of school suspensions.

Impact of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports on Students' Behavior

Participants were asked to explain how the implementation of PBIS impacted student behavior. The two major themes that derived from the data were improved behavior and that PBIS also had a positive impact on the administrators. Participant 2 commented on how PBIS had resulted in improved behavior of the students. According to this participant:

There has been less in school suspensions as well as out of school suspensions. Student were focused on gaining positive points. They do not play fight, nor do they cut their classes because they would lose points and were not rewarded with incentives, trips, or awards.

Participant 3 remarked that “the students’ behavior had improved, and they were motivated to come to school regularly. The students were willing to learn because they felt they were being rewarded for their efforts.” Participant 3 also noted more positive changes in the behavior of the young men he commented specifically on how the boys were able to develop self-control and pay attention to the teachers. Participant 3 in addition, gave the following comments related to the students’ change in behavior after PBIS was implemented. “We look at behavior all the time and new ways to curb negative behaviors. Behavior is very important, and since PBIS was implemented, behavior is under control and we can get our young men to settle down and learn.” Participant 5 also commented on the changes in student behavior. According to Participant 5:

The PBIS model has worked for many young men. As a whole I have seen improved behavior; the young men became a lot more manageable than they were at the beginning of the school year. Students were made aware of the classroom expectations. They knew that they must behave or there will be consequences for misbehavior. As a result, their behaviors have greatly improved.

Participant 9 further emphasized the following regarding how PBIS impacted student behaviors. This participant stated that he: “explained to the students that if they did the right thing, they would be rewarded, and as a result, students paid better attention, their grades increased, and their attendance improved.” Participant 9 became excited and decided on her own accord to take a look at the raw data representing attendance. She discovered that the numbers showed an increase in the attendance of the students.

Participants 6 and 7 were both administrators who indicated that the implementation of PBIS resulted in them taking a more positive framework to correcting student behavior compared to the approaches of punishment of the past. Participant 6 gave the following comments: “PBIS made our school proactive in approaching inappropriate behavior rather than reactive. As a result, the school was able to maintain good behavior most of the time.

Participant 7 reflected on the “adverse ways” they used to discipline students. He indicated that “educators found that the more we used adverse ways to discipline, the worse the behavior became.” According to Participant 7, PBIS with its incentives and rewards was a much more positive than punitive forms of discipline, and as a result “students’ grades increased as well as their behavior.”

Challenges Encountered with Implementation

Participants were asked to discuss the challenges they experienced during the implementation of PBIS. The major themes that developed from the data were hesitation to comply and lack of understanding. Initially the educators were hesitant to implement PBIS and they were not coming together because they thought PBIS was just another new program, and they were not sure if this program would work this time. Participant 2 noted his lack of cooperation at first: “Educators did not want to cooperate because they did not take the time to understand the program. They thought it was just giving students rewards to make them work.” Participant 4 talked about his hesitancy in complying with PBIS and his resistance to change. He spoke of how the challenge of learning a new system contributed to his initial reluctance to change. According to Participant 4:

At the beginning of the implementing stage of PBIS we were challenged to learn another new electronic points system called Live Schools. This is an online rewards system which includes an incentive component to gain positive points. Students would receive points, for being prepared for class, for being present in the classroom, for doing homework assignments and for both small and large academic improvements. I was reluctant to use the point system at first for PBIS because I felt it was just more work to do. However, after learning the system I was able to use that system effectively for the young men.

Participant 5 added comments regarding her reluctance to comply. She also spoke of other challenges that she encountered. This participant stated the following when faced with implementing PBIS:

I felt overwhelmed and I did not want to cooperate at the beginning of the school year. Based on my perception I felt that we were forced to learn a new system, called “Live Schools” as well as implement PBIS. Another challenge I encountered was that the students lack of fully understanding the reason why they had to earn the points for PBIS. Participant 6 spoke of the challenges encountered when implementing PBIS. This participant stated: “As an administrator my challenge was bringing educators up to par with the new ideas. Some educators became too complacent, and they did not want to change.” Participant 7 also commented that “educators were not using the electronic point system because of a lack of understanding.

Some participants indicated that part of the lack of compliance was due to the fact that teachers did not buy into PBIS because they did not participate in the initial planning of the implementation. According to Participant 7,

As an administrator I feel that we should have given the teachers an opportunity to be part of the roll out for PBIS instead of just giving them a new system and asking them to do it our way. We suggest that educators should be part of the initial implementation plan of PBIS.

Steps Taken to Overcome Challenges

Participants were asked what steps were taken to deal with the challenges of implementing PBIS. The themes that emerged were team building strategies, training sessions, and professional development. Participants mostly agreed that the obstacles of PBIS implementation can be overcome with team building experiences as well as providing professional development opportunities. Participant 2 explained that both educators and administrators came together as one with the sole purpose to find ways to implement PBIS. We did research on PBIS. Articles were read and discussed, and we utilized the data, for successful strategies other schools used in the past.

Participant 9 contributed commented on how the challenges to implementing PBIS was resolved. This participant discussed how through meetings and professional development workshops to come together to discuss best practices for implementing PBIS. Participant 4 further added to the discussion of how the challenges of PBIS were addressed in the following statement:

We had power point presentations and we discussed the history of PBIS. During our professional development sessions, we focused on different incentive program that other schools used in the past that worked. We discovered that individual rewards such as school bucks, which is a school currency used to purchase school supplies and snacks from the school store became a motivational tool for students.

Participant 5 commented “As an administrator we realized that any electronic system which will be utilized as part of PBIS implementation; must first be introduced to the educators and training time should be included. P8 advised that for implementation to be successful educators must be given time to learn electronic systems if any and know how it works before implementing PBIS.

Advice and Recommendations to Others for Implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Participants were asked to talk about what advice and recommendations they would give to other schools about PBIS. The following themes surfaced from the data. PBIS can remove negativity from students as well as provide positive outcomes. Participants agreed to share some of their experiences and best practices derived from school wide PBIS.

Participant 2 highlighted her recommendations. She pinpointed that PBIS brings the team together to really think of the needs of the students. She advocates for a common goal and the utilization of a variety of ways to give incentives and rewards. Participant 3 expressed the following:

I would recommend PBIS to any school that is looking for a remedy to fix behavior, improve attendance and grades. PBIS is a different way to interact with students and to focus on the positive areas, such as recognizing the students who are consistently doing well, but it also gives the educators a chance to reach out to students who are struggling”.

Participant 4 gave detailed information.

I highly recommend PBIS because this is a way to withdraw the negatives and create endless positive outcomes. If these young men are given the support and initiative to participate in a program like PBIS; they show growth and educators are able to see the joy in their faces instead of anger and frustration when they are channeled in the wrong direction. With positive incentives which are part of PBIS they have the opportunity to improve and grab something really great while becoming mature men of the 21st century. Participant 7 stated my recommendation is that use PBIS in order to encourage black boys to learn. Young men need to be pushed in the right direction. PBIS is a positive reinforcement of what teachers are always trying to do which is, to educate scholars. PBIS has bought a lot of stability and positive interaction among our young men.

Participant 9 added the following comments regarding the use of PBIS to address behavior. H Discussed how PBIS could be used to encourage competition in a healthy way. Participant 9 discuss stated, “I was also surprised that this program PBIS has made my low achieving students worked harder and adjusted their attitudes towards learning.” Participant 9 further indicated the following:

PBIS can serve as a motivator and it allows every-body who shows resilience to be part of something so I will not hesitate to recommend PBIS. In addition, PBIS rewards those scholars who might not always get rewarded for doing the right thing. It also helps the scholars that may often be off task to have an opportunity to get on task and be rewarded for doing something good.

In conclusion Participant 10 simply stated our young men have grown with the implementation of PBIS. This program PBIS has opened doors and windows for our young men to explore and develop good habits for success. Participant 10 concluded his advice for implementing PBIS with the following comments:

I recommend PBIS because it gives students an opportunity to redeem themselves. Students who are used to get into trouble for negative behavior can now be recognized for their good behavior; with PBIS one notices that students are more inclined to change their behavior and to do well. PBIS is wonderful.

Composite Description

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to address the following research question: How did school wide PBIS examine the behavior and academic achievement of African American students in an all-male grade 6 through 12 urban school? Participants reported that in the past the school tried numerous ways to bring about positive behavior, but their efforts attracted more negative outcomes. Participants described PBIS as a preventive evidence-based intervention and reward system that can influence good behavior and produce positive outcomes.

Many harsh measures had been used in the past such as corporal punishment, but this was to no avail. Students were suspended or expelled but behavior did not change. Students were not able to learn, and teachers were not able to teach effectively. Upon research and investigation, the administrators discovered PBIS as a possible solution for addressing inappropriate school behavior. Participants highlighted that the implementation of PBIS revealed that behavior can be changed using clear expectations. PBIS offers rules and regulations that outline what positive behavior looks like. Participants shared that when the students' behavior was properly managed, the students become active and engaged in learning. In addition, participants indicated that when positive behavior was reinforced with incentives, the students' positive behavior was repeated. This way PBIS promote good behavior.

Participants discussed the actions that were taken to get educators motivated and involved in the implementation stages of PBIS. They clearly agreed that educators needed to be prepared from the initial stages of implementation. Administrators expressed the importance of making staff member a core part of the implementation lay out. Participants also felt that educators needed to be trained and a time set aside for frequent meetings to discuss research and for professional development.

Participants shared that prior to the implementation of PBIS, a number of disciplinary methods had been used to address in appropriate school behavior. Students were removed out of the classroom for punitive reason such as calling out, and for speaking out of their turn. In addition, students were sent on lunch detention where they would not congregate and socialize with the school community. For infractions such as

physical or verbal confrontation, students were sent on reset. During reset their privileges were taken away from them, no fun activities, no trips, and no movie outings. For major violations students experienced in house or out of school suspension depending on the severity of the infraction.

Participants indicated that PBIS did not only changed students' behavior administrators benefited from the impact. Educators were able to teach their students because the students were focused on the classroom. There was also an increase in attendance, students came to school on a regular basis, and they were motivated to learn. There was also a decreased in punitive measures that were not effective.

Participants spoke about the successes of PBIS as well as the setbacks. Participants expressed the challenges and frustrations they encountered during the implementation stage. Some educators showed resistance to change, and they were not cooperative initially, however when they witnessed the positive change in behavior of the students they came on board. These educators had their doubts about the program because they did not understand the concept of PBIS. Some participants felt that PBIS was just another program that did not work. The following steps are recommended to overcome these challenges, time must be allocated for team building strategies, followed by intense PBIS training, grade team meetings and professional development sessions.

Advice and recommendation from the participants inform that any school can believe in the system of PBIS because this program removes negativity, and it creates many positive outcomes. In addition, PBIS offers room for competition and allows young men to reach their academic potential. Students are actively involved, and educators are

better able to impart knowledge in the minds of young men. For the students who are not able to spark and ignite a flame of brilliance PBIS is an equalizer for all.

All participants gave concise information that demonstrated that PBIS was a successful program in an all-boys' public school in a large urban area in the Northeast, though not without its challenges, especially in the early stages of implementation. All interview questions were answered universally by the participants, who presented a complete picture of how school wide PBIS functioned in their school. Further, having the perspective of both classroom teachers and administrators broadened the information provided by these educators.

Summary

Chapter 4 reiterated the purpose of the study and the research questions. It also contained the setting, demographics of the participants, how data were collected and analyzed, and the results in the form of themes integrated with the interview questions that gave rise to the themes. The educators provided me with down-to-earth, in depth answers about a system to which they dedicated much time and effort with positive results. These results gave me rich material to develop the interpretations of the data and recommendations to make for future research that are, presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this qualitative single case study, I examined the impact of PBIS on students' behavior and academic achievement. The purpose of this study was to determine educators' perspectives of the impact of a school-wide PBIS program on the academic outcomes for students in an all-male Grade 6 through 12 urban school for African American young men. The key findings indicated that PBIS is a tool that uses incentives and rewards to improve student behavior. Results also revealed that whenever possible all school educators and administrators should be included in the implementation stage. Doing so promotes a better understanding of PBIS and buy-in to the success of the implementation. Findings from this study revealed eight major themes regarding the effects of PBIS on student performance and behavior. The eight themes identified from the results were: (a) preventive evidence-based intervention/reward system for good behavior; (b) encourages positive behavior curb negative behavior; (c) school meetings and training sessions; (d) removal of students from the classroom; (e) improved behavior in students, increased attendance, decreased punitive measures; (f) hesitation to comply and lack of understanding; (g) team building strategies, training sessions; and (h) remove negativity, create endless positive outcomes, and offer competition.

Interpretation of Findings

Definition of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

At the beginning of each interview participants were asked to define PBIS. The two themes that emerged were that PBIS is a preventive, evidence-based intervention and a reward system for good behavior. The two themes pertaining to the definition of PBIS

were consistent with descriptions and definitions of PBIS presented in the literature. For instance, the New York City Department of Education's (2019) manual on citywide behavioral expectations reported that to enhance the learning environment and provide a conducive atmosphere for learning, schools should administer positive guidelines that impact knowledge in students about their social, emotional, and behavioral well-being (e.g., Biliias et al., 2017; Horner & Macaya, 2018; Hunter et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2018).

Educators and administrators both agreed that misbehavior and discipline problems take up a great deal of instructional time. Närhi et al. (2017) stated that disruptive behavior poses a challenge to learning and negatively affects both academic outcomes on the part of students and causes job-related stress on educators. The findings from my study confirmed that PBIS was an effective method for managing the boys' behavior in the classroom. Further examination also revealed that PBIS kept the students engaged and willing to learn.

Motivation for Implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Participants were asked what motivated them to implement PBIS. The two themes which emerged were that PBIS is able to encourage positive behavior and curb negative behavior. The two themes concerning the motivation for implementing PBIS were consistent with the descriptions presented in the literature. For example: The Secretary of Education King (2016) advocated for supportive schools that would lower punitive discipline such as expulsion and suspensions. Instead, the recommendation was to address all students' emotional, social, and behavioral needs. Fergus and Bradshaw (2018) highlighted that there have been noticeable changes in school discipline policies at

the state and federal levels. City and state discipline codes and regulations are gearing towards more positive interventions such as PBIS.

Fergus and Bradshaw (2018) claimed that there have been recent shifts in school discipline policies on the state and federal level. City and state discipline codes and regulations are moving toward more positive interventions such as PBIS. Intensive discipline methods such as zero tolerance are described as severe punishment. Findings from my study are in alignment with the revelation that young men of color are more prone to exhibit good behavior when the principles of PBIS are used to correct behavior rather than punitive measures such as expulsions and suspensions.

Actions Taken to Motivate Educators

To emphasize the importance of teachers' attitudes and motivation towards the implementation of PBIS, participants were asked what actions were necessary to motivate them during the time of implementation. The two themes that emerged from this study used to motivate educators were training sessions and school meetings. These themes were consistent with findings from Biliias et al. (2017). Professional development and training are the two major components of PBIS. School meetings and training sessions are integral parts of the school's implementation process (Ennis et al., 2018; Feuerborn et al, 2016). My study confirmed that to implement PBIS with fidelity and to motivate educators and administrators, they needed to be trained thoroughly. Participants reported that during their training sessions, they researched PBIS and used data and information from other schools to implement it.

During PBIS implementation, schools became safer, and students' behavior did improve. My study also confirmed the first step of PBIS implementation known as prediction. During this phase of implementation, administrators decide on where students are most likely to fail and then analyze the failure to anticipate the questions they need to ask in an effort to encourage implementation success (Horner & Macaya, 2018).

Participants in my study came together as a school to decide who should be invited into the program.

Prior Strategies Used for Inappropriate Behavior

Participants were asked what discipline methods were used for inappropriate behaviors. The two themes that surfaced were the removal of students from the classroom and students sent on detention, reset, or suspended. The two themes pertaining to previous strategies used to correct behavior in this study were consistent with my findings reported in the literature review. Researchers have referred to this type of discipline as zero tolerance, which is a harsh discipline method that is often ineffective and does not result in any positive behavioral changes (Fergus & Bradshaw, 2018; Kincaid et al., 2016). Many of the punishments administered by the schools such as corporal punishment, suspensions, and expulsions can result in a pathway to the juvenile justice system (Mallett, 2016a). The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (2016) confirmed that because of crude school disciplinary qualities, students, especially those of color and students with disabilities, were disproportionately disassociated from school and transferred to the juvenile justice system.

My study confirmed that students were punished for acts such as calling out in the classroom or for talking out of their turn. As discipline measures, students were kicked out of the classroom, sent on lunch detention, or experienced the reset process. During this process, they would be denied privileges to go on trips, and they were not allowed to participate in any fun activities. Depending on the level of the infraction, students would even be suspended (King, 2016).

My study confirmed that suspensions do not work. Students were suspended, but their behaviors did not change. Participants remarked that suspensions decreased only when good behavior brings about positive returns. Allen and Steed (2016) and Childs et al. (2016), PBIS researchers, conducted studies regarding the adverse impact of school discipline. They discovered that suspensions were being used as a means to avoid the real problem. CRDC (2016) also recommended that schools resort to proactive and innovative ways to address disruptive behavior such as PBIS, conflict resolution, and social cognitive interventions.

Impact of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports on Students' Behavior

Participants were asked to share their experience with the impact of PBIS on the students' behavior. The following themes that emerged were improved behavior in students, increased attendance, and a decrease in punitive measures. The three themes regarding the effect of PBIS on students' behavior were improved behavior, increased attendance, and a decrease in punitive measures, which were consistent with the results of studies from Masser et al. (2015). These researchers shared that the implementation of positive interventions resulted in fewer suspensions compared with the previous year.

Most participants felt that PBIS had a positive impact on everyone: the students, the educators, and the administrators. My study confirmed that students came to class with the desire to learn because they felt that they were going to be rewarded for good behavior. Administrators felt that PBIS gave the students avenues to redeem themselves. Students who were always seeking negative attention saw PBIS as an opportunity to do something good so that they too can be recognized.

Hunter et al. (2017) concluded that the consistency of PBIS when applied to the physical classroom, using the procedures and rules, the timing and the transition, helped first year teachers to identify, remember, and implement PBIS research-based strategies. These strategies improved academic and behavioral outcomes. Several participants from my study confirmed that the implementation of PBIS brought the students' behavior under control and that when young black men settle down, they do learn, and they do come to school.

Ramirez and Rosario (2018) agreed that the implementation of PBIS improved student behavior in class. Teachers became happier and were able to teach and encourage their students. Students displayed less violent acts and attendance improved as well as academics. Teachers in my study revealed that they developed a better relationship with their students. Educators were able to teach while their students were willing to learn. Ramirez and Rosario (2018) explained that the implementation of PBIS has proven to improve students' behavior in class, for teachers became happier and were better able to teach and reach out to their students. Students' attendance did improve as well as academics. My study also confirmed that there was an increase in attendance as students

came more regularly to school and their grades improved. Barrett and Harris (2018) researched the benefits of PBIS using a data-driven electronic system to maximize the effects of PBIS, known as the Kickboard System. The results indicated a reduction in the number of days suspended by 52%.

Challenges Encountered with Implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

During the interview sessions, participants were asked about any difficulties they experienced during the implementation of PBIS. The two themes that were highlighted were hesitation to comply and lack of understanding. The two themes regarding hesitation to comply and a lack of understanding were consistent with the findings in the review of the literature. Feuerborn et al. (2016) revealed that teachers in their study expressed fear of the unknown, feelings of inadequate knowledge, and anticipation of possible failure.

My study also confirmed the notion that some of the participants saw PBIS as just another program, and they were not sure if it would be effective. Experts in the field of PBIS urge schools to implement procedures that effectively address student misbehavior (Horner et al., 2015; Sugai et al., 2015). Participants in this study were concerned that the students would not fully understand the reason they had to participate and earn points to learn. Freeman et al. (2016) advocated on behalf of both the students and the educators, encouraging the need for students as well as staff members, educators, and administrators to know about the kind of prosocial actions that lead to positive reinforcements in

schools. Some educators in this study expressed their lack of compliance was due to the way they felt, which was not being part of the rollout initially.

Steps Taken to Overcome Challenges

Educators were asked about the best way to overcome challenges of PBIS implementation. Two major themes were derived from the interviews: team building strategies and training sessions. The two themes pertaining to ways to overcome these challenges were consistent with methods used in the literature to resolve these issues. For example, Evanovich and Scott (2016) postulated that for PBIS to be implemented effectively, teachers must work collaboratively as a team.

The best ways to solve the challenges of implementing PBIS must include team building strategies, training sessions, and professional development. In my study, educators and administrators came together with the primary purpose to find the best practices for implementing PBIS. Rosario and Ramirez (2018) discovered that educators with a positive attitude towards PBIS were able to foster better student teacher relationships. Biliias et al. (2017) explained that during the implementation stage, administrators and teachers received training on social skills development. Administrators found that if any electronic system has to be introduced as part of PBIS implementation; the system must first be introduced to the educators, and training time should be allocated. Participants highlighted that for implementation to be successful, educators must be given the time to learn electronic systems and know how they work before the implementation of PBIS.

Advice and Recommendations

Participants were asked to share their advice and recommendations about PBIS. The themes that emerged from this study were that PBIS can remove negativity, create endless positive outcomes, and offer competition. The themes relating to participants' advice and recommendations were consistent with the descriptions of other researchers in the field (Allen & Steed, 2016; Bear et al., 2016; Childs et al., 2016; Närhi et al., 2015).

PBIS can remove negative outcomes such as school dropout rates; juvenile delinquencies, and juvenile incarceration (Colcord et al; 2016; Freeman et al., 2016 Närhi et al., 2015). PBIS can be used as an alternative to adverse school discipline outcomes such as suspensions and expulsions as well as to inhibit negative school behaviors (Bottiani & Bradshaw, 2017). All participants agreed and shared that PBIS can remove negativity from students' behavior, and behavior can be replaced with numerous positive outcomes. Several participants agreed that to curb such behavior, PBIS would be the way to go. Homer et al. (2015) recommended that schools implement procedures that effectively address student behaviors. Noltemeyer et.al. (2019) agreed that when PBIS is implemented in African American schools, there is improved classroom behaviors. My study confirmed the importance of knowing the expectations. Participant 5 explained, "PBIS will offer them discipline as well as ways to self-regulate; they will also be able to 'know what the expectations are.'" Ennis et al. (2018) reiterated that teaching school expectations is a primary component of school wide PBIS. Participant 7 revealed, "We were looking for an attitude change in education, self and in the community." Närhi,

Kiiski, and Savolainen (2017) all agreed that disruption in the learning process causes a challenge and negatively impacts academic achievement.

Participants in my study strongly recommended that in future research, electronic training associated with the implementation of PBIS should be initiated before the rollout of the PBIS program. Participants were introduced to the Live School electronic program the same time the PBIS program was being implemented. Participants felt that they were forced to learn another new program during the implementation stage of PBIS. For PBIS to work effectively, teachers must work collaboratively as a team; otherwise, teachers would likely have negative attitudes (Evanovich & Scott, 2016).

Most of my participants in this study admitted that PBIS can be used to improve behavior. My study confirmed that during the implementation stage of PBIS, participants received professional development workshops. The present study confirmed the benefits of PBIS using an electronic point system that offers competition. Students who were performing at low grades in mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies showed more favorable improvements using PBIS program when compared to non-participating high performing schools.

Theoretical Framework and Finding Interpretations

The theoretical framework that guided this study was ABA. This theory addresses the process of a systematically applying interventions based upon the principles of the learning theory to improve socially significant behaviors to a meaningful degree and to demonstrate that the interventions employed are responsible for the improvement in behavior (Collier-Meek et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2017). Applied behavioral analysis

can be used for students and patient with disabilities, social work, and medicine, specifically for students and patients with disabilities such as autism and behavioral problems (e.g., Albright et al., 2016; Collier-Meek et al., 2017; Finn & Watson 2017). Malott et al. (1995) confirmed that ABA may be used to either decrease or increase any behavior. It is used for behavioral interventions, consultation, and assessments in the school setting (Zoder et al., 2017). Smith (2013) described the principles of ABA regarding three stages of disruptive classroom behavior: the antecedent, the behavior and the consequences of classroom behavior. Participants in this study shared that the theory of ABA was applied using PBIS incentives and rewards. Students were focused on the lesson being taught because they knew that they would be rewarded for good behavior. Students' frustrations are diminished, and students remained in class and were able to learn. The theory of ABA has a history of being used by many behavioral analysis researchers in the past and it is currently being used (Baer et al., 1968; Collier-Meek et al., 2017; Noltemeyer et al., 2015).

The findings of this study are consistent with the findings that there were changes in behavior of the young men after the implementation of PBIS. Their attendance did improve, and they received better grades. Noltemeyer et al. (2019) confirmed that when PBIS is implemented with high levels of fidelity, the results indicate that there are positive student outcomes, such as improved classroom behaviors as well as increased grades. When ABA is applied, the principles of the learning theory can improve socially significant behaviors by a degree that can reveal that the interventions warrant the improvement in behavior (Sanetti & Fallan, 2017; Zoder et al., 2017). Participants

described events and activities used during the implementation process. Students felt that they were being compensated for doing their work, so they came to school. Educators felt that if they did the right thing, that it was all right to be compensated.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study was the small sample size; only 10 participants made up the total sample. The 10 participants who volunteered for the study ranged in age 25 – 64 and were all educators and administrators who taught in an all boys' school. The individual responses and descriptions represents the experiences and the perceptions on those involved in this study and may not be representative of the general population. Therefore, this small sample limits the transferability of the results.

Another major limitation of the study was the research design. This single case study addressed the implementation of school wide PBIS in an all-boys school of African American males in grades 6 through 12. The sample population did not represent all African Americans, nor did it represent all grades. As a result, findings from this study may not be transferable to other racial/ethnic populations. The results do not generalize to the other grades. The results from a single school may not generalize to other schools of African American students in different 6 – 12 single gender schools.

The third limitation was that of gender as it relates to the study. This study addressed the implementation of school wide PBIS in an all-boys school of African American males in grades 6 through 112. Therefore, the results of this study may not be transferable to young women.

Due to my personal and professional experiences, researchers' bias was acknowledged as a potential limitation of the study. To control my bias, I was aware of when it arose and was able to remain objective. I used my reflexive diary to record my personal assumptions and pre-conceptions regarding my biases. I was aware of the impact those biases may have on my data collection and data analysis. A reflexive diary was used as a self-assessment measure to identify and suspend any prior or existing knowledge about school wide PBIS (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

Recommendations for Future Research

I recommend continued research in the area of behavioral changes of young women who have benefited from the implementation of PBIS. While there is a tremendous amount of information regarding PBIS, there is limited research about PBIS on African American young men in single gender schools. I would also recommend the implementation of PBIS at the elementary school level from the students' perspectives, ranging from ages 10 through 13, preadolescents. I would also recommend similar qualitative case studies because this method allows participants to give rich detailed descriptions of their experiences.

Future research could focus on the impact of PBIS in a mixed gender urban school. Such a study may contribute to a more generalized of the effects of PBIS of both genders, male and female. Another potential area for future research based on the literature review would be the impact of PBIS on the parents of the scholars whose behaviors have changed due to PBIS. Parent were not part of my study. The insights and

behavioral observation of their sons can contribute to the benefits of PBIS as well as innovative ways to improve behaviors in the classroom for young men.

Implications

Classrooms with fewer disruptions and with a positive social climate encourage students to be more active in school events and less likely to engage in disruptive behaviors (Colcord et al., 2016; Palinkas, 2015). The present study has implications for positive student outcomes due to success with school wide PBIS. The results from this research demonstrates evidenced-based support on how positive disciplinary and reward programs as alternatives to the harsh disciplinary policies and practices can be used to address and improve disruptive behavior in the classroom.

Implications for Positive Social Change

The implication of this study for positive social change includes evidence-based strategies and procedures that can provide alternatives to harsh disciplinary methods that have not worked in the past decades. My study confirmed that behavior can change if directed in the right way. PBIS offers a wealth of ideas and information discussed by participants. An implication for social change would be an increase of knowledge and understanding of the effects of PBIS. Information from this study could improve understanding of PBIS among individuals. PBIS offers individuals a different way to encourage positive outcomes in the lives of young men. Health providers, social workers, counselors, and educators as well as administrators and therapists can also benefit from the results of this study. PBIS can be used as a deterrent to incarceration and to avoid the

pipeline which can lead to juvenile detention. This study confirmed that behavior can be changed for young men in the future.

Implications for Professional Practice

To provide a safe and supportive school environment that truly accommodates appropriate demeanor for learning and academic excellence, educators must first create a positive school climate, which can be achieved by preventing problematic outcomes before they occur (Bottiani & Bradshaw, 2017). The results from this study confirmed that a positive school climate afforded by the use of school wide PBIS can decrease negative school behavior and the use of punitive disciplinary practice, which in turn can lead to positive outcomes such as improved behavior, increased school attendance, and strong motivation to learn. .

Theoretical Implications

My study is based upon ABA. This theory pertains to the principles of the learning theory to improve socially significant behaviors to an appropriate degree and to demonstrate that the outcome is responsible for the improvement in behavior (Collier-Meek et al., 2017). The results of this study confirmed that PBIS is a program used to promote and inculcate behavior that is learned and re-enforced through token rewards and incentives. Participants noted that after the implementation of PBIS, the young men came to school, they were no longer kicked out of the classroom, their behavior improved, they listened, they wanted to learn, and their attendance and their grades increased. Applied behavioral analysis was the appropriate theory for this study. The young men did change their behavior. Furman and Lepper (2018) defined ABA as the scientific study of

behavior change, with the use of the principles of behavior, to evoke or extract a targeted behavioral change.

Conclusions

This study focused on the effects of PBIS in a single gender school of African American male student's grades 6 through 12. The perspectives of educators and administrators were discussed and interpreted. There is evidence to support that PBIS has a positive effect on behavior, however, due to the limitations of this study, the magnitude of the impact of PBIS on classroom behavior awaits further research. Educators continue to deal with inappropriate behaviors in and out of classrooms. They are often seeking new ways and means to avoid disruptive learning environments. For effective learning to take place, scholars need to feel safe and motivated to remain focused on the lesson being taught. Educators need to be equipped with the tools and skills to create, innovate, and explore other options available to teach students social skills that will ensure life-long success.

Administrators are called upon to adequately provide professional development opportunities to assist educators lacking behavior management. It is essential for educators to explore positive and proactive behavior models such as PBIS. Educating young men of color is indeed a daunting task. Young men are very easily distracted, and they love to have fun. PBIS serves as a series of games and challenges in which they can interact and achieve positive returns. Expectations are clear and the rewards serve as immediate gratification. PBIS offers young men an alternative to incarceration. Young

men can become ambassadors of discipline for future generations if and when they are led in the right direction.

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Appendix: Interview Questions

1. How would you describe School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (school wide PBIS)?
2. What prompted your school to implement school wide PBIS?
3. What steps did the school take to prepare educators and administrators? for the implementation of school wide PBIS?
4. Prior to implementing school wide PBIS, what behavior modification strategies did your school utilize to address inappropriate student behavior?
5. How has the implementation of PBIS affected students' behavior?
6. What challenges were encountered during the implementing process of school wide PBIS?
7. What actions were taken to overcome those challenges?
8. How has the implementation of school wide PBIS affected disciplinary actions such as office referrals, detentions, in school suspensions and out of school suspensions placement.
9. Have you noticed any changes in students' attendance since the implementation of school-wide PBIS?
10. What advice would you give to another school that wants to implement school wide PBIS for behavior improvement?