

2023

Early Childhood Teachers' Perspectives of Being a PBIS Coach

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Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Tiesha L. Allen-Vanover

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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2023

Abstract

Early Childhood Teachers' Perspectives of Being a PBIS Coach

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EDS, Albany State University, 2015

MS, Albany State University 2005

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

November 2023

Abstract

School districts across the United States have seen an increase in the number of students who need behavioral support. The problem is that early childhood teachers who serve as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) coaches have challenges implementing the PBIS framework because of lack of buy in and resources such as time and funding. This basic qualitative study was conducted to explore early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach and their experiences with implementation within the school. The conceptual framework used for this study was implementation science. The research questions for this qualitative study focused on the perspectives of the teachers and their experiences with PBIS implementation. Semi-structured interviews were used as a way to collect the data from 10 participants who serve as PBIS coaches and have been in the position for at least 3 years. The thematic analysis of this data was conducted using Braun and Clarke's 6 step framework. The analysis identified four key themes: (a) PBIS coaches must be trained and have experience to accomplish the roles and responsibilities of coaching, (b) PBIS coaches are challenged by limited resources, workload, and staff buy-in, (c) PBIS coaches promote positive school climate through uniform expectations, acknowledging students and staff, and providing staff support, and (d) PBIS coaches need resources and necessary support to improve PBIS. Exploring the perspectives of early childhood teachers who serve as PBIS coaches may initiate positive social change by informing stakeholders of challenges with implementing PBIS, and the results may inform them of possible solutions to improve implementation and decrease problematic behavior.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Bryan Vanover, bonus daughter, Camoria, and poodle pup, Brinx. Thank you for all of your patience, understanding, and support as I strived to complete this prestigious endeavor. Your love and support did not go unnoticed. You assured me, pushed me, and held me accountable for sticking to what I started. For that, I am forever grateful and I love you with all my heart.

To my parents, Mr. and Mrs. CJ and Ozzie Armstrong and Eddie C. Howard Jr., thank you for your love and support as I completed this process. Your words of encouragement fueled me when I thought about giving up. To my cousin Regina, without your love and support, this would not be possible. While going through your own storm, you helped to push me to the next level and assured me that it was all worth it in the end. To Dr. Shereca Harvey, thank you for being an amazing mentor. I will never forget your constant reminders of, "The best dissertation is a completed dissertation." To my cousin Kathy, we have supported each other throughout this journey. You are up next. To my cousin Arkimmie, you have encouraged me and provided so much wisdom from the beginning to the end. To Lori Washington, thank you for always pushing me to be great. To Teneka Brown, you spoke this into existence. You manifested my journey in your constant Facebook posts and comments. To my wonderful family, friends, and colleagues, thank you for your supportive words and encouragement as I was working towards bettering myself and achieving my goals. Also, thank you for understanding that my absence had a purpose.

Acknowledgments

“It is not how you start, but how you finish.” This quote has guided me from the time I realized the difference between equality and equity. Everyone’s “Why” is different. My “Why” was because I had to work and prove myself that I too was worthy of all the things that life had to offer. Although I was doubtful on occasion, I had faith and stay the course.

Thank you to my phenomenal chair, Dr. Terri Edwards. It was divine that I was assigned to you. You have provided me with not only the knowledge and guidance throughout the process, but the encouragement that I needed to continue. You held me accountable and because of that, I was able to stay focused. Lastly, thank you for providing me with the individualized attention that I needed. There was never a time when you were not available to answer questions or provide feedback.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

According to Hannigan and Hannigan (2020), school districts have reported an increase in the number of students who need additional behavioral support. Educators have stressed the ongoing concern that there is a need for additional assistance in supporting the needs of students (Yanek & Goodman, 2023). Hannigan and Hannigan suggested that policymakers, administrators, teachers, and parents strive to find solutions to the problem and provide students with a safe, protective, and welcoming environment. Lloyd et al. (2023) revealed that addressing student behavior has drastically changed over the last three decades. One widely implemented evidence-based practice (EBP) in districts is Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) (Center on PBIS, 2018). Adopted in more than 25,000 schools, PBIS is a three-tiered preventive structure (primary prevention, secondary prevention, and tertiary prevention) linked to advanced student behavior management and positive academic results (Kittleman et al., 2019; Wiene et al., 2018). The implementation of PBIS can create a school climate that is positive and not punitive and allow students and staff to build better relationships with each other while increasing learning opportunities.

Early childhood education teachers who are PBIS coaches use PBIS to help them apply effective methods to support students' social and emotional growth (Bhatnagar & Many, 2022). Bradshaw et al. (2021) suggested that PBIS's main goal is to evaluate student and staff behavior in the school environment. If early childhood education teachers who serve as PBIS coaches focus on organizational principles such as building capacity, PBIS coaching support, and professional development, the behavior of students

can be improved (Kittleman et al., 2019; Robbie et al., 2022). Robert (2020), however, found that teachers who were PBIS coaches do not have time to plan for PBIS due to scheduling conflicts.

In Chapter 1, I summarize relevant literature about PBIS and teacher coaches' perspectives. The problem statement includes a context to frame the purpose of the study focused on exploring teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach. Additionally, I provide information about the nature of the study, key terms, assumptions, delimitations, limitations, and the significance of the study.

Background

According to Clemons (2021), PBIS is a framework applied to prevent behavioral problems, provide a continuum of support for students, and mitigate punitive reactions due to inappropriate conduct commonly noted in students. Scherer and Ingle (2020) revealed that PBIS was introduced as a strategy to help students with disabilities in the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Scherer and Ingle noted that Congress added PBIS as an approach to assist these students with their misbehavior and prevent them from being suspended. As a result, teachers have been using the PBIS framework to transform school culture while offering behavioral assistance to enhance a safe, orderly, and sufficient learning context.

PBIS and School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) have evolved over the years into more advanced and inclusive practices (Robert, 2020). The multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) framework was created to minimize problem behaviors while increasing students' social skills (Nese et al., 2019). Clayton et

al. (2020) found that effective leadership and communication are essential skills in implementing the PBIS framework successfully. According to Nese et al. (2023), systems level teaming processes are crucial when implementing PBIS across the tiers and proper creation of the team aids in the effectiveness. McIntosh (2018) indicated that effective implementation of PBIS, with guidance from PBIS coaches, can be accomplished by using data for decision making. Yanek and Goodman (2023) agreed that evaluating data is key for PBIS teams when making instructional and social-emotional behavioral support decisions. With proper decision-making, the PBIS team can collectively identify problem areas within the school and work towards providing solutions for them.

Tiered systems help support teachers by outlining a clear and consistent structure for collaboration, which aids in providing assistance for general and special education students (Oakes et al., 2020). Tier 1 of MTSS involves the provision of universal PBIS support to all students, where the behavioral expectations are taught and students are acknowledged when those expectations are met (Steed et al., 2022). Tier 1 teams help staff implement PBIS with fidelity (Center on PBIS, 2018). The PBIS team consists of a PBIS coach, teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, and students who help establish the systems and practices of SWPBIS (Bastable et al., 2020; Center on PBIS, 2018). A core component of PBIS is the internal coach (Center on PBIS, 2018). Bastable et al. (2020) indicated that the role of the school PBIS coach is significant because the individual selected is responsible for organizing team meetings, aiding in analyzing school data, delivering staff professional development, and evaluating Tier 1 systems.

Historically, discipline in schools has been reactive rather than proactive (Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019). Early childhood teachers need to implement daily classroom routines and know how to address misbehavior in the classroom for better implementation of the PBIS framework (Carr & Boat, 2019). Yanek and Goodman (2023) agreed that creating classroom norms and explicitly taught routines are conducive for teaching and learning. Scherer and Ingle (2020) indicated that PBIS is not a curriculum or program, but a proactive approach to reducing punitive responses to misbehaviors. The PBIS framework is used by teachers to understand how to support students. Teachers who serve as PBIS coaches need to guarantee that best practice implementation is dependable, especially when considering the best outcomes for students (Kittleman et al., 2019).

An integral part of SWPBIS is coaching (Winnekar & Fox, 2020). Coaching support is an effective strategy for providing early childhood teachers who are PBIS coaches with the additional support and tools needed to implement EBPs successfully (Kelly et al., 2022). PBIS coaches use various tools such as observations, staff and member feedback, checklists, and surveys to identify the type and amount of coaching support needed to implement PBIS (Bastable et al., 2020). The roles and responsibilities of PBIS coaches include supporting schools' initiatives and sustainable learning, monitoring databases to analyze student data related to behavior, and participating in PBIS leadership conferences and meetings. Previous studies have not addressed implementation efforts from the perspective of early childhood teachers who serve as PBIS coaches. This qualitative study was designed to explore the gap in practice

concerning early childhood teachers who serve as PBIS coaches struggling to implement PBIS with fidelity.

Problem Statement

Due to an increase in the number of students needing behavioral supports, the expectation for early childhood teachers to serve as PBIS coaches, and the barriers that early childhood teachers face, there is a need to explore how early childhood teachers perceive their role as PBIS coaches in the implementation of the PBIS/SWPBIS initiative. Tyre and Feuerborn (2021) stated that staff struggle with implementing PBIS with fidelity because they do not want to implement additional EBPs. They believe that PBIS is another packaged curriculum that they will have to teach. Tyre and Feuerborn further stated that staff must be trained to understand that PBIS will be successful when they implement the practices with fidelity. According to Menzies et al. (2020) and Robert (2020), early childhood teachers struggle with implementing PBIS with fidelity due to low buy-in and minimal resources such as time and funding. Kelly et al. (2022) added that teachers also struggle with implementation due to lack of coaching support, knowledge of behavioral interventions, effective coaching practices.

PBIS has proven effective among primary school students in the United States (Robert, 2020). Research has shown that teachers implementing SWPBIS with fidelity have experienced a lower rate of office discipline referrals, an improved school atmosphere (Kittleman et al., 2022), and an enhanced capacity to implement more individualized and intensive support (Kim et al., 2018). Research on the implementation of the PBIS framework has demonstrated that teachers' perspectives (Nichols et al.,

2020) and leadership styles and approaches (Clayton et al., 2020) affect its adoption with fidelity. According to McColskey-Leary et al. (2021), educational interventions and programs are put into place without identification of the supports needed, which negatively impacts implementation. Once school leaders identify a need for change or new practice, they should not implement the initiatives without ensuring proper planning and capacity building first.

PBIS coaches lead their staff by helping them identify what is needed to implement programs successfully, as well as the process needed to elevate the environment in which they are implemented. Even though there is growing evidence that PBIS implementation with fidelity has a positive impact on the overall development of a student, early childhood teachers have not successfully achieved their intended goals in various public schools despite investments (Bradshaw et al., 2021; Horner & Macaya, 2018). There are no policies put in place by the government and other education stakeholders that mandate the implementation of PBIS in public schools (Center on PBIS, 2019). Simonsen et al. (2019) highlighted that although government policy does not make PBIS mandatory, guidance is provided for schools to assist with data collection, personal preparation, and practices. According to Eppley et al. (2018), Every Student Succeeds Act requires that EBPs are encoded in policy; however, this does not specify the requirement of PBIS.

Implementing PBIS with fidelity may be challenging for early childhood teachers who serve as PBIS coaches due to their primary roles and responsibilities. According to Nese et al. (2019), implementing PBIS in schools is complex due to the variety of

supports that are needed for success. Clayton et al. (2020) stated that researchers found that PBIS implementation was achievable when there was administrator support and that without administrators' support, there may not be sustainability. Support and resources from outside the school are required to implement PBIS programs with fidelity (Menzies et al., 2020; Nese et al., 2019). The average time for schools to implement PBIS is 2 years. Researchers stated that their findings identified a gap in practice in fidelity practices such as time allocation, competing responsibilities, coaching support, and training or professional development (Bastable et al., 2021; Lloyd et al., 2023; Robert, 2020). Early childhood teachers who do not have support and resources are at risk of experiencing teacher burnout (Herman et al., 2018; Oakes et al., 2020). According to Tyre and Feuerborn (2021), PBIS is worth the investment when PBIS coaches are knowledgeable about PBIS, have a positive attitude regarding implementation, and receive hours of professional development. Researchers have also stated that studies conducted to explore the lack of fidelity and implementation practices of PBIS have placed minimal focus on district factors such as adoption practices (Kittleman et al., 2020).

Bastable et al. (2021) argued that the MTSS framework must have PBIS coaching support as an integral part of SWPBIS. Most of the responsibility for the implementation and fidelity of PBIS is left up to PBIS coaches, who are also classroom teachers, and who have other responsibilities such as grading student work and writing lesson plans. The authors indicated that teachers view teaching as their primary role while PBIS comes second. Kittleman et al. (2020) explained that successful implementation at every stage of

PBIS requires training and ongoing coaching support. According to Bastable et al. (2020), providing coaching support for teachers who are PBIS coaches is vital for successful PBIS implementation and fidelity.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach and their experiences with implementation within the school. Researchers have shown that practice-level and school-level factors where teachers engage in regular activities to improve fidelity affect the quality of implementation of PBIS (Nese et al., 2019). School-level factors such as race, socioeconomic status, and school structure also affect implementation. Early childhood teachers may use the conclusions of this study when implementing PBIS and sustaining a PBIS program with fidelity in their school. A constructivist paradigm was used to construct new knowledge using teachers' interview data on being a PBIS coach.

Research Questions

The following questions guided my qualitative study:

RQ 1: What are early childhood teachers' perspectives of being PBIS coaches?

RQ 2: What do early childhood teachers who are PBIS coaches need to improve the implementation of PBIS?

Conceptual Framework

In this basic qualitative study, I explored the perspectives of early childhood teachers who serve as PBIS coaches and what is needed to improve implementation of PBIS. The conceptual framework that was used to ground this study was based on

implementation science. Moir (2018) stated that implementation science is the study of essential components needed to promote authentic adoption of EBPs to increase effectiveness. The cross-disciplinary field of implementation science has promoted positive outcomes for children and students with disabilities (Cook et al., 2013). Nilsen et al. (2013) noted that researchers in implementation science have imported and used various theories that can aid in improving the framework and help with the planning and implementation process. These theories involve contextual, organizational, and economic concepts. Nilsen (2015) stated that there are three overarching aims of the use of theories, models, and frameworks of implementation science: detailing the process of translating research into practice, understanding and explaining what influences implementation outcomes, and evaluating implementation.

Implementation involves identifying and addressing multiple factors that aid or impede the adoption and sustainment of EBPs (Lyon, n.d.). Cook et al. (2013) indicated that implementation science promoted methods to improve the routine practice of evidence-based programs. Bauer and Kirchner (2020) argued that the goal of the implementation science framework is to identify dynamics affecting the uptake of an innovation into routine application. In this regard, the core of implementation science is as follows:

- recognizing uptake facilitators and obstacles across various levels of setting (students, educators, schools, and parents)

- developing and applying implementation approaches able to overcome these obstacles and promote the enablers to enhance the uptake of EBPs such as PBIS.

Cook and Odom (2013) further indicated that implementation science entails studying and acknowledging how evidence-based programs are espoused and sustained via seven core implementation components: (a) pre-service and in-service training, (b) program evaluations, (c) staff selection, (d) systems interventions, (e) facilitative administrative support, (f) staff evaluation, and (g) ongoing consultation and coaching. Lyon et al. (2018) affirmed that changing professional behavior, techniques, and approaches is vital in adopting new interventions so that they will be incorporated sufficiently.

These implementation strategies improve implementation and service outcomes. In education, implementation science is defined as the scientific study of methods and strategies that support commitment to EBPs with fidelity (McCloskey-Leary & Garmen-McClaine, 2021). The strategies and supports should include training, coaching teams, and leadership to move these EBPs into routine use. Lyon et al. (2018) claimed that PBIS implementation must unfold over time in multiple phases with complex, multilevel systems using continual professional development and other support. Lyons et al. stressed that inadequate attention to system influences can prevent successful implementation. In Chapter 2, I provide a detailed explanation of implementation science as it relates to the perspectives of early childhood teachers who serve as PBIS coaches and their experiences implementing PBIS.

Nature of the Study

To gain a better understanding of early childhood teachers' perspectives, who are PBIS coaches, and the challenges and success of implementation and fidelity practices, I conducted a basic qualitative research design. According to Sutton and Austin (2015), qualitative approaches assist researchers with acquiring information about the thoughts and feelings of the participants which can allow them the ability to understand their experiences. Qualitative methods are critical for implementation science as they allow the researcher the opportunity to examine complexity and include a diversity of perspectives (Ramanadhan et al., 2021). I also explored their experiences of implementation practices of PBIS.

The participants were early childhood education teachers who serve in the capacity of the school PBIS coach with at least 3 years of PBIS coaching experience. The participants were selected using the Walden University participant pool and social media groups that focus on PBIS. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews with a minimum of 10 to 12 early childhood teachers. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), interviews are successful ways to obtain information about individuals' personal experiences. These interviews were conducted via telephone or Zoom. Their responses were audio recorded for later transcription and coding.

There are numerous approaches to conducting thematic analysis. Braun and Clark (2006) created a six-phase process to aid in analyzing data. I used the process once the audio recordings have been transcribed. At Phase 1, I read the transcripts carefully and repeatedly to familiarize myself with the data that was collected. All interview notes and

audio remained confidential. Coding was conducted at Phase 2. Miles and Huberman (1994) indicated that codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning. At Phase 3, I identified emerging themes to answer the research questions and reviewed the themes at Phase 4. I continued the analysis process until no new themes emerged. Phases 5 was used for defining and naming the themes and in Phase 6, I provided a finalized analysis report. A detailed description is provided in Chapter 3.

Definitions

The following definitions of key concepts were used throughout the study.

Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs): Practices and programs shown by high-quality research to have meaningful effects on student outcomes (Eppley et al., 2018).

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS): An overarching system of support that provides three tiers of instructional intensity focusing on academic, behavioral, social, and emotional indicators of whole child components of learning (Sailor et al., 2020).

PBIS Coach: Individual(s) who provides support to the PBIS team and school in implementing and sustaining PBIS (Baker & Ryan, 2019).

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS): An evidence-based three-tiered framework designed to improve and integrate all data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day (Center on PBIS, 2020).

School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS): A multi-tiered framework to make schools more effective places by establishing a social culture and the behavior supports needed to improve social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes for all students (Center on PBIS, 2020).

Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI): A comprehensive assessment that can be used to measure each tier individually or evaluate the overall implementation of PBIS (Massar et al., 2019).

Assumptions

There were several assumptions associated with this study based on the perspectives of early childhood teachers who are PBIS coaches. I assumed that their responses to the interview questions were open, honest, and truthful. It was assumed that the participants reflected on their own practices and not the experiences of other teachers. It was expected that the teachers participating in this study were interested in the topic and did not have other motives for participating. I assumed my role in education did have a negative impact on the study. These assumptions were essential because this study aimed at exploring the perspectives of early childhood teachers who were PBIS coaches and their experiences with PBIS implementation.

Scope and Delimitations

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach and their experiences with implementation within the school. Participants included a minimum of 10 to 12 early childhood teachers who have been PBIS coaches for at least 3 years. I chose a minimum of 3 years because the time frame allowed the PBIS coaches to have knowledge and experience with implementation practices. This study did not include the expertise of other PBIS team members who have knowledge of the PBIS framework but do not operate in the capacity of the school coach. In the current study, I used semi structured interviews to collect data regarding the

challenges that PBIS coaches have while implementing PBIS. Finally, I explored their perspectives about additional support that could assist with implementation and sustainability.

I considered using Roger's (1962) diffusion of innovations theory as the conceptual framework because it focuses on understanding the adoption of changes within social systems (King et al., 2019). According to Dearing and Cox (2018), diffusion is the social process that occurs among people in response to learning about new innovations and new evidence-based approaches for extending or improving health care and technological advancements. It is conceptualized that new ideas and practices are communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system (Dearing & Cox, 2018; King et al., 2019). I made the decision not to explore this theory because I wanted to focus more on the perspectives of implementation practices for teachers in early childhood education and not the adoptions of new practices within the healthcare and technology field.

Limitations

There were several possible limitations to this basic qualitative study. The first limitation was the number of early childhood teacher participants who serve as PBIS coaches. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of teachers who had time for interviews was limited. Using the Walden University research participant pool and PBIS social media groups to solicit participants aided in acquiring qualified participants. Another limitation was the effect that the COVID-19 pandemic had on student and staff attendance. According to Lyons (n.d.), time is needed for implementation of programs

and practices and the school calendar should reflect 2 to 3 consecutive school years of consistent implementation. The final limitation to this study was researcher bias. As the sole researcher, my own experiences as an early childhood teacher who served as a PBIS coach could have impacted the results of this study. I used a reflective journal to record biases as I completed the study. To prevent participants from being influenced, I did not include early childhood teachers who I was familiar with.

Significance

There is a gap in practice concerning PBIS implementation for early childhood teachers who serve as PBIS coaches. This study may provide stakeholders with knowledge by using the perspectives of the teachers to understand the challenges they face when implementing PBIS. The study findings may be used to improve the use of PBIS for early childhood teachers by improving professional learning opportunities for PBIS coaches and staff. This study may lead to positive social change by assisting stakeholders with strategies to improve implementation and sustainability of the PBIS framework and ultimately improving student behavior.

Summary

In Chapter 1, I provided an introduction highlighting the importance of PBIS and the role of PBIS coaches. I provided the research problem on early childhood teachers who serve as PBIS coaches experience challenges when implementing PBIS. Researchers stated that the implementation of PBIS involves systems and fidelity measures to promote successful adoption and sustainability. The research questions were aimed at teachers' perspectives and what additional support could be provided to them to assist with

implementation. The conceptual framework for this study was based on implementation science. I also addressed the assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance. In Chapter 2, I provide a review of the literature and a detailed discussion of implementation science.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I described existing research relevant to my study. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach and their experiences with implementation within the school. The problem is that early childhood teachers who serve as PBIS coaches are challenged when implementing the PBIS framework due to lack of resources such as time and funding (Judkins et al, 2019; Kittleman et al, 2022). Moir (2018) suggested that budgets be created to support funding for PBIS. Teachers have primary roles and responsibilities that prevent them from implementing with fidelity (Scaletta & Hughes, 2021). The implementation of PBIS strategies is vital to improving school climate and reducing student misbehavior (Bradshaw et al., 2021). Charlton et al. (2021) stated that the leading indicator of school improvement and predictors of school outcomes is determined by the school learning environment. Teacher involvement in PBIS implementation and adoption in school settings is essential to creating a positive school climate and encouraging positive student behavior.

Chapter 2 includes a description of search strategies used to conduct this literature review and a discussion of the conceptual framework which guided this study. In the remainder of this review, I explained the importance and impact of implementing PBIS effectively and literature based on the perspectives of teachers who serve as PBIS coaches.

Literature Search Strategy

For this literature review, I used numerous online databases to search for journals and books that provided literature on early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach. I used the Walden Library, ERIC, EBSCO, ProQuest dissertations and theses, SAGE Journals, and general Google searches. The Georgia Department of Education website was also used to provide in-depth information about the roles and responsibilities of PBIS coaches. I searched for peer related journals and within the last 5 years. Key concepts for this for searching relevant literature included: *early childhood teachers' perceptions PBIS, PBIS coach, roles and responsibilities of PBIS coaches, teacher perceptions of PBIS, PBIS implementation and sustainability, PBIS fidelity tools, teacher burnout, and time to implement evidence-based practices*. I searched ProQuest dissertations and theses to find additional sources. A search for literature that focused on the implementation science conceptual framework was also conducted. Some of the literature was outside of 5 years.

Conceptual Framework/Theoretical Foundation

In this study, I explored early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach and their experiences with implementation within their school. The conceptual framework for the study is comprised of the implementation science framework. Implementation science was introduced in the early 1970s as a response to healthcare practice needs (Odom et al., 2019). According to Nielsen et al. (2013), implementation science developed due to the emergence of evidence-based medicine. Nielsen et al. further indicated that early implementation science research has broadened to incorporate

the theological and methodological approaches from social science and the researchers of implementation science strived to improve the framework by importing and using a variety of theories to improve the understanding and explanation of implementation endeavors.

Implementation science and practice are expanding at a swift rate (Lyon, n.d.). Implementation occurs over multiple levels, and it is critical that educational leaders understand that resources such as time and personnel are necessary to guarantee the success of these programs and interventions (Robert, 2020). Odom et al. (2013) revealed a need for implementation science in education. The founders of implementation science questioned the parallel effort in education, which led to the Education Science Reform Act of 2022 (Odom et al., 2019). Odom et al. stated that education leaders argued that teachers and other stakeholders learned more about their curriculum, strategies, and practices through implementation science. After careful review of the implementation of EBPs, healthcare and educational leaders collaborated to form a clear movement in implementation science.

When implementing PBIS, implementation science involves practical steps for adopting, implementing, and sustaining the PBIS framework with accuracy and fidelity measures (Nese et al., 2019). Nese et al. (2019) stated that according to implementation science, implementing EBPs with fidelity is not easy as it is influenced by practice-level and school-level factors. Weist et al. (2019) noted that a strength of PBIS is the foundation in implementation science which involves implementation, monitoring, and continuous refinement and improvement. Teachers are provided effective strategies to

implement through the usage of implementation science (Kittleman et al., 2021). Moir (2018) stated that personal readiness for change depends on how capable and motivated the organization is. Staff selection is a critical element in implementation as these are the individuals that make up the implementation team. Equitable implementation involves the tools and principles of implementation science to make sure programs are effective (Brownson et al., 2021).

Lyon et al. (2018) examined schools as organizations and as a result, identified three core organizational implementation contexts which have an impact on the implementation of EBPS such as PBIS. The identified organizational implementation contexts include strategic implementation leadership, strategic implementation climate, and implementation citizenship behavior. Lyon et al. further argued that strategic implementation leadership encompasses the different behavior demonstrated by leaders which support or hinder the implementation process of EBPs. Therefore, to help PBIS coaches implement the PBIS framework successfully, leaders must be knowledgeable of the framework and help support the staff with the implementation process.

Odom et al. (2013) clarified that implementation begins with a model, the practice, or program to be implemented, and the professionals responsible for developing the curriculum. For PBIS to be implemented with fidelity, implementation must occur in phases. The exploration or adoption stage is where decisions are made with commitment to adopt the program or practice (Horner et al., 2018). At this stage, an implementation team should be created, and procedures and systems should be in place. The implementation team makes sure that meetings and planning occur at multiple levels.

These practice-level factors help promote implementation fidelity of PBIS by providing timely and responsive professional development to maximize the outcome to the students (Harn et al., 2013). Moir (2018) revealed that time restrictions cause implementation risk of failure. Odom et al. (2013) identified the role of professional development, technical assistance, and support in facilitating the implementation of EBPs for students as an important part of the implementation process. Arden et al. (2017) also recommended that implementers place a high level of focus on practice-level strategies including assessment of readiness, coaching, and building capacity.

Fixsen et al. (2015) stated that implementation is a process, not an event. Implementation can be a long process where there may be repetition and ongoing planning, training, collaboration, and evaluation, as schools transition through all four stages (Fixsen et al., 2015; Lyon, n.d.). Within implementation science, specific activities should occur at each stage. In the exploration and adoption phases, the school has to support implementation by providing guidance, resources, time, coaching, training and technical assistance. PBIS coaches and their leadership should also identify if they possess the knowledge and skills to implement it with fidelity. At Phase 2, installation, PBIS coaches must have the time to meet with the PBIS team monthly to review data and plan accordingly. Within the planning, the coach and PBIS team must make sure that the data systems for collecting student outcomes, program quality, and fidelity of implementation are in place. In Phase 3, initial implementation, intense supports are provided for the students through well-developed systems. The PBIS coach must make sure that all staff and parents are aware of the systems that have been put into place.

Phase 4 is when schools have implemented PBIS fully. In this phase, the PBIS coach is in control of the practices and programs that are adopted throughout the entire school routinely.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variable

PBIS Definition

Instead of scripted programs, frameworks are implemented in schools to improve academic and social outcomes for all students (Clemons, 2021). According to Horner and Macaya (2018), PBIS is a framework for selecting and implementing EBPs within the MTSS model for behavioral, social, emotional, and academic success. Gage et al. (2020) and von Ravensberg (2020) advocated that a multi-tiered approach known as PBIS gives behavioral support essential to minimize negative behavior and increase academic achievement by using a data driven systematic approach. Data allow educators to examine what approaches are needed to handle student infractions and promote positive student interactions (Hannigan & Hannigan, 2020; McIntosh et al., 2018; Scherer and Ingle, 2020). PBIS can also be compared to Response to Intervention (RTI), where data collection is an ongoing process (Carr & Boat, 2019; Robert, 2020).

According to the Center on PBIS (2018), PBIS is divided into several tiers. At each tier, teachers try to improve student conduct and foster a positive climate. Research shows that positive school climates affect academic achievement (Charlton et al., 2021). According to Gage et al. (2020), all students in the school are included in the first tier of school-wide prevention initiatives, which is the primary role of PBIS. According to Noltemeyer et al. (2019), the first tier of PBIS support is for all students. It is suggested

that 80% of students will be successful receiving universal support in this tier (Center on PBIS, 2018). Weingarten et al. (2020) indicated that students in Tier 1 should engage in research-based core curriculum and behavioral support. The students who need additional assistance, identified by data collection, will need small groups of targeted Tier 2 interventions (Noltemeyer et al., 2019; Van Camp et al., 2021). Approximately 15% of students may fall in Tier 2, whereas approximately 5% of students are allotted for Tier 3 support (Center on PBIS, 2018). Students needing Tier 3 interventions require individual support through functional behavior assessments, individualized counseling sessions, and other intense interventions (Horner and Macaya, 2018; Lloyd et al. (2019; Weingarten et al., 2020).

Understanding School-Wide PBIS

SWPBIS is a three-tiered systems-level approach concentrated on constructing a safe school environment where all stakeholders understand the expectations (Kittleman et al., 2020). The Center on PBIS (2015) emphasized the importance of students and staff participating in the implementation process to implement PBIS across the whole school. Horner and Macaya (2018) stated that building safe and disciplined school environments are equally important as creating academic enriched settings. Horner and Macaya further revealed that schools have heavily relied on punishment and student removal rather than identifying effective strategies to address problematic student behavior. According to Melekoglu and Diken (2022), SWPBIS strategies involve exploring the needs of all stakeholders and examining the social, cultural, and economic constructs of the school environment.

To promote PBIS effectiveness, SWPBIS expectations must be created to help students follow procedures throughout the school (Gage et al., 2020). Gage et al. (2020) suggested that the expectations should be positively stated, clear, and concise and posted on matrices in various locations such as the cafeteria, restroom, hallways, front office, and the classroom. According to Scaletta and Hughes (2022), the PBIS team helps create and define universal expectations and determine how they will look across settings within the school. For classroom matrices, Horner and Macaya (2018) stated that teachers have their own views as to how their classroom should be managed and their views should be respected when creating the universal expectations.

Praise is a social reinforce commonly used by teachers to increase appropriate student behavior (Myers et al., 2020). School staff helps students exhibit positive behaviors by referring to the school wide expectations. Markelz and Ridden (2019) indicated that an evidence-based strategy to promote positive social and academic outcomes is the use of behavior specific praise (BSP). According to Lastrapes (2020), BSP is the most effective form of praise, and when given appropriately, it will reduce negative behaviors. BSP should be given to students immediately for the best results and can be reinforced through token economies (Markelz & Ridden, 2019). Markelz and Ridden revealed that low rates of praise are due to frequent student disruptions and off-task behaviors. To remedy lack of praise given to students, teachers have implemented the use of Apple watches as reminders to give praise to students (Markelz & Ridden, 2019; White et al., 2021).

PBIS in Early Childhood Education

Many early childhood education programs are not equipped with the resources needed to improve the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of children (Hemmeter et al., 2022). Although many schools are not prepared, early childhood education programs can improve children's school readiness and long-term developmental outcomes by using consistent and responsive interactions (Doromal et al., 2022). According to Rucinski et al. (2018), it is important for early childhood teachers to build positive relationships with their students as this will aid in the students' social, emotional, behavioral, and academic development. PBIS is an effective method in early childhood education to address student behavior problems (Carr & Boat, 2019). Carr and Boat (2019) stated that within the framework, there is a consistent plan to address the needs of students throughout the school, and the reinforcement that children receive is essential to their growth and development. Reinforcement is an important step in teaching new behavior and involves the addition and subtraction of elements to the environment (Gist, 2019).

The needs of early childhood students are different from those students in elementary, middle, and high school. Melekoglu and Diken (2022) highlighted that PBIS was initially implemented for high school students and was later utilized by secondary, primary, and early childhood centers as an intervention for problem behavior. Making PBIS developmentally appropriate for everyone is a barrier in early childhood settings (Center on PBIS, 2018). According to Winnekar and Fox (2018), the critical elements of SWPBIS are essential for older students and not a contextual fit for early childhood students without making adjustments to the implementation plan. The Center on PBIS

(2018) revealed that early childhood PBIS systems and the foundational systems that guide the PBIS framework vary; however, the only difference is the early childhood systems focus on younger children and their families.

Early childhood teachers reported that challenging behaviors of students prevent successful inclusive environments (Car & Boat, 2019). According to Chaparro et al. (2022), students with disabilities need assistance from not only their teachers, but also the systems, resources, practices, and school policies. Introduced into federal legislation in 1997 through the Individuals with Disabilities Act, PBIS helps meet the needs of students with disabilities and significant behavioral concerns (Clemons, 2021; Simonsen & Sugai, 2019). Supporting students' social and emotional behavior in early childhood settings helps minimize negative behavior and those behaviors should be consistently observed and addressed as early as possible (Melekoglu & Diken, 2022).

The need for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in education is on the rise. Johnson (2019) stated that there has been a demand to improve the quality of education for young children in school readiness and SEL. The Pyramid Model has distinct tiers that differ from the traditional tiers of PBIS (Center on PBIS, 2018). The model helps promote the behavioral, social, and emotional competencies of children from birth to five years. According to Winnekar and Fox (2020), the Pyramid Model is an evidence-based framework and preschool teachers can use it to teach these competencies and address problematic behaviors. The tiered model involves intensive intervention, targeted social emotional supports, high quality supportive environments, nurturing and responsive relationships, and effective workforce (Center on PBIS, 2018). Without the training and

support needed, early childhood teachers implement the Pyramid Model with fidelity at 40% (Hemmeter et al., 2022). Hemmeter et al. (2022) stressed that teachers need professional development opportunities to improve their knowledge and skillset to work with the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students.

The Need for Professional Development in PBIS Schools

Numerous factors contribute to positive outcomes following professional development. According to Palmer and Noltemeyer (2019), useful professional development opportunities are needed for teachers to gain knowledge and address issues in schools. Teachers need professional development to build the basic understanding of PBIS, minimize misconceptions, and build shared visions and outcomes (Chaparro et al., 2022; Tyre & Feuerborn, 2021). To help with fidelity measures, all faculty and staff should receive ongoing professional development through the implementation of the PBIS framework (Horner & Macaya, 2018). PBIS coaches work to make sure that there is annual professional development (GADOE, 2023). As Horner and Macaya noted, members of the PBIS team coordinate professional development activities for staff and monitor data and fidelity practices to guide them in the decision-making process.

According to McDaniel et al. (2020), the first tier of PBIS should be implemented by all school staff members and training schedules should be scheduled throughout the year. McDaniel et al.'s view is consistent with that of Horner and Macaya (2018) who stated that PBIS is not a curriculum or intervention that school leaders purchase to adopt in a two-day workshop. Scaletta and Hughes (2021) noted research findings that indicated the need for professional development at the onset of PBIS implementation.

Scaletta and Hughes revealed that the school administrators and PBIS team believed the school staff felt a sense of investment and reacted positively to SWPBIS professional development. Targeted professional development of teachers, therefore, is a key component of a successful PBIS rollout.

The Roles and Responsibilities of the PBIS Coach

Coaching is essential for the successful implementation of PBIS. Knowledge of implementation science and professional training does not guarantee the effective adoption of a practice such as PBIS (Horner and Macaya, 2018). The role of the PBIS coach is constantly evolving and it is important that PBIS coaches understand that there may be additional responsibilities added when needed (Baker & Ryan, 2019). Giordano et al., (2021) defined coaching as the art and practice of inspiring, energizing, and facilitating the performance, learning, and development of the one being coached. Horner and Macaya (2018) revealed that through coaching, teachers receive the skills and knowledge to help them improve student outcomes. During this interactive process, a collaborative relationship is built between the coach and those receiving the coaching (Giordano et al., 2021). In the implementation of PBIS, coaching refers to a set of functions that are needed to provide guidance and support to the PBIS team with implementation and sustainability (Baker & Ryan, 2019). Although there are various definitions and descriptions of coaching in numerous settings, Giordano et al. stated that the ultimate goal of coaching is for the strategies that have been learned to become natural processes for those implementing them.

PBIS coaches are the primary support for the PBIS team in achieving and sustaining the goals of implementation, according to Baker and Ryan (2019). Baker and Ryan noted that although there is typically one coach per school, on occasion a co-coach is needed because of the number of responsibilities assigned to the PBIS coach.

According to GADOE (2023) PBIS coaches have an extensive number of roles and responsibilities. GADOE outlined some of the roles and responsibilities including the following: (a) ensuring that the PBIS team meet regularly, (b) assisting with data and evaluations for decision-making purposes, (c) making sure that assessments are conducted (d) attending trainings and meetings, and (e) guiding implementation efforts with fidelity. School PBIS coaches, also referred to as internal coaches, serve as liaisons between the school based PBIS team and district PBIS leadership (Baker & Ryan, 2019; GADOE, 2023). Individuals with PBIS expertise outside of the school building are known as external coaches or the district coordinator (GADOE, 2023). School coaches have similar responsibilities as the external coach, which includes attending meetings, reminding, and reinforcing PBIS throughout the school (Baker & Ryan, 2019).

Teachers serving as PBIS coaches must have these resources available to implement PBIS with fidelity (Horner et al., 2018). Horner et al. (2018) stated that resource leveraging is the process by which the outcomes from initial investment in personnel, materials, and events to achieve the targeted goal result in additional investments toward that goal. According to von Ravensberg (2020), school leaders should expend resources on PBIS coaching and building local coaching capacity. In a study conducted by Pas et al. (2020) highlighted coaching logs as a way to measure the

amount of time spent on coaching activities within the school. The study showed a significant amount of time spent on meetings, training, data analysis, and off-campus activities (see also Lindstrom Johnson et al., 2020).

The PBIS coach not only serves the PBIS team, but the entire system of the school (Baker & Ryan, 2019). According to Scaletta and Hughes (2021), the role of the school coach can be overwhelming, and leaders should work to build capacity of the PBIS team by shifting some of the responsibility from the PBIS coach to everyone. Scaletta and Hughes noted that in their study of administrators processes and practices of PBIS implementation, one administrator advocated shared responsibilities to prevent isolation and workload on one individual. Baker and Ryan (2019) stated that the role of PBIS coach is broad and challenging and therefore ideal for staff with flexible schedules such as a psychologist, counselor, or social worker. Baker and Ryan further noted that the internal PBIS school coach is the responsibility of school building-based personnel who are not teachers with direct teaching responsibility. According to Goodman-Scott et al. (2018) there is a direct correlation between the current roles and responsibilities of school counselors and those of the PBIS coach and that school counselors have the time and expertise to lead PBIS schools in the implementation process.

Barriers to Implementing EBPs

There are numerous barriers to implementing EBPs in schools. Teacher stress plays a significant role in the implementation of EBPs such as PBIS (Larson et al., 2018). Yanek and Goodman (2023) findings revealed elevated concerns on mental health and well-being of students, families, and educators, social and philosophical orientations, and

post pandemic demands have produced stress and challenges for teachers. Testing requirements, RTI, and PBIS have created more responsibilities than in the past (Gist, 2019). Larson et al. (2018) stated that there was a correlation between work overload and the willingness to implement innovative practices. New teachers and those who lack familiarity with interventions are also reluctant to implement EBPs (Nichols et al., 2020). Charlton et al. (2021) that teachers who work in positive school climates with minimal stress have higher self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Herman et al. (2018) revealed in their research that stress and emotional exhaustion yielded low levels of PBIS implementation, quality of teaching, and building relationships with students. Herman et al. stated that it is important for leaders to support teachers by understanding that teacher stress, burnout, and self-efficacy are factors in the implementation of interventions.

The lack of time also creates barriers to implementing EBPs (Foster, 2019; Judkins et al., 2019). Giordano et al. (2021) indicated that early childhood teachers need time to coach and receive coaching throughout the workday. Stakeholders must understand that it is critical for them to invest time and effort in implementing EBPs (Nese et al., 2019). Bastable et al. (2021) revealed in their study on PBIS implementation that teachers prioritized instruction and regular job duties over implementing intervention strategies. The Georgia Department of Education (2022) highlighted in the Teacher Burnout Report that teachers' planning time and instructional time must be valued and there is minimal time to complete the various tasks mandated. Although PBIS is a framework that addresses the social, emotional, and academic needs of the students, Tyre

and Feuerborn (2021) indicated that teachers felt that there were too many initiatives being implemented and not enough time to implement them.

In addition to lack of time, Kittleman et al. (2022) added that lack of funding for school coaches is the core of implementation failure. Pas et al. (2020) revealed in their study the ratio of costs to benefits analysis when evaluating interventions. In their study, Pas et al. indicated that the fidelity of implementation improved as the funds increased. Kittleman et al. (2020) stated that schools are given a finite number of resources for the implementation of EBPs and leaders should be selective when making allocations. According to Lindstrom Johnson et al. (2020), it is important for district leadership to allocate necessary funding to implement PBIS by hiring additional personnel and provide substitutes for team members to attend training. Lindstrom Johnson et al. added that resources should be spent to fund professional development on and off the school campus, secure data systems for effective data management and decision-making, and to purchase curriculum, resources, and other materials or services. Chaparro et al. (2022) agreed that without these resources, it is difficult to implement PBIS and revealed through the results of fidelity assessments. Without allocating funds for schools to use towards PBIS effectiveness, schools face challenges with implementation.

It is important for school leaders to understand the significance of staff buy-in for incorporating new initiatives. PBIS is a long-term commitment with the goal of is to practice with fidelity and sustain the framework (Baker & Ryan, 2019). Filter and Brown (2019) revealed that the implementation of PBIS is a long process and schools should prepare themselves by planning and helping staff understand the commitment that is

involved. It was suggested by Carriere et al. (2020) that schools understand their school climate before deciding to implement PBIS as a strategy to examine buy-in and commitment. According to Scott et al. (2019) low staff buy-in can be a determining factor in successfully implementing EBPs. Schools that do not have buy-in and commitment from staff may incur challenges with PBIS fidelity (Filter & Brown, 2019; Scott et al., 2019). Baker and Ryan (2019) outlined buy-in tasks for PBIS coaches to consider that are critical at the initial implementation stage. It is the responsibility of the PBIS coaches to make sure that the team completes these tasks as well as engage staff in discussions, prompt the team to update, and achieve the items on the action plan (Baker & Ryan, 2019). By understanding staff buy-in, school leaders can provide ways to implement new initiatives in an effective manner.

The Facilitation of PBIS Implementation Fidelity Tools

There are numerous fidelity tools to assist schools with implementing PBIS. Measuring PBIS fidelity involves the examination of the core features of the PBIS framework, systems of effective implementation, and interventions (Massar et al., 2019). Kittleman et al. (2018) emphasized the need for school PBIS teams to evaluate and assess the fidelity of implementation using various PBIS assessment surveys and tools. Masser et al. (2019) stressed the importance of using fidelity tools that are valid and reliable and outlined various SWPBIS fidelity measurement tools that include the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI), School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET), Team Implementation Checklist (TIC), Self-Assessment Survey (SAS), and the Benchmarks of Quality (BOQ).

The TFI measures the implementation of SWPBIS across all tiers and is most reliable when facilitated by the PBIS coach or district coach (Chaparro et al., 2022; Kittleman et al., 2018). Algozzine et al. (2019); Baker and Ryan (2019) noted that the TFI is divided into three tiers and efficiently measures the extent of which the school staff uses the core features of SWPBIS. The comprehensive assessment can measure each tier individually or collectively (Massar et al., 2018). According to Kittleman et al. (2018), the TFI is conducted by most schools once or twice a year with the first assessment completed at the beginning of the school. The PBIS product book contains artifacts measuring the implementation and fidelity at Tier 1 and keeping the book updated is the responsibility of the PBIS coach (GADOE, 2023). GADOE (2023) outlined each section and the elements of the product book to show the alignment with the TFI.

Another fidelity research tool for schools to measure the fidelity of implementation at Tier 1 is the School-wide Evaluation Tool. According to Noltemeyer et al. (2018), the SET can be utilized by any school, but it is only a required assessment of PBIS schools in the states of Arizona, Minnesota, Missouri, and North Carolina. It is conducted by an external evaluator and measures the core features of SWPBIS and the teaching of the expectations (Pas et al., 2019). Baker and Ryan (2019) stated that the accepted criterion for fidelity in initial implementation is 80% for teaching the expectations, there is a score of 80% needed for overall implementation. The SET is a valid and reliable way of assessing primary prevention practices.

Other assessments such as the Team Implementation Checklist, Self-Assessment Survey, and Benchmarks of Quality provide schools with the information needed to make improvements in PBIS practices. The TIC is a progress monitoring tool that is completed monthly or quarterly by the PBIS coach and team (Baker & Ryan, 2019). Noltemeyer et al. (2018) revealed that Georgia and Arizona offer this tool as an optional measure; however, it can be completed by anyone. To measure the perceptions of staff on the needs of the school, classroom, and individual students, Baker and Ryan highlighted the SAS as an instrumental tool for identifying improvements with implementation. Morris et al. (2022) added that the PBIS coach must be trained in conducting this assessment and that the results guide the team with prioritizing the next steps for fidelity and sustainability. Created by the Florida PBIS initiative to evaluate PBIS implementation, the BOQ is another assessment that is completed by the PBIS coach and team (Baker & Ryan, 2019). Using this measure as a requirement or option for schools, Noltemeyer et al. revealed that the BOQ is a strong, reliable, and valid fidelity assessment. Early childhood programs provide an Early Childhood Benchmarks of Quality Cultural Responsiveness Companion to assist PBIS coaches and teams with the Pyramid Model to improve implementation measures (Wennerstrom et al., 2021). In this companion guide, Wennerstrom et al. provided benchmark items accompanied by directions, elements, adaptations, and resources to aid early childhood teachers with implementing practices for young children and families. Although each of these assessments is similar, they serve a distinct purpose of measure Tier 1 implementation fidelity.

Impact of Successful PBIS Implementation and Sustainability

Successful implementation and sustainability are possible when school leaders acknowledge the importance of the work needed in the four implementation stages (Ward et al., 2021). The PBIS framework, according to Gagnon et al. (2018) has the potential to significantly improve children's behavior and social skills when implemented correctly. Payno-Simmons (2021); Kern et al. (2022) also agreed that the outcomes of implementing PBIS with fidelity promote overall student success. Improved behavioral outcomes have also been seen with students of color when PBIS is implemented with fidelity (Gage et al., 2019). Adopting PBIS as a multi-tiered system of support can be challenging and intimidating for implementers (Sugai & Homer, 2020). Although implementation can be complex, successful implementation is possible when there are resources to support the framework (Nese et al., 2019). According to Johnson (2019) there are a wide variety of systems and programs that aid in scaling up PBIS implementation in early childhood settings. Schools that have regular team meetings, systematically plan, and evaluate implementation efforts increase the effectiveness of successful implementation (Kittleman et al., 2021). Horner and Macaya (2018) added that schools are successful in implementing PBIS when the core features are clearly defined, and action plans explicitly outline a plan for improvement.

The implementation of PBIS in school settings is critical for managing students' behavior and improving their academic performance. Positive outcomes are always linked to proper implementation (Gage et al., 2019). According to Chaparro et al. (2022), implementation drivers are needed to effectively and efficiently implement PBIS and

other EBPs. Chaparro et al. added that these drivers are categorized by competency, organization, and leadership and each category involves specific systems that promote successful implementation. The argument that implementation drivers are needed to implement EBPs effectively was supported by Lancet et al., (2021). According to Lancet et al. (2021), these drivers collectively serve as the elements of infrastructure needed to encourage, advance, and sustain the capacity of teachers and staff in implementing innovations as intended.

The amount of time needed for successful implementation can span over several years. Successful implementation of EBPs is a multiyear process which involves the making decisions, identifying areas of improvement, and the input of stakeholders (Ward et al., 2021). A foundational principle of PBIS that the faculty and staff are responsible for providing the environments and systems of support for the students to promote successful implementation (Herman et al., 2018). Teachers must hold students accountable for teaching and following the expectations outlined by the PBIS team. It is the responsibility of the PBIS coach and the team to make sure that they utilize the data and assess the practices to guarantee the effectiveness of decreasing negative behaviors and promoting positive ones (Baker & Ryan, 2019). Trends show lower office discipline referrals and suspensions with schools that implement PBIS with fidelity (Pas et al., 2019).

Massar et al. (2019) indicated that evaluating the fidelity of implementation of SWPBIS is critical for successful implementation and sustainability. Kittleman et al. (2021) stated that engaging in continuous improvements improves sustainability of EBPs.

Effective and sustainable practices for successful implementation of PBIS involve staff and systematic support (Tyre & Feuerborn, 2021). This support must be ongoing by building local capacity with high fidelity of technical assistance and support (Center on PBIS, 2018). For schools in high need districts, Freeman et al. (2020) stated that there should be a district wide PBIS coaching position as well as two or three coaches in the building. Freeman et al. added that schools should invest in data and communication systems to assist with teacher implementation for school-wide and classroom practices.

Teacher Perspectives of PBIS

Implementing PBIS with fidelity provides students and school personnel with a wealth of benefits (Goodman-Scott et al., 2022). Higher self-efficacy contributes to greater implementation of PBIS (Oakes et al., 2021). Understanding the perspectives of teachers on how they view behavior helps increase the buy-in of implementing behavior management strategies (Baker & Ryan, 2019). Oakes et al. (2021) indicated that challenging work environments, low funding, rigorous learning experiences, and increased accountability for student achievement contribute to students not being successful academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally. Some teachers stated that they are overwhelmed by meetings during planning time and the workload is too much to handle, especially when they aren't given breaks throughout the day (Georgia Department of Education, 2022). Similar findings were reported from research conducted by Lee et al. (2023) which focused on teacher stress and wellness and Pressley (2021) regarding teacher workloads pre and post the COVID-19 pandemic. GADOE (2022)

highlighted teachers' perspectives and called for action in their request to remove some of the workload if leaders wanted new initiatives to be implemented with fidelity.

Promoting school safety provides an environment where kids can learn and grow. Teachers believe that feeling safe at school is important and that SEL, teaching quality, school climate, and student engagement and motivation are all factors in student success (Boylan et al., 2018). Tyre and Feuerborn (2021) reported that the misconceptions that staff have regarding PBIS implementation, acknowledgement and reinforcement, personal feelings about behavioral expectations can contribute to how successful PBIS will be in a school. Some teachers have the misconception that students should already know how to behave, conform to their classroom rules, and have consequences for negative behavior (Tyre & Feuerborn, 2021). In contrast, Estrapala et al. (2018) highlighted that teachers valued positive reinforcements for students when they exhibit the right behavior and the frequency for those reinforcements can decline over time. For younger children, Winnekar and Fox (2020) stressed the importance of frequent and immediate reinforcements as a way to encourage students to follow the expectations. Trump et al. (2018) discovered in their research that many schools are discontinuing the practice of adverse punishment and shifting towards teaching and rewarding students for exhibiting the appropriate behavior. In a study of the implementation of Ohio's PBIS Recognition System, stakeholders worked to have a local and state recognition system. Although there were challenges with the implementation, results indicated that teachers felt that recognizing students was important and had numerous benefits (Noltemeyer et al., 2018).

Teachers believed that coaching practices have a direct correlation to the success of PBIS implementation (Kelly et al., 2022). Their perspectives regarding the implementation of PBIS and coaching support can also be explored by examining Feature Item 17 of the SAS (Baker & Ryan, 2029). In the study on the role of coaching on the implementation of individualized behavior supports, Kelly et al. revealed that teachers felt that there should be ongoing coaching support, increased time and resources to coaching opportunities, and continuous feedback to implement effective practices. Yanek and Goodman (2023) agreed that teachers need training, coaching, and time to work collaboratively to implement effectively. Although Tyre and Feuerborn (2021) noted that some teachers believe that some staff will not implement PBIS, Walker et al. (2020) shared in their study that teachers felt classroom and behavior management was a shared responsibility and PBIS was a way to provide behavioral interventions and support for those students.

Summary and Conclusions

The literature review contained evidence of issues that were directly related to factors involving the implementation and sustainability of PBIS. Previous research outlined professional development, time for implementation, building capacity, and providing effective coaching to staff as drivers in successful implementation practices. The review of the literature also outlined numerous roles and responsibilities of the school PBIS coach that may provide insight into factors that affect implementation and fidelity practices. While researching the implementation of PBIS and sustainability, there continues to be issues with time and other resources needed to implement EBPs such as

PBIS with fidelity. Research revealing that the role of the PBIS coach should not be occupied by teachers who have direct teaching responsibilities helps in understanding why early childhood teachers who serve as PBIS coaches struggle with implementing PBIS.

The literature was lacking in the area on early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach and teachers' perspectives of PBIS. By discovering new knowledge, this study is designed to explore the perspectives and experiences of early childhood teachers who are PBIS coaches. Chapter 3 included a comprehensive description of the research design, methodology, data collection, and data analysis plan for investigating their perspectives.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach and their experiences with implementation within their school. Early childhood teachers who are PBIS coaches guide the school PBIS team with implementation efforts, fidelity practices, assessments, and professional development opportunities. Encouraging early childhood PBIS coaches to share their experiences with implementation may assist in learning more about their challenges, concerns, needs and strategies that they use with implementing PBIS. In Chapter 3, I provide details of the research methodology, which included a description of the research design, rationale, and the role of the researcher. Participant selection, data collection, and data analysis are discussed. I conclude Chapter 3 by discussing trustworthiness and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

The following research questions guided this basic qualitative study:

RQ 1: What are early childhood teachers' perspectives of being PBIS coaches?

RQ 2: What do early childhood teachers who are PBIS coaches need to improve the implementation of PBIS?

Qualitative research is a way of understanding phenomena through the perspectives and experiences of the participants in their natural settings (Howson, 2021). A quantitative approach was not considered for this study as the results would attempt to definitively prove or disapprove a hypothesis. Creswell (2023) indicated that in quantitative research, the data collected has to be quantified and statistics must be

calculated to support or refute the hypothesis. Perspectives and experiences cannot be quantified; and therefore, a quantitative approach would not be suitable. Interviews, surveys, and observations are various ways that researchers collect data from the participants (see Burkholder, 2020). I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews to gain a better understanding of teachers' perspectives. Semi-structured interviews provide a flexible way of interviewing key informants who have attitudes, perceptions, and personal experiences relating to the topic (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Other ways of collecting the data were considered prior to selecting semi-interviews. Like interviews, surveys were an option as surveys involve collecting data about the participants' attitudes people, events, and various objects (Burkholder, 2020). Surveys are more formal, whereas semi-structured interviews are more conversational and provide opportunities for participants to discuss topics in further detail. By conducting surveys, I risked limiting the perspectives of the participants.

I also contemplated conducting a focus group to collect the data for this qualitative study. Focus groups provide information about the experiences of the participants as a collective rather than individually (Morgan, 2009). Although it was beneficial to have the participants provide their perspectives in an open setting, some participants may be withdrawn from sharing their perspectives about the topic if majority of the group has expressed opposing or supporting thoughts. There was also risk of losing the natural interactions that may be provided in an individual setting if focus groups were selected. Therefore, a basic qualitative design with semi-structured interviews was selected for my study.

Role of the Researcher

As the sole researcher of this study, I collected, organized, and analyzed the data to explore the perspectives of early childhood teachers who serve as PBIS coaches and their experiences with the implementation of PBIS within the school. I have a varied educational background which includes teaching, school counseling, and leadership. I was an early childhood teacher for 16 years and occupied the dual role of a school PBIS coach for 4 of those years. After the emergence of COVID-19, I did not return to the early childhood classroom setting and became a district PBIS coach once the district was granted the U.S. Department of Education School Climate Transformation Initiative grant. The objectives of the grant were designed to enhance and expand the current PBIS framework which would benefit schools and provide supplemental support for the school PBIS coaches with implementation. Currently, I am in the capacity of director of the SCTI and PBIS department.

My background as an early childhood teacher, PBIS coach for the school and district, and assistant director of the PBIS department have contributed to my interest in studying the perspectives of early childhood teachers who are PBIS coaches. Being in these capacities have allowed me to gain understanding of ways that various teachers implement PBIS within their schools locally and nationally. They have also allowed me to gain feedback from various stakeholders on ways that they can improve PBIS and provide additional support to teachers.

Researchers must be careful to avoid bias by being aware of prejudices, feelings, and opinions (Burkholder, 2020). The experiences that I have gained throughout my

career and education have the potential to produce bias. I have recognized the needs and concerns of school-based PBIS coaches and the difficulties they experience when implementing PBIS in the school. To minimize bias, I do not have personal or professional relationships with the participants for this research. When soliciting participants through social media, I excluded anyone who was currently working in my district or anyone who I was familiar with. I did not lead the participants by using verbiage that could have produced emotion and influenced them to respond in a way not intended by the questions on the survey. I used reflective journals to record my feelings and thoughts throughout the completion of the study to identify and avoid bias. Use of reflective journals in qualitative research allows researchers to own centrality of the research process and develop the writer's critical thinking and analytical skillset (Jasper, 2005). The process of recording bias in a journal during this study is known as reflexivity.

Methodology

Participant Selection

To gain a better understanding of the early childhood teachers who are PBIS coaches, I recruited 10 to 12 participants to conduct semi-structured interviews. Bernard (2019) indicated that the range of 10 to 20 knowledgeable participants is acceptable to gain understanding of their experiences. To qualify as a participant for this basic qualitative study, early childhood teachers who serve as PBIS coaches must have at least 3 years of PBIS coaching experience. Participants who teach in a virtual setting were not

be included in this study as their challenges, concerns, and needs may be different from those implementing the PBIS framework in a brick-and-mortar school setting.

The participants were selected using the Walden University participant pool and teachers' social media groups that focused on PBIS. For both the Walden University participant pool and teachers' social media groups, I solicited participants by posting an invitation on the websites. The participants who desired to take part in the study reached out to me by email. I then sent them the consent form to review to return to me if they agreed to participate in the study. I followed up by email and provided them with a thank you note and a time schedule of interviews. Once I received the consent form from the participants, I reached out to them to schedule interviews.

Instrumentation

Semi-structured interviews were used as the sole data collection instrument for this qualitative study. Semi-structured interviews are typical for novice researchers in qualitative research (Burkholder, 2020). To construct validity, I asked two nonparticipating PBIS coaches who were not early childhood teachers to review the interview questions. The interview questions (see Appendix A) were created using the implementation science conceptual framework, the literature review, and the following research questions:

RQ 1: What are early childhood teachers' perspectives of being PBIS coaches?

RQ 2: What do early childhood teachers who are PBIS coaches need to improve the implementation of PBIS?

The participants answered 10 open ended interview questions as a way of exploring their perspectives of early childhood teachers who serve as PBIS coaches. Interview questions serve as probes to gain more knowledge and understanding from the participant. Interview Questions 1, 3, 5, 7, and 8 align with RQ1. Interview Questions 2, 4, 6, 9, and 10 align with RQ2. The implementation science conceptual framework for this qualitative study provided a guide for the creation of the second research question and Interview Questions 7 through 10. The interview protocol guide (Appendix B) was used to outline details of the study, collect demographic data, ask the interview questions, and gave the participants the opportunity to ask questions or share feedback.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The Walden University Participant Pool and teacher social media groups was used to solicit participants for this qualitative study. Planning for data collection is an extensive process in which the researcher collects relevant data in an efficient manner (Newcomer et al., 2015). Newcomer et al. (2015) added that the information must be carefully collected without the consumption of too much data so that it can be assimilated effectively. First, the invitation was posted and those who were interested reached out to me expressing their interest. Participants were then emailed a copy of the consent form outlining specific details about the nature of the study. I created a schedule for the interviews to take place within a range of 3 weeks. There were two opportunities daily to schedule within that time frame. The participants selected a date and time that was flexible for them to complete the interview. Prior to the interview, I sent out another email reminding the participants of their scheduled date and time.

To answer the research questions, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain information about the experiences of the participants. The data were collected from participants via telephone or Zoom. Before beginning the interview, I recorded the date and time of the interview. I also welcomed the participants and thanked them for agreeing to participate in the study. I reminded the participants of the time allotted for the interview of 45 to 60 minutes. After giving the participants a brief introduction of my background, I provided a brief overview of items from the consent form and reminded them that the interview would be audio recorded and notes would be taken throughout this process. Once the interview began, participants were asked three demographic questions. After the interviews were completed, I thanked the participants again and solicited any questions or feedback. I reminded participants that they would be sent a summary of the findings for participants to comment on and ask questions if they had any.

Data Analysis Plan

Braun and Clark (2006) outlined a six-phase process to assist researchers with analyzing data. Newcomer et al. (2015) indicated that the data analysis plan aids researchers by providing structure throughout the process until the findings were presented. At Phase 1, I became deeply immersed in the data that had been transcribed from the interviews. According to Burkholder et al. (2020), researchers can transcribe interviews by hiring someone, use of software, or transcribing them on their own. To transcribe my interviews, I used Transcribe, an online program which provided a transcription of human speech into text. The interview transcripts were printed and

reviewed in the order that they were scheduled. To make sure that the audio recordings were aligned with the written transcripts, I thoroughly conducted a line by line analysis. I reviewed the transcripts multiple times until I was completely familiarized with it. I also reviewed my reflection notes during this time.

During Phase 2, I began the coding process. Attribute coding, descriptive coding, and pattern coding are three useful methods (Newcomer et al., 2015). The data that were collected were categorized in numerous ways. I used a combination of descriptive coding and pattern coding for this study as both methods allowed large quantities of text to be evaluated to identify topics, issues, themes, and patterns. It was important to code any item that addresses the research questions. Codes should be brief but offer adequate detail to stand alone as they are essential building blocks (Bryne, 2021). Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that the process of coding is flexible, organic, and evolves throughout the analytical process. Open coding was used to break the data into discrete parts. After open coding was completed, I used axial coding to group the open codes into categories.

In Phase 3, the categories were analyzed and sorted into themes. I provided the name and description of each category and evaluate the relationship between the categories and emerging themes. I also explored different levels of themes as overarching and subthemes may exist. Phase 4 involves reviewing the themes for refinement. Byrne (2021) recommended that researchers should carefully consider the number of themes as too many themes can cause incoherence and too few can lack depth. Braun and Clark (2006) outlined six key questions to ask when reviewing themes. I self-reflect and asked key questions to make sure that the themes were accurately identified according to

the supporting data and answered the research questions. For any themes that lacked sufficient data, I removed and refined them.

At Phase 5, defined and labeled the themes. I provided comprehensive analysis by evaluating the themes and subthemes in relation to the research questions. After the themes were confirmed and named, I reviewed them according to the codes and data set. In the last phase, Phase 6, I reviewed the themes to make sure that the research questions were answered. I continued reviewing the data to the point of saturation where no new themes emerged. All discrepant cases were documented and discussed in the results. The phase was completed by producing the report that outlined any changes and the final results.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the term used in qualitative research to determine how truthful the data, interpretation, and results are in the study. Burkholder et al. (2020) indicated that researchers use the term trustworthiness as a way to measure the confidence in their sources and methods to collect the data. Credibility is one of the most important criteria in qualitative research. According to Cope (2014), credibility refers to the truth of the data, the experiences of the participant, and the interpretation and representation of the experiences by the researcher. A qualitative study is credible if the descriptions of human experience are immediately recognized by individuals that share the same experience. Reflexive journaling was used to establish credibility. Through reflexive journaling, I evaluated my own thinking towards this topic. Lastly, credibility was established in this

study by spending a significant amount of time reviewing the transcripts. I provided a summary of my findings to the participants to review and ask questions if they have any.

Other terms such as transferability, dependability, and confirmability, were used to help researchers establish trustworthiness. Transferability is similar to generalizability in quantitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 2006). Transferability means that the findings of the research are comparable to the findings from another researcher (Nowell et al., 2017). To establish transferability, I provided a careful description of the situation by giving specific details about the setting, population, data collection methods, and time period over which the data were collected. By providing a thick description, readers of the research were able to understand the relativeness and had the opportunity to establish if the findings were transferable to another setting.

Dependability refers to how consistent the data collection instruments, analysis, and reporting are used in the research (Burkholder, 2020). Dependability is similar to reliability in quantitative research and researchers should make sure that they are reliable and consistent throughout the process (Lincoln & Guba, 2006). Kock (1994) indicated that audits establish dependability by keeping records of field notes, transcripts, and reflexive journals. Throughout the study, I established dependability by maintaining a reflexive journal and used the notes taken during the interview for precision in reporting the findings. I used an audit trail to strengthen dependability by including all data sources during the data collection and analysis process.

Confirmability means that there are consistent conclusions drawn from evaluating the same qualitative data (Burkholder, 2020). Lincoln and Guba (2006) added that

confirmability is established when credibility, dependability, and transferability are met. Reflexivity was a way that I established confirmability by examining my own beliefs and judgments towards the data collected. I kept a reflective journal and record my own personal bias.

Ethical Procedures

There are various ethical issues in qualitative research. Social research should not injure the participants physically, psychologically, or socially (Babbie, 2019). Burkholder (2020) emphasized the importance of safeguarding online participants' privacy during the research process. According to Babbie (2019), qualitative researchers should never use the term anonymous as the term is not synonymous with confidential. Ethicist (2015) explained that there was a difference between privacy and confidentiality; however, procedures should be put into place to uphold the ethical principles of the research. Researchers are responsible for making sure that the information collected is secure and does not pose risks to the participants.

Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) provides guidelines that researchers must follow. An invitation outlining the specifics of the study were placed in the Walden University participant pool and teacher social media groups. Participants were made aware of any risks and benefits and guidelines centered around confidentiality, compensation, participants' rights, and procedures of the interview in the consent form. Participants were assured that they could withdraw from participating from the study for any reason without repercussions.

An identification number was used to protect the identity of the participants. A password-protected drive was used to store the data for at least 5 years. After 5 years, the data collected will be destroyed. This is ethical as noted by Babbie (2019) that once all the data has been collected and no longer needed for the study, it can be removed and destroyed immediately.

Summary

Chapter 3 included the methodology for this basic qualitative study. I described the role of the researcher, selection of the participants, instrumentation, and the detailed process of recruitment, participation, data collection, and data analysis. I also provided strategies to use for trustworthiness and credibility. Ethical procedures were also clearly outlined as I concluded this chapter. In Chapter 4, I provided the results of the study, which includes data collection, analysis, results, and evidence of trustworthiness.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach and their experiences with implementation within the school. I used the Walden University Participant Pool and teacher social media groups to obtain participants. To obtain additional participants, I used snowball sampling. After expressing interest, participants were emailed a consent form to review before agreeing to participate in the study. Once the participants reviewed the consent form and agreed to participate, they responded to the email with "I consent." After participants confirmed their participation, they were sent a schedule of available dates and times to interview. Participants were given the option to select two available dates and times for the interview. The option was available for participants to interview via Zoom or telephone. All participants selected to interview using Zoom conferencing. The Zoom audio recording feature was used, and cameras were turned off for participants' confidentiality. Transcribe, an online software that provides audio and video transcriptions, was used to transcribe the participants' responses to the interview questions. After reviewing the transcripts and audio recordings, I made amendments to some of the transcripts where wording was not accurate. Once I completed reviewing each transcript and audio recording for accuracy, I began to identify codes, categories, and themes. In Chapter 4, I describe how the participants were selected, demographic information, and the data collection and analysis process.

Setting

For this basic qualitative study, semi-structured interviews were used to capture the perspectives of 10 K-3 early childhood education teachers who also served as PBIS coaches. The Walden University Participant Pool, teacher social media groups, and snowball sampling were used to recruit participants. All interviews were conducted from my home office. All participants agreed to have their interviews conducted via Zoom rather than by telephone. Each participant was assigned an identification number to ensure confidentiality. The number of years as an early childhood education teacher ranged from 8 to 29 years. Each teacher was randomly given a four-digit identification number. In Table 1, I summarized the participants' years in education, years as an early childhood education teacher, years as a PBIS coach, and gender.

Table 1

Research Participants

Research participants	Years in education	Years as an early childhood teacher	Years as a PBIS coach	Gender
P1	18	18	3	Female
P2	10	10	5	Female
P3	20	20	3	Female
P4	25	14	3	Female
P5	16	15	4	Female
P6	13	13	3	Female
P7	17	17	3	Female
P8	13	13	3	Female
P9	29	27	8	Female
P10	8	8	3	Female

Data Collection

Once I received approval from Walden University's IRB, I began the data collection process. The IRB approval number was 06-01-23-1004989. To recruit participants, my study was posted to the Walden University Participant Pool. To obtain additional participants, I posted the invitation on various teacher social media groups. Snowball sampling was used to obtain additional participants for this study. Once someone expressed interest in participating in the study, I sent them a copy of the consent form to review. Participants were asked to respond with "I consent" if they agreed to move forward with in the study. Participants were also sent a copy of the interview schedule to select two available dates and times that would be beneficial for them. The data collection process took a total of 10 weeks to complete. All 10 of the participants agreed to complete the interview via Zoom. The interviews lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. To guarantee reliability, each participant was asked the same interview questions and in the same order.

At the beginning of each interview, I welcomed and thanked the participants for participating in the study. I reviewed the duration of time that it would take to conduct the interview and made them aware that I would be taking notes. I stated the purpose of the study and gave a brief introduction of myself. I reviewed the consent form as a reminder that participating in the study would not pose risks to their health, well-being, or position in the school system. I reminded the participants that the information would be used for this study only and that their identity would remain confidential. A reflective journal for each interview was kept documenting my thoughts to manage any potential

bias. Each participant was given the opportunity to withdraw from the interview before audio recording began via Zoom. The camera feature was not used, and participants were asked to change their Zoom name to maintain confidentiality.

Once the interview began, each participant was asked three demographic questions to gain understanding of their number of years in education, number of years as an early childhood teacher, and number of years as a PBIS coach. Next, I proceeded with the 10 interview questions. After the interview was complete, I thanked the participant for sharing his or her experience as an early childhood education teacher who also served as a PBIS coach. I informed the participants that they would receive a summary and any feedback would be appreciated. Before ending the interview, participants had the opportunity to ask any questions. I informed the participants that once the study was complete, I would provide them with a two-page summary of the findings.

Transcribe was used as the software for transcribing the audio recordings. Once each interview was transcribed, I reviewed line by line for accuracy. Amendments were made to those transcripts to ensure accuracy in wording. All audio recordings are stored on a secured password-protected drive. After 5 years, the data that were collected will be destroyed. I followed all the data collection steps outlined in Chapter 3.

Data Analysis

For this basic qualitative study, I explored early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach. Using semi-structured interviews, I asked each participant a total of 10 open-ended questions in the same order. After the interviews were conducted, I uploaded the audio recordings into Transcribe for transcription and reviewed each

transcript for accuracy. During this process, I familiarized myself with the data that were collected from each participant.

Phase 1: Familiarizing Myself With the Data

All participants were given an identification number to maintain their confidentiality. All audio recordings and transcripts were carefully reviewed multiple times to ensure accuracy of the data that were collected from each participant. The transcripts were printed in the order of the interview. I reviewed the notes that were taken during the interview and made additional notes as I continued to immerse myself in the data.

Phase 2: Generating Codes

Open and axial coding were used in the data analysis process. Open coding was used to break the data from the transcripts into discrete parts. An Excel spreadsheet was used to code the transcripts. Column A was headed with the interview questions, and column B was headed with the various codes that were created after analyzing the participants' responses. Columns C through L contained each participants' identification number. The rows contained the interview questions separated by the codes that were created from the responses. To distinguish between the two research questions, a color code was given for RQ1 and RQ2. A total of 64 codes were created during open coding. In Table 2, I provided a sample of some of the codes that were created from the participants' responses.

Table 2*Examples of Open Codes*

Code	Participant	Excerpt
Leadership	P1	"I serve on our guiding coalition team, leadership team, and grade level chair."
	P2	"I am the first grade teacher, PBIS coach, grade level chair, technology committee, and school-wide leadership team."
Knowledge/Experience	P5	"They wanted people with experience, people who understood the concept of PBIS."
	P10	"I was on our PBIS team for five years."
Training	P7	"I had an eight-day session with our Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) and it prepared me to coach at my school."
	P8	"I went through trainings with my district."
Analyze Data	P1	"I had to go in and analyze data because not only am I the PBIS coach, but I am also the data analyst."
	P5	"I look at data to help us analyze where we might need to reteach or go back and figure out what's happening with our students and how we can better support them."
Organize/Monitor	P8	"All over the building I monitor to make sure that everyone is comfortable with PBIS and they know how to utilize PBIS. Make sure they are not struggling."
	P2	"A big part of PBIS is how you celebrate students; It takes a lot of planning and time which is hard for a classroom teacher."
Support	P4	"Daily, I have teachers that come to me with questions about how to implement the expectations or understand the lesson plan they've been given."
	P6	"I make sure that each team member knows their role and they are willing to participate."
Time	P5	"It's a challenge finding the time to get PBIS done. We are also trying to get our other job responsibilities done as well."
	P3	"Trying to make all of the meetings and missing some of my class time because I have to go to a meeting and be away from my students."
Unmotivated	P4	"I have to make sure that they are buying in and motivated about PBIS."
	P6	"The teachers were not being rebellious and not buying in."
Culture	P2	"Part of PBIS is building that community and then rewarding those behaviors we want to see."
	P6	"The whole idea is to really change the culture of the school."
Funding	P10	"Our PTA and well as our principal generously donated money to get our PBIS store up and running."
	P9	"We need a budget to successfully implement it because with our celebrations and school store, it takes a lot."
Coaching	P7	"Coaching is paramount. It gives me direction and having district support to walk me through implementation is needed."
	P9	"Coaches should be well trained or implementation is not going to be well within the school."
Buy-In	P2	"It's hard to get people on board who do not want to change and do something different than we've always done."
	P3	"Getting everyone in the school to buy-in. Total buy-in from everyone."
Needed Training	P10	"Everyone should be required to attend a PBIS training on how to implement that within their classrooms."
	P2	"There should be district PBIS training for everyone to learn how to implement within their classrooms."

Once I completed open coding, I used axial coding to group the open codes into categories. I reviewed, examined, and organized the open codes to identify the connections and relationships the codes had with each other. Continuing using the Excel spreadsheet that was created in the initial coding process, I revised any codes that needed revision and added additional codes as new ideas emerged. A total of 16 categories evolved during axial coding. In Table 3, I provided a sample of some of the categories and open codes that were created from the participants' responses.

Table 3*Examples of Open Codes and Categories*

Category	Code	Participant	Excerpt
Numerous Roles and Responsibilities	Leadership	P9	"I serve on the leadership team and the leadership cabinet."
	Committees	P8	"I am grade chair team lead and on the school improvement team."
	Analyze Data	P10	"I make sure we have our monthly meetings the second Tuesday of every month."
	Organize/Monitor Support	P7	"I make sure we have our celebrations monthly, do our surveys to monitor what we have to work on."
Training and Experience	Knowledge/Experience	P3	"I was the PBIS coach at my previous school."
	PBIS Team District/state training	P6	"I was a member of the PBIS team for years before I volunteered for the coach."
Lack of Resources	Time	P1	"A classroom teacher does not have the flexibility to do all the responsibilities of a coach."
	Workload Flexibility Funding	P6	"Classroom teachers have a lot on their plate so it was a struggle for me."
Low Staff Buy-In	Unmotivated Buy-in	P2	"Working with negative personalities from those who do not want to change from what they've been doing."
		P1	"You have to have the buy-in. Teachers were not giving students their points."
Positive Climate and Culture	Culture Support staff	P9	"I would say to foster a safe and nurturing environment for all students."
		P10	"To provide a positive learning environment for all students and to reduce the amount of unwanted behaviors."
Provided Resources	Resources Programs	P4	"We have received Second Step curriculum and incentives for students and staff."
		P7	"The PBIS Rewards program has been provided for us."
Value of Coaching	Staff buy-in Guidance Leadership	P3	"If the coaches are not properly trained, it's very hard for the PBIS coach to relay this information to the school to buy-in."
		P2	"Get people excited about the changes and provide feedback to address changes in the future."
Needed Resources	Time Funding	P6	"We are really short staffed at the school so we didn't have anyone to run the store."
		P1	"We need to make sure that we have some kind of way to support PBIS financially."
Support with Implementation and Fidelity Practices	Needed Training Fidelity Practices Additional Coaching	P3	"Workshops are needed for new teachers coming in and refreshers after the breaks."
		P8	"I know about the tiered process but I'm not knowledgeable enough and there's still more I need to learn."

Phase 3: Searching for Themes

Once I completed axial coding, I examined the categories to identify emerging themes from the entire dataset. The categories were grouped according to similar meanings and characteristics. Four themes were derived from the analysis: (a) PBIS coaches must be trained and have experience to accomplish the roles and responsibilities of coaching, (b) PBIS coaches are challenged by limited resources, workload, and staff buy-in, (c) PBIS coaches promote positive school climate through uniform expectations, acknowledging students and staff, and providing staff support, and (d) PBIS coaches need resources and necessary support to improve PBIS. I used thematic analysis as a guide to identify the various patterns and generate the themes according to the research questions. I made sure that the codes were distinctive and nonrelative to the other themes.

Phase 4: Reviewing the Themes

In Phase 4, I reviewed the themes multiple times to make sure that they were of good quality. I performed a deep analysis of the data items. Next, I generated a finalized the list of the themes. I accomplished this by comparing the data with the themes that were formulated to identify any missing information that may have been overlooked in the earlier phases of the analysis.

Phase 5: Defining and Labeling Themes

Once I made a list of the themes and defined them, I made revisions to all of themes. After careful review, all themes needed additional information to support them. I removed some categories that needed to be applied to collapse with other themes. Four

themes emerged from the data analysis process. There were three themes that answered RQ1 and one theme that answered RQ2.

Every participant indicated that training and experience is needed to help with the numerous roles and responsibilities of a PBIS coach. All of the participants expressed that there are numerous challenges, such as lack of time and funding, that prevent them from implementing PBIS. The participants valued their jobs as PBIS coaches and believed that the one of the main goals of implementing PBIS is to provide a positive school climate for students and staff. Lastly, all participants expressed that PBIS cannot be implemented without making adjustments to the resources that they are provided and the various supports that are needed. In Table 4, I provided a sample of the categories and themes that emerged during thematic analysis related to both research questions. RQ1 for this study was *What are early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coaches?* The themes used to answer this research question were: (a) PBIS coaches must be trained and have experience to accomplish the roles and responsibilities of coaching, (b) PBIS coaches are challenged by limited resources, workload, and staff buy-in, and (c) PBIS coaches promote positive school climate through uniform expectations, acknowledging students and staff, and providing staff support. RQ2 for this study was *What do early childhood teachers who are PBIS coaches need to improve the implementation of PBIS?* The theme used to answer RQ2 was: (d) PBIS coaches need resources and necessary support to improve PBIS.

Table 4*Categories and Themes*

RQ1: What are early childhood teachers' perspectives of being PBIS coaches?	
Categories	Themes
Having Numerous Roles and Responsibilities Training and Experience	PBIS coaches must be trained and have experience to accomplish the roles and responsibilities of coaching.
Lack of Resources Excess Workload Low Staff Buy-in	PBIS coaches are challenged by limited resources, workload, and staff buy-in.
Positive Culture and Climate Value of Coaching	PBIS coaches promote positive school climate through uniform expectations, acknowledging students and staff, and providing staff support.
RQ2: What do early childhood teachers who are PBIS coaches need to improve the implementation of PBIS?	
Categories	Themes
Needed Resources Support with Implementation and Fidelity Practices	PBIS coaches need resources and necessary support to improve PBIS.

Phase 6: Producing the Report

The last phase was to complete a summary analysis of the themes and write the results in the final report. After finalizing the data analysis, I ensured that the themes answered the research questions. I did not find evidence of inconsistent findings in the data; therefore, no additional analysis was needed. The themes provided information on the research questions: RQ1: What are early childhood teachers perspectives of being PBIS coaches? RQ2: What do early childhood teachers who are PBIS coaches need to improve the implementation of PBIS?

Results

I explored early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach for this basic qualitative study using semi-structured interviews. In this section, I share the results of the data that was collected from 10 interviews with early childhood teachers who currently serve as PBIS coaches. A total of 10 open-ended questions were asked. The interview questions (see Appendix A) were used to answer the research questions. Interview questions 1, 3, 5, and 7 were used to answer RQ1 to get a better understanding of their perspectives. Interview questions 2, 4, 6, 9, and 10 were used to answer RQ2.

The first research question focused on the perspectives of early childhood teachers who serve as PBIS coaches. Three themes emerged to answer the first question. The themes were: (a) PBIS coaches must be trained and have experience to accomplish the roles and responsibilities of coaching (b) PBIS coaches are challenged by limited resources, workload, and staff buy-in (c) PBIS coaches promote positive school climate through uniform expectations, acknowledging students and staff, and providing staff support. The second research question focused on items that PBIS coaches need to improve on to improve implementation. One theme emerged from this question. The theme that emerged was: (d) PBIS coaches need resources and necessary support to improve PBIS.

Theme 1: PBIS Coaches Must Be Trained and Have Experience to Accomplish the Roles and Responsibilities of Coaching

Having Numerous Roles and Responsibilities

Early childhood teachers who serve as PBIS coaches were participants in this study. When asked about their roles, all the participants revealed that they have multiple roles in addition to being a PBIS coach. P5 stated, “I am the transitional kindergarten teacher at my school. It is where kids were turning five between September 2nd and December 2nd, and they’re going to go to kindergarten next year. I am also one of the MTSS leads.”

P8 shared, “Right now, I am a second-grade teacher, grade chair team lead, and I serve on the school improvement team.”

P5 indicated, “In conjunction with being the PBIS coach, I am also an early childhood intervention teacher and mentor teacher for the new teachers coming in.”

PBIS coaches are also considered leaders within the school. Most of the participants shared that they serve on the leadership team or have some type of leadership role. P2 indicated “I am a 1st grade teacher and 1st grade team lead. I do a lot with technology and I’m on the leadership team for the entire school. I wear many hats.”

P9 expressed,

I am an early childhood intervention teacher. I serve on the leadership team at the school and on the leadership cabinet. I am also chair of the girls’ mentoring program at the school and I am chair of our Relay for Life team.

The participants stressed that as early childhood teachers and PBIS coaches, they had a number of responsibilities and tasks that added to overwhelming workloads. When asked about the daily responsibilities in the role of a PBIS coach, the participants revealed that they are involved in numerous meetings, where analyzing data is a major task. P10 revealed that “I am in charge of our monthly meetings which we have on the second Tuesday of every month where we sit down, and we analyze the behavior data from the previous month to look and see what’s going on in our building.”

P10 continued,

We look at minors, we look at majors, we analyze where the behaviors are occurring the most and what time of day they’re occurring. Then from there, we have to look at how we are going to support those teachers and those students who are displaying those behaviors.

Similarly, P5 noted, “I am the facilitator of our PBIS meetings and lead discussions with our staff members regarding PBIS, helping them to look at our data and manage our PBIS systems within our school.”

P1 reported,

We have to go SWIS and put in the data. Then we had to analyze the data because not only was I the PBIS coach, but I was also the data analyst on our PBIS committee. So, I had to make sure to go in and look at the data and look at trends in the data. When our committee met, I was able to discuss with them the trends that I see, like what incidents are happening and the time of day they are happening.

All the participants shared other responsibilities that include the monitoring and overseeing of assessments, programs, curriculums, and student celebrations. They also shared that they are responsible for providing staff with the support needed for implementation by providing professional development and being available to answer questions or concerns that they may have. P2 stated, “We kind of pre-meet, talk about what we need to discuss that month, if we had the TFI or the walkthrough, or the survey.” P2 continued,

Obviously, a big part of PBIS is how you celebrate students. So that’s another thing that takes a lot of planning and time and it’s hard for classroom teachers to do because unlike assistant principals and counselors, we don’t have that flexibility.

P8 supported,

I’m all over the building monitoring, making sure that everyone is comfortable with PBIS, and they know how to utilize PBIS and not struggling with it. At the beginning of the year, we have our PBIS kickoff. I am responsible with organizing that as well. During the kickoff, we lay everything out on the table and let the teachers and students know what is expected of them and the PBIS process.

P7 added, “In addition to having monthly meetings with the PBIS team, we make sure we have celebrations for our students monthly and we survey the school to see what areas we need to work on.”

Training and Experience

PBIS coaches must provide training and knowledge on proper implementation practices for faculty, staff, and students. When PBIS coaches are trained and have the experience needed, they are able to ensure PBIS implementation fidelity and sustainability, build capacity within the school, and improve student outcomes (Center on PBIS, 2018). The participants revealed that it is essential for PBIS coaches to have training and experience. P5 expressed, “Our school started PBIS six or seven years ago. I was a member of the team first and we attended our county trainings where they gave us information on tier one and then tier two and then tier three.”

P5 added,

We worked with the county coaches to help with that and then our kind of site-based coaches came out of the initial team. Our site admin assigned those people to be the PBIS coach. So obviously they wanted people with experience, people who understood the concept of PBIS because there was some confusion sometimes around it. That was our initial training. We then worked with district coaches to help train us.

P6 stated,

It should be a requirement that you have experience in the classroom and also have good classroom management. It should be imperative that you have experience dealing with problem behaviors PBIS coaches should attend any trainings that the district requires the coaches to attend. I attended PBIS con which is a national PBIS training.

P4 confirmed,

I was previously on the PBIS team and served in the role of communications before being a PBIS coach for my school. I received some training with the school and district on implementation and students that needed interventions. I also completing a six-week course on implementing positive behavior with students.

Theme 2: PBIS Coaches Are Challenged by Limited Resources, Workload, and Staff Buy-In

Lack of Resources

Lack of resources was a key concern for early childhood teachers who are PBIS coaches. The participants vocalized their challenges with implementing PBIS and how the lack of time and lack of funding were major issues. P7 shared, “I think being that I’m a full-time teacher and trying to do PBIS, time is an issue, and you can’t create more of it.”

P7 continued,

I am trying to fully devote myself to both and it became an issue of time because you have I have a full set of students in my classrooms and sometimes I needed to walk around and do observations to make sure that I was inspecting what I was expecting from staff. So, time would be the biggest issue as a full time teacher and PBIS coach.

P5 expressed, “We teach full-time and so we have to do PBIS coaching after school or during TK PLC meetings because we are challenged with finding time to get PBIS tasks done.”

P10 agreed,

There are a lot of challenges. The amount of time as a classroom teacher, you have a million and ten things to do to make sure your classroom is running the right way. There are a lot of PBIS duties that need to be done and you want to make sure you are providing the resources for everyone. As a classroom teacher, I cannot get out of my classroom and go support teachers in other rooms or observe what is happening in real time. So, some things slip through the cracks because nobody really has time and time is of the essence. I wasn't able to do everything because I was stuck in my classroom all day.

In relation to funding, the participants believed that because their school lacked funding, there were threats to implementation. P6 stated, “I am challenged with buying incentives, and I go out on my own to get incentives for students and those who want to participate in celebrating the students.”

P10 shared,

We can reward students with free things all day long. Things like wearing pajamas or any kind of free reward. But also, I think that classroom teachers don't understand that students have these behavior points and they're earning all these points, but the points aren't really effective if the students are not being recognized for earning the points. So, a big thing that teachers felt were that they

were not going to spend a bunch of money on a treasure box and hand out toys all time. Also having events cost money. We used to do a quarterly glow party for our kids. I think that from being in a classroom for eight years, students want to be recognized and not by a piece of paper or certificate. So being able to do things costs money and that is something that we really don't have a lot of.

Excess Workload

Early childhood teachers are faced with a heavy workload in addition to being PBIS coaches. Most of the participants shared how their workload conflicted with their coaching responsibilities and those of the staff, which led to PBIS not being implemented with fidelity. P1 shared that because the workload was overwhelming, it was important to have balance by stating,

“Being a classroom teacher and a PBIS coach you have the responsibility of having a classroom of students that you have to make sure that you're meeting their academic needs and making sure you're keeping data on them and how they're growing and progressing.”

P1 continued,

You're not just over a program for 25 and 26 students. You have 400 and 500 students in a school who you are tracking. I have to make sure the matrices are right and make sure teachers understand how to report minor and major behaviors. I have to also make sure the expectations and present for all areas around the school. So, I had to learn how to balance being a teacher and a PBIS

coach. So yes, a major challenge is having to manage a classroom and being over the program for an entire school.

P6 shared,

As a classroom teacher and a PBIS coach, I think a challenge for me was delegating some things to the team and trying to do it all myself. Because I had empathy for teachers and I knew that they had a lot to do and I knew what my workload was, it was hard for me to ask another teacher, “Hey, can you do this?”.

Knowing that they have a lot on their plate, that was kind of a struggle for me.

P3 agreed, “The challenge is basically doing all the paper for being a PBIS coach and the paperwork for an early childhood classroom intervention teacher. It just gets a little overwhelming.”

Low Staff Buy-In

Participants revealed that staff buy-in had a direct correlation to successful PBIS implementation. They shared that their work to get staff to fully buy-in and commit to PBIS was challenging and prevented them from implementing the PBIS framework the way that it should be implemented. P6 admitted that it was difficult to even get the PBIS team to buy-in by stating,

“The first challenge is my team composition. Getting my PBIS to really be invested in what we were doing. I could probably count on 4 or 5 members on my team. The other team members didn’t try to come to meetings as much as they could have. They kind of thought it was a hassle. I was just like, well goodness, why are you on the team? Let’s get people who want to be here.”

P6 continued,

I think it was an issue for me to start with. You know getting all of the staff involved. I keep saying this, the staff buy-in is so important. When it was time to reward students, many teachers were having issues with rewarding from their cell phones, and they did not want to use their iPads. They were being a little bit rebellious about not wanting to learn how to use it properly and efficiently. We had to have some private PLs with some people to teach them how to do it. I still think there are some that are still not seeing it. Although we did see improvement, I think staff buy-in is a big struggle.

P4 agreed,

One of the challenges that I face is buy-in from the teachers and making sure that they said yes, I would love to be a part of PBIS. I have to make sure that they are buying in and are kept motivated about PBIS. The most difficult thing is making sure that when I'm asking them to implement a lesson plan or a new strategy on how to handle behavior, they're going in 100%. I have to make sure I go back and stay on it to help them be consistent.

The negative attitudes towards PBIS affected staff buy-in. P2 shared that teachers were negative when asked to implement,

“It's hard working with different personalities. There are those that do not want to change something that they've been doing and some that don't want to follow the protocol because they're good friends with the principal. They think that they can skip all the steps of the framework and go straight to ISS.”

P2 continued,

There will always be someone who doesn't agree with your decisions as a coach. For example, many upper grade teachers did not like how we celebrated PBIS because there was a \$0 budget from the school. We had to rely on donations and volunteers. They were quick to complain but did not consider all the things that go into planning.

P10 expressed,

That the biggest challenge as a classroom teacher and being a coach at the same time is when you hear the word coach, it's kind of looked at as a higher position like an admin or an instructional coach position. When you're a classroom teacher and the PBIS coach at the same time, you don't always get that level of respect because staff see you as a classroom teacher too. They feel as though you should not try to tell them what to do in their classrooms. So, although you are the coach and considered the expert and know how PBIS should be implemented correctly, others feel like you a classroom teacher to and they aren't going to listen to you.

Theme 3: PBIS Coaches Promote Positive School Climate Through Uniform Expectations, Acknowledging Students and Staff, and Providing Staff Support
Positive Culture and Climate

School climate is a key indicator of school improvement and critical outcomes, positively impacting students' academic achievement, problem behavior, and social-emotional health, according to various researchers (Charlton et al., 2021). When asked about the objective for schools implementing PBIS and how PBIS coaches assist with the

process, many participants revealed that the goal was to have a positive school culture and climate where the focus is on the whole child. P9 shared, “Our goal is to foster a safe and nurturing environment for all students as well as rewarding students for positive behavior. As a PBIS coach, we want to make sure that it’s implemented.”

P6 agreed,

The whole idea is to really change the culture of the school. Even at my school, we don’t have or we haven’t had many behaviors or real strong behavior issues. The idea of celebrating students, really seeing the impact of kids looking forward to coming to shop at the store and just the ones that might not have severe behavior concerns. So, for me as a coach, just changing the culture of the school in a positive way.

Similarly, P7 noted,

For us it is to get everybody on the same accord. To make sure we are all moving in the right direction as far as how we expect the students to behave and what the expectations are at our school. It is to promote overall togetherness.

In relation to students and staff, P1 shared, “The objective is to build relationships between the students and teacher to where good behavior is acknowledged for students. That behavior will trickle down into the students being successful in their academics.”

Some of the participants emphasized improved behavior as a way to improve the school climate. P10 expressed, “We want to provide a positive learning environment for all students and to reduce the amount of unwanted behaviors.”

P10 continued,

We want to encourage students to do the right thing and be acknowledged for displaying appropriate behavior. We want to teach the students the right way to behavior in a positive manner as opposed to punishing them for doing something wrong. A lot of kids don't know the right way and when they come to school, we are the only form of communication of what is expected and how to behave. A lot of kids don't get that at home. So just setting the standard for the appropriate way to respond with your emotions and teaching them it's okay if you mess up. We teach it in a positive way and not punish them. It's a teaching method.

P4 shared,

Where I am, we want to increase the positive behavior of students, but also intervene with those that do not display positive behavior. We want to encourage better behavior in all students and help the teachers model that behavior that we would like to see in our students.

Value of Coaching

PBIS coaches, school, and district, are a valuable entity of the PBIS framework. At the core of the framework, PBIS coaches assist with building capacity within the schools by collaborating and facilitating the infrastructure and systems (Center on PBIS, 2018). Coaching serves as a bridge between the research and practice gap and the participants agreed that they are key drivers of the implementation process. P4 shared, "When I think about myself as the PBIS coach, I believe first in the program, and I believe in PBIS. I also believe that it works."

P4 elaborated,

PBIS is not something that you put down and pick up. It is a daily process of thinking about how you are going to implement and keep it implemented. You must be consistent in everything that you do. Without that, you will not be successful. I make sure that the expectations are being taught according to the lesson plans that we have created.

P7 agreed, “Coaching gives me direction. There are times that I have questions and the district coaching is there for support. They walk me through and having them there is paramount.”

P10 explained,

PBIS coaches are like experts in the field. When there is a question, they can come to me, and I can help them out. I think it’s great to have someone in the building that, you know, if they don’t know what to do, they can come to you or someone on the PBIS team. They have resources that is readily available to them to be able to do what they need to do. As a coach, I attend the county meetings and interact with other coaches. I get a chance to see what they’re doing at their schools. So, it’s great to just have that one person that’s able to interact with other people from the county and then come back and share with the others.

Theme 4: PBIS Coaches Need Resources and Necessary Support to Improve PBIS

Needed Resources

Schools need robust systems for PBIS implementation, ensuring staff resources are available for effective collaboration and problem-solving for students. Some of these resources include additional time for implementation and funding for various events,

incentives, and materials. All participants shared that they need additional time to implement PBIS. P9 stressed, “I would say more time. More time is needed within my school day and not a lot of time after contract hours.”

P9 added,

Since we need more time, I would like to share that if we had school-based PBIS coaches, I feel like that should be their only role and not have another role in the building to successfully implement and make sure it is being done with fidelity.

P3 shared,

PBIS takes a lot of time and I wish we could have a PBIS coach in the school that does PBIS implementation from day to day. PBIS needs more time since I have to split my time teaching and being a PBIS coach.”

Several teachers addressed that money is needed to fund the various activities that are being conducted throughout the school. P1 emphasized, “Of course we need finances. We had to find ways to finance things like parties because we were giving kids points to the store and purchase items.”

P1 continued,

Finances were one of the things where we had to find money to buy the items and attend the trips that we took them on for their PBIS celebrations or VIP parties.

We also needed money because we have rented bounce houses or water slides and things like that. We have faced obstacles because we had to raise money to ensure that the kids understood that they were earning the points and getting rewarded.

We didn't want to promise the students that they were getting rewards and in the

end, don't do anything with the points that they've earned. We had to be careful how we raised money because there are so many laws on how schools can collect money and funds and where those funds can and can't go.

P9 agreed,

Our school needs money. We need a budget. Or I would say there should be a higher budget to successfully implement PBIS. There are celebrations that we have and then our school store. I mean it takes a lot you know, for that.

P10 supported, "We need more money. Did I say we need more money? We need more money to be able to provide the rewards and recognition for the students."

Support With Implementation and Fidelity Practices

Participants expressed that there is a need for support with implementation. This support involves staff training and the need to improve staff buy-in to improve fidelity practices. P4 indicated, "Our school is in need of support from the district when it comes to proving behavior interventions for students."

P10 asserted,

I think that the entire school needs training on PBIS and not just from myself as the coach. It needs to come from the county. Everyone should be required to attend a PBIS training in how to implement within their classrooms. Yes, I have a wealth of knowledge in my brain from all the things that I've gone to and all the trainings I've been to. But you can only deliver so much in an hour professional development. So, I think the biggest piece is teachers just need more knowledge and training on implementing PBIS.

P8 expressed,

I've done PBIS for 3 years and there is still a lot that I don't know and want to learn, like the tiered process. I know about the tiers, but I want to be knowledgeable enough. In my opinion, there is still a lot that I need to learn so I can see how to place the kids in the process. I know that everyone starts at tier 1 but I need help with knowing when it is severe enough for them to move to tier 2 or tier 3. We also need training on the flowchart. We have it and are constantly making adjustments to it based on the observed behaviors. So, I guess I need more knowledge to help me implement being that I am the PBIS coach.

P3 shared,

We need workshops for the new teachers that are coming in so that they can start fresh right in the beginning and not after the first year because teachers will come in doing something different. So, training is needed for brand new teachers and refreshers are needed for teachers that are coming back.

Some participants addressed the need for support with strategies to improve staff buy-in. P2 shared, "Teachers are not being consistent with implementing PBIS throughout the year. We have a lot of issues with that and we want everyone to participate. We need support with staff buying in the implementation of it." P3 added, "I need support with getting everyone to buy-in. From the principal to the custodial staff, total buy-in from everyone."

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (2006) described trustworthiness as true value of qualitative data and the analysis and interpretation of it. Trustworthiness is a crucial factor in evaluating qualitative research, with transparency being its most significant aspect. Burkholder et al. (2020) stated that trustworthiness is the degree which researchers can have confidence in their sources including the methods which those sources were gathered, and that trustworthiness can be achieved through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility is the assurance and believability of the research findings. Credibility was established by creating and utilizing the interview protocol to guide me through the interview process. The interview protocol was used for each individual interview. It contained a pre-interview script where I thanked the participants for participating in the qualitative study and informed the participants of the time that was allocated for completing the interview. I introduced myself, provided the participant with my background, stated the purpose of the qualitative study, and informed the participants that I would not pose risks to their health, well-being, or position in the school system. I assured the participant that the interview will remain confidential. It would not be made public and the data that was collected will be secured and used for this study only. Prior to audio recording, I informed the participants that they had the right to withdraw during any time.

Once recording began, the participants were asked three demographic questions before beginning with the interview questions. During this time, I was able to establish credibility by making sure that the participants were currently early childhood teachers and have been PBIS coaches for at least 3 years. The participants were asked a total of 10 questions which allowed them to share their perspectives of being early childhood teachers who served as PBIS coaches. Once the participants answered all the interview questions, I thanked them again for participating and stopped the audio recording. I kept notes during the interview process and a reflective journal was used to record any biases that occurred. Participants were provided with a two-page summary of the findings along with the opportunity to provide any feedback. None of the participants had questions or provided feedback from the findings of this study.

Transferability

Transferability in research refers to the ability of findings to be applied to different groups or settings, allowing readers to relate the results to their own experiences (Cope, 2014). To support transferability, I provided a detailed description about the participants in the study, setting, and sampling by providing demographic data (see Table 1). Excerpts from the interview protocol outlining the interview procedures also strengthen transferability. The participants have been early childhood education teachers ranging from 8 to 27 years with 3 to 8 years as a PBIS coach. Through this thick description, readers may consider transferring this study's findings to other schools or environments that may be experiencing similar implementation issues.

Dependability

The dependability of the findings refers to the consistency of data under similar conditions. Participants' interviews were conducted via Zoom. To ensure dependability, I followed the interview protocol to guarantee that the interview questions were asked in the same order for each participant. An audit trail was used to keep records of field notes, transcripts, and reflexive journals to make sure the findings were accurately reported. I read the transcripts from the interview multiple times. Through multiple readings of the transcripts, I was able to assess my interpretations, and ensure that they did not change over time. To enhance dependability, I incorporated all data sources during the data collection and analysis process.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the researcher's ability to confirm that the data accurately represents the participants' responses, excluding any biases or viewpoints (Cope, 2014). I used reflexivity to confirm the validity of their findings by examining their own beliefs and judgments towards the collected data. I maintained a reflexive journal and audit trail throughout the process to record my own personal biases. I effectively reported the findings of the study by providing detailed quotes from participants that highlighted each emerging theme.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I reviewed the data analysis process and the shared the findings of the study. This study was formed from three research questions to explore early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach. Semi-structured interviews were

used to collect the data from all 10 participants. Braun and Clark (2006) six-phase thematic analysis provided a guide for the data analysis process. Once I completed axial coding, I grouped the categories into themes. A total of four themes emerged from the analysis: (a) PBIS coaches must be trained and have experience to accomplish the roles and responsibilities of coaching, (b) PBIS coaches are challenged by limited resources, workload, and staff buy-in, (c) PBIS coaches promote positive school climate through uniform expectations, acknowledging students and staff, and providing staff support, and (d) PBIS coaches need resources and necessary support to improve PBIS. Themes one, two, and three answered RQ1. Theme four answered RQ2. To support my analysis, I included excerpts from all participants.

The first theme was: PBIS coaches must be trained and have experience to accomplish the roles and responsibilities of coaching. Participants discussed the training and experience that they received prior to becoming a PBIS coach and the training and experience needed to perform their duties effectively. Participants shared their diverse roles and responsibilities as teachers, coaches, and members of the school community. Most of the participants shared that they have leadership roles within the school. All of the participants revealed that their multiple responsibilities included: analyzing data, meeting with faculty and staff, providing support for teachers, completing walkthroughs and assessments, and monitoring programs, curriculums, and celebrations.

The second theme was: PBIS coaches are challenged by limited resources, workload, and staff buy-in. Participants revealed that being an early childhood teacher and a PBIS coach was very challenging. All participants shared that there wasn't enough

time to carry out the responsibilities that came along with being a PBIS coach because they were classroom teachers. The participants shared that they were challenged because their schedules did not allow them time to perform the tasks required of a PBIS coach. Most of the participants discussed how there was a lack of funding to have events and provide incentives. Without money, it was difficult to celebrate staff and students. Other challenges included an overwhelming workload due to having the role of classroom teacher and PBIS coach. Lastly, the participants were challenged with lack of staff buy-in. Most of the participants shared that they have dealt with negative attitudes towards PBIS and found it challenging to keep the staff motivated to implement the framework.

The third theme was: PBIS coaches promote positive school climate through uniform expectations, acknowledging students and staff, and providing staff support. The participants believed that the main goal of PBIS coaches was to assist with promoting a positive school culture. They felt that they were valuable entities, and their presence could guide the school towards its goal. The participants shared that they wanted to educate the whole child by improving student behavior as well as improving academics. Majority of participants agreed that consistent expectations for students and staff created uniformity, further fostering a positive atmosphere.

The fourth theme was: PBIS coaches need resources and necessary support to improve PBIS. Participants expressed a pressing need for additional time to successfully implement PBIS with fidelity. Two of the participants felt that a full-time PBIS coach at the school level who would focus only PBIS implementation would be most beneficial. Majority of the participants indicated that there was a need for money allocated for PBIS

implementation. The participants believed that a budget for incentives and PBIS celebrations and would enhance their recognition of their staff and students. To assist with PBIS implementation, the participants felt that additional supports were needed. These supports should include additional staff training and strategies that would help improve staff buy-in.

Chapter 4 included the study's trustworthiness by addressing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The data was thoroughly analyzed and interpreted to prevent any potential biases. Reflective journals and audit trails for field notes were used throughout the process of data collection and analysis. There was no evidence to contradict the findings and therefore, no additional analysis was needed.

In Chapter 5, I interpret the study's findings, outlining its limitations, recommendations, and implications. An analysis of each theme's results is provided, highlighting their alignment with the research questions and literature review in Chapter 2. I conclude Chapter 5 with opportunities for social change and a reflection of this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach and their experiences with implementation within the school. The data for this study were collected using semi-structured interviews via Zoom and telephone. All 10 participants were early childhood teachers serving in the capacity of PBIS coaches for at least 3 years. The themes that emerged from this data analysis were the following: (a) PBIS coaches must be trained and have experience to accomplish the roles and responsibilities of coaching, (b) PBIS coaches are challenged by limited resources, workload, and staff buy-in, (c) PBIS coaches promote positive school climate through uniform expectations, acknowledging students and staff, and providing staff support, and (d) PBIS coaches need resources and necessary support to improve PBIS.

In this chapter, I explain the findings of the study and provide an understanding of early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach. The research findings are compared with the current literature and the conceptual framework of implementation science.

The implementation science framework's is based on the theory of personal readiness for change, encompassing the capability, opportunity, and motivation to change behavior (Moir, 2018). Baker and Ryan (2019) highlighted implementation science as the best framework to outline the processes of adopting and implementing evidence-based practices.

Interpretation of the Findings

Once approval from Walden University's IRB was received, I began the data collection process. The following research questions were used for this basic qualitative study:

RQ 1: What are early childhood teachers' perspectives of being PBIS coaches?

RQ 2: What do early childhood teachers who are PBIS coaches need to improve the implementation of PBIS?

I used Walden University's Participant Pool and snowball sampling strategies to collect data from 10 participants using semi-structured interviews. The participants were asked 10 questions about their perspectives of being PBIS coaches and their needs to improve PBIS implementation. The data analysis was conducted using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. Four themes emerged from the data analysis: (a) PBIS coaches must be trained and have experience to accomplish the roles and responsibilities of coaching, (b) PBIS coaches are challenged by limited resources, workload, and staff buy-in, (c) PBIS coaches promote positive school climate through uniform expectations, acknowledging students and staff, and providing staff support, and (d) PBIS coaches need resources and necessary support to improve PBIS. The themes were directly connected to the framework of implementation science. The conceptual framework of implementation science centers around the successful adoption, implementation, and sustainability of EBPs.

Theme 1: PBIS Coaches Must Be Trained and Have Experience to Accomplish the Roles and Responsibilities of Coaching

Proper training is necessary for the effectiveness of PBIS implementation (Horner & Macaya, 2018; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019; Scaletta & Hughes, 2021). According to Baker and Ryan (2019), full implementation can take 3 to 5 years; however, the stages of implementation specifically indicate what each school should be achieving at that time. School leaders must recognize the necessary tasks to be completed at each stage (Ward et al., 2021). PBIS coaches assist with guiding staff towards proper implementation of PBIS practices. For PBIS coaches to be successful with leading schools in PBIS, they must have significant training and experience. Participants agreed with the findings and shared that they had received training at the local, state, and national level.

P4 expressed,

I have received classroom training with my district and social-emotional learning training with the state. Also, different partners have come in and provided me with training on restorative practices. As the coach at my school, I am responsible for sharing that information to our staff in school trainings. When we have our team meetings, I communicate some of that information with our stakeholders and parents.

Hemmeter et al. (2022) noted that training must occur to provide learning opportunities to increase knowledge at all tiers for assisting students with social, emotional, and the behavioral needs of the students. Training should include knowledge

of the MTSS as students need Tier 1, 2, and 3 supports (Center on PBIS, 2018; Weingarten et al., 2020).

P1 added,

During COVID-19, I attended Zoom sessions with the state to talk about the implementation of PBIS and focus more on tier 2 and tier 3 of MTSS. I had to learn about where the students were in tier 2 and tier 3 and take care of their concerns of the high-risk students.

Previous experience on the PBIS team was also helpful for PBIS coaches to assist with implementation. Baker and Ryan (2019) outlined some of the various responsibilities of team members and indicated that their roles impact successful implementation as well. Baker and Ryan added that PBIS team members have responsibilities of reflecting and modeling the vision of PBIS, outlining needed professional development of staff, assessing the data to measure implementation progress, and presenting data to the staff and community. Most of the coaches indicated that they had served on the PBIS team prior to becoming the school PBIS coach. P8 shared, “Because I had been on the PBIS team, I was appointed by my principal to help after the previous coach left. My principal felt that I was a good fit to help with PBIS implementation.”

The failure of PBIS implementation can be prevented by providing adequate training to those responsible for its execution. Lyon et al. (2018) advocated for training and coaching support prior to the implementation phase. Lyon et al. suggested that interactive and post training supports be provided at the exploration phase so that staff

learn without it being a requirement. P7 revealed, “I did not have experience as a PBIS coach or team member before I was selected. I did receive eight sessions of training from RESA to be the coach at my school, but I have to have deeper understanding.”

The implementation of PBIS consists of core features that help identify how schools are improving (Kittleman et al., 2019; Masser et al., 2019). PBIS fidelity tools and assessments are required and PBIS coaches must be trained and prepared to facilitate. Participants acknowledged the necessity of facilitating these duties and emphasized their responsibility for ensuring fidelity in the completion of these assessments. P2 shared, “With me being the coach, I have to administer the SAS and TFI to get feedback from the PBIS team and everyone in the school.” The findings support the research that early childhood teachers should be trained to effectively perform their roles and responsibilities as PBIS coaches.

Theme 2: PBIS Coaches Are Challenged by Limited Resources, Workload, and Staff Buy-In

PBIS coaches have numerous roles and responsibilities (GADOE, 2023; Scaletta & Hughes, 2021). The PBIS team should work collaboratively and cohesively to carry out implementation efforts (Baker & Ryan, 2019). Horner et al. (2018) indicated that the exploration stage of implementation science should be where schools assess the resources for PBIS implementation. Time constraints significantly hinder the effective coaching of PBIS coaches (Foster, 2019; Giordano et al., 2021; Judkins et al., 2019). Participants agreed with the findings and expressed that they are responsible for most implementation duties but faced challenges in executing them within the allotted time.

P9 stated,

I would say the biggest challenge would be the time because when you have another responsibility, like being a full-time teacher, teaching my students and me serving my students come first. So just having enough time to be in the role to serve as the PBIS coach would be time management.

Classroom teachers' main role is to provide daily instruction for their students.

Scaletta & Hughes (2021) revealed that teachers' primary roles and responsibilities hinder their ability to implement PBIS with fidelity. Baker and Ryan (2019) supported that it is not ideal for classroom teachers to serve as PBIS coaches because of their numerous roles and responsibilities, and that the position of PBIS coach should be for someone who has a more flexible schedule.

P2 shared,

I have been to numerous trainings and most of the PBIS coaches are administrators or counselors with more flexibility. I was the only classroom teacher, and it is hard making sure that I am teaching and performing the duties of a PBIS coach.

Funding was also identified as a challenge when implementing PBIS. The absence of funding for school coaches is a significant obstacle to the successful implementation of PBIS (Baker & Ryan, 2019; Chaparro et al., 2022; Kittleman et al., 2022). Administrators must ensure the successful implementation and maintenance of PBIS by dedicating themselves to ensuring the availability of those financial resources (Baker & Ryan, 2019). Implementation science should be integrated into school design and evaluation to

ensure effectiveness and sustainability, with funding being a necessary investment to support implementation (Moir, 2018). Participants acknowledged the necessity of funding not only during the initial stages of implementation, but also for sustainability. P9 expressed,

It is challenging when we don't have the money to acknowledge our students.

Teachers were upset that we were selling snacks at our PBIS parties because in the past, we've gotten them donated or people volunteered to bring them. At the same time, we had to do that because we didn't have the money to have better parties.

Teacher workload has become overbearing, and many teachers find it impossible to tackle during the normal hours of the school day (GADOE, 2023). According to Larson et al. (2018), staff are reluctant to implement practices such as PBIS because of work overload. Moir (2018) revealed that individual's workloads should be taken into consideration to prevent loss of implementation fidelity due to competing job pressures. This is consistent with the findings from this study. Participants shared their frustrations with the overwhelming workload and agreed with the research surrounding the amount of tasks that teachers have to complete within the school day. P7 shared, "I have so much to do and it is hard to devote myself to teaching and being the PBIS coach. I have a classroom full of students and there is so much that I need to do."

The implementation of PBIS occurs over multiple levels and it is important to get system-wide buy-in (Lyon, n.d.). Administrators are leading supporters of staff buy-in. Baker and Ryan (2019) stated that administrators inspire staff buy-in and achievement

and as leaders, they should set the tone for adopting the initiative. Participants agreed that they were presented with numerous challenges as it related to staff buy-in. The staff chose not to buy in for multiple reasons and expressed how hard it was to get buy-in from teachers.

P5 added,

For us a school, the staff must be on board with the same ideas. I felt there was no buy-in because there are a lot of misconceptions about PBIS with our own staff. It is frustrating because PBIS is so valuable and making those connections with the students and treating them with respect is valuable. We can't expect respect back unless we give it first. I feel like that's all PBIS is about.

The low implementation of PBIS is attributed to a combination of factors including lack of resources, excessive workload, and low staff buy-in. Schools that lack the resources and tools to implement often abandon PBIS (Nese et al., 2019). Participants acknowledged the numerous challenges they faced due to the lack of resources and supports, believing it is impossible to implement PBIS with fidelity.

Theme 3: PBIS Coaches Promote Positive School Climate Through Uniform Expectations, Acknowledging Students and Staff, and Providing Staff Support

A crucial factor when considering readiness for PBIS implementation is considering the culture of the school in the exploration stage. Determining the learning outcomes and improvement to the school climate are key factors for school leaders to consider. Bradshaw et al. (2021) advocated for PBIS strategies as a way to improve the school climate and reduce problematic behaviors. The PBIS coach is appointed to gather

school data and guide the school towards creating a positive school environment before adoption (Baker & Ryan, 2019). The analysis of data was praised for its potential to identify effective strategies for addressing student infractions and fostering positive interactions (Hannigan & Hannigan, 2020; McIntosh et al., 2018; Scherer & Ingle, 2020). The participants expressed similar outcomes. When asked about the objectives for schools using PBIS and how coaches assist with the process, participants revealed that the students respond well to positive interactions, and they saw an increase in positive behaviors.

Participants agreed that promoting that positive school climate is a major responsibility that they have. P2 stated, “I want to promote people to do PBIS. It gives you a great leadership role and the chance to connect with other people in the school. I want to dismiss the negative connotation that comes with PBIS.” The perception of PBIS is influenced by numerous myths that need to be dispelled. Findings supported the research of Tyre and Feuerborn (2021) regarding the misconceptions that staff have towards PBIS.

P6 agreed,

Adults in the building have said to me that they don’t want to award students points for doing what they are supposed to do. I shared that it wasn’t like it was when we were kids. There is the misconception that the students shouldn’t be rewarded but they can get bonuses for doing what they are supposed to do. Most of the teachers received that reward. Once students started getting those tangible

rewards, many of the minor behaviors went away and the behavior improved so much.

The conceptual framework of implementation science promotes sustainable practices through structure. Researchers have studied the impact of school climate, including social norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching practices, and organizational structures, on wellbeing and positive outcomes among educators and students (Lyon et al., 2019). Promising results for a positive culture and improved behavior are evident when schools shift to a unified approach (Horner et al., 2019). Findings support Gage et al.'s (2020) statement that uniform expectations aid students in adhering to procedures and fostering a positive environment. Participants agreed that everyone is on the same page when there are universal expectations. P8 shared, "Every teacher is expected to implement the same PBIS expectations with fidelity. We monitor our students' progress and discuss the data weekly. We focus on improving the behavior to have a positive environment." P3 stated, "It feels good seeing teachers not yelling at students when they are implementing the framework."

A positive implementation climate indicates expectations, support, and rewards for the use of programs or practices (Lyon et al., 2018). Carr and Boat (2019) emphasized the importance of a consistent plan and reinforcements for students' growth and development. The results support the need for acknowledging students on a regular basis. Participants agreed with the research and stressed the importance of consistent student and staff acknowledgments to promote successful implementation of PBIS. P8 agreed,

Being a coach and seeing students doing good or me catching them being good is awesome. Students love to hear their names over the intercom when they pick up a piece of paper or follow the expectations. Sometimes we see the other students start looking for paper to pick up so that they can hear their name over the intercom as well.

P4 expressed,

I love PBIS Rewards app because you can reward students and staff. The teachers always praise the app. I love it because it's simple to use and it tracks how the students are behaving and following the expectations. It makes everyone feel good when they are being acknowledged school-wide.

Implementation science is paramount because it emphasizes the need for support for those implementing EBPs. A school climate that is safe and supportive is a key factor for school effectiveness (Charlton et al., 2021). The findings show that support is needed, and many participants revealed how support promotes the positive culture. Participants believe that their role as PBIS coaches is valuable and that they strive to guide schools with creating a positive and supportive climate for students and staff.

Theme 4: PBIS Coaches Need Resources and Necessary Support to Improve PBIS

Leaders and teachers should prioritize investing the necessary time into an initiative over poorly implementing it (Moir, 2018; Nese et al., 2019). When asked about the resources needed to improve PBIS, participants shared that they need additional time or additional staffing to take on the role of PBIS coach. P10 stated, "I put in a lot of extra

hours of my personal time. I believe that PBIS slips through the cracks because we need more time. I mean it's feasible but not going to be implemented 100%."

P6 agreed,

I need more time or maybe someone else to help with running the store. We had an issue when we were short staffed at the school and nobody was available to run the store. So I didn't get to run it the way I imagined I would. If we had somebody there to run the store, I think it would be more beneficial.

Implementation science suggests that school and practice level factors, including resources, determine whether schools will adopt or abandon PBIS implementation.

Lindstrom Johnson et al. (2020) stressed that school and district leaders must understand the funding requirements of PBIS implementation and make efforts to support funding for training and reinforcement programs. It is critical for the PBIS team to have a plan for ongoing funding (Baker & Ryan, 2019). Horner et al. (2019) revealed that implementing PBIS can be costly, averaging about \$5,000 per school. Findings are supportive of Moir's (2018) research indicating that funds need to be invested to cover the costs. Participants supported the research by sharing that money was needed to support implementation efforts, including celebrations and incentives. P7 explained, "We are out of creative ideas for free incentives because we need more money for rewarding our students."

As mentioned by Odom et al. (2013) professional development and other supports are needed for effective implementation and fidelity practices. These implementation and fidelity practices include building an understanding of PBIS, minimizing misconceptions, and creating a shared vision (Chaparro et al., 2022; Tyre & Feuerborn, 2021).

Professional development opportunities equip staff with the necessary skills to tackle school-related issues. (Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019). P2 expressed, “Every year when we come back from summer break, we get started with tasks other than professional development for PBIS. We need specific training to help everyone understand the flowchart and how to provide effective consequences for students’ behavior.” The results from the research indicate that staff require professional development in the foundations of PBIS and its implementation practices.

Other support to improve PBIS implementation should be provided to staff. All participants referenced the need for ways to improve implementation and fidelity practices. P5 shared, “I really enjoy being the PBIS coach but it’s hard to get staff on board. I think we need ways to combat that. Sometimes our district helps with ideas but it’s hard.” Findings back Carriere et al. (2020) research by indicating that strategies are needed to support with staff buy-in. Filter and Brown (2019) highlighted the importance of thorough planning and staff support as strategies for effective implementation. It is important for school leaders to assist staff with understanding that PBIS is a commitment that takes everyone working together to be successful.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations for this study. The first limitation was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the number of teachers who had time for interviews. Many teachers were unable to provide interviews due to low attendance and availability. I overcame this limitation by using the Walden University research participant pool and PBIS social media groups to solicit participants to acquire qualified participants.

The second limitation was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student and staff attendance. The school calendar should reflect 2-3 consecutive years of consistent implementation of programs and practices (Lyons, n.d.). The COVID-19 pandemic has limited the ability to gain a true perspective of implementation practices from early childhood teachers serving as PBIS coaches.

The third limitation was researcher bias. As an early childhood teacher, PBIS coach, and assistant director of school climate, I have extensive experience in leading implementation within my school. During the data collection and analysis process, I used a reflective journal to document my thoughts. The study's objectives were not hindered by my personal thoughts and perspectives.

Recommendations

Results from this study could potentially contribute to further research on early childhood teachers' perspectives on their roles as PBIS coaches. The first recommendation for future research should be to focus on providing comprehensive professional development training to PBIS coaches and staff on rigorous implementation practices. PBIS coaches require comprehensive coaching and training to facilitate needed professional development for staff. PBIS coaches should attend district, state, and national training to acquire the knowledge needed for implementation. School leaders should require PBIS training for all staff at the start of the year and booster training throughout the year. Opportunities should be made available for those who joined after the start of the year and missed the initial training.

The second recommendation is to examine the workload of early childhood teachers serving as PBIS coaches prior to assigning them the role. Although administrators are the leaders of the school, they may not have a full scope of the responsibilities of PBIS coaches and PBIS implementation. The primary responsibility of classroom teachers is to provide instruction for their students; however, other duties include monitoring and evaluating student progress, maintaining a safe environment, and planning the implementation for curriculum programs. Classroom teachers' workload is increasing due to local, state, and federal mandates. Assessing the responsibilities of the classroom teacher should be heavily considered if schools desire to implement PBIS with fidelity.

The third recommendation would be to allocate time and funding for implementing PBIS. To be effective, there must be time designated for implementation. Time should be set aside for PBIS team meetings, walkthroughs, assessments, planning, and providing acknowledgements. Time should be allocated for classroom teachers to offer additional support to other teachers and staff who require additional assistance with fidelity practices. School leaders must also identify sources for a school budget. Increasing funding is necessary to provide training, materials, incentives, and other acknowledgements for students and staff.

The final recommendation would be to explore ways to improve staff buy-in with improving PBIS implementation practices. Staff buy-in starts with leadership (Baker & Ryan, 2019). The PBIS team is designed to have an administrator capable of making crucial decisions and devising strategies to enhance the implementation of PBIS.

Administrators can aim for successful implementation and teacher buy-in by acknowledging their efforts and providing necessary resources such as time and funding. Administrators can also offer continuous support throughout the year through ongoing training. There should be consistent collaboration amongst the PBIS coach, administrators, and the PBIS team to assess staff buy-in and identify strategies to improve implementation.

Implications

This study may contribute to positive social change by revealing to various stakeholders the challenges that early childhood teachers who are PBIS coaches face with the implementation of PBIS. By exploring their perspectives, stakeholders may work to improve the time and funding issues faced by PBIS coaches. Stakeholders may also see the importance of professional development and training for staff to improve implementation practices. The findings could provide insights for enhancing implementation, promoting sustainability of the PBIS framework, and reducing problematic behavior. This study's findings could assist school administrators in their leadership roles by identifying strategies to enhance staff support.

The study's findings indicated that the participants expressed that their responsibilities as an early childhood classroom teacher and PBIS coach were overwhelming and difficult to perform. The workload, lack of resources such as time and funding, and low staff buy-in were all barriers of successful implementation. The participants stressed the need for more time, funds, and professional development to improve staff buy-in and support students and staff in their schools.

Conclusion

The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to explore early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach. The study's findings revealed a gap in current practice. Research exists on PBIS implementation but there is limited research available on early childhood teachers who serve as PBIS coaches and their experiences with implementation. The results revealed obstacles early childhood teachers encounter as PBIS coaches with implementation and the areas they need improvement in to enhance their effectiveness. Teachers expressed that the daily responsibilities of being a classroom teacher and PBIS coach were overwhelming. They expressed that the PBIS framework's implementation was hindered by a lack of time, funds, and support.

Stakeholders must recognize the value of PBIS coaches and their commitment to fidelity, but resources like time and funding are crucial for successful implementation. The information from this study may help school leaders understand the challenges that PBIS coaches face with PBIS implementation. Educators might use the findings to promote positive social change by enhancing the implementation and fidelity practices ultimately transforming the school climate. Early childhood teachers, serving as PBIS coaches, may use the findings to assist them in guiding the implementation of a framework to enhance the school's culture. We must continue to inform educators of teachers' perspectives to make improvements for teachers, PBIS coaches, and ultimately students.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. In addition to being a PBIS coach, what other positions/roles and responsibilities do you have at your school?
2. What is the objective for schools utilizing PBIS implementation and assigning PBIS coaches to assist with the process?
3. What qualifications and training are required to become a PBIS coach?
4. What resources have been provided to improve PBIS implementation at your school?
5. What are your daily responsibilities in the role of a PBIS coach?
6. How does the PBIS coaching process affect successful PBIS implementation?
7. What challenges have you experienced as an early childhood teacher who is a PBIS coach?
8. What are some of the successes have you experienced as an early childhood PBIS coach?
9. What do you believe you need to improve PBIS implementation at your school?
10. Is there any additional information that you would like to share about being a PBIS coach or PBIS implementation?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Date of the interview: _____
 Begin Time: _____ End time: _____
 Interviewer: _____ Interviewee: _____
 Method of interview recording: _____

Pre-Interview Script:

Welcome and thank you for deciding to participate in this qualitative study. In an effort to preserve your time, I will strive to complete this interview in a prompt manner. The interview will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes to complete. I will be taking notes throughout this process.

The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to explore early childhood teachers' perspectives of being a PBIS coach and their experiences with implementations within the school. This interview is being conducted by myself, Tiesha L. Allen, a Walden University doctoral student. I have been in education for approximately 20 years. I have served in the capacities of an early childhood teacher and intervention specialist. I am currently the director of the PBIS department within my school district.

As a participant in this study, I will not pose any risks to your health, well-being, or position in the school system. The interview will remain confidential, and your identity will not be made public. The data collected will be secured and used for this study only.

As mentioned, the interview will be recorded, and you can withdraw during any time. Do I have your permission to audio record this interview? Thank you. Do you have any questions? Recording will begin now.

Demographic Questions

1. How long have you been in education? _____
2. How long have you been an early childhood education teacher? _____
3. How long have you been a PBIS coach? _____

Post-Interview Script

Thank you for participating in this qualitative study. I am grateful that you have shared your experiences as an early childhood teacher and PBIS coach. Once the study is completed, I will send you a summary and any feedback you have will be appreciated. Before ending our interview, I would like to know if you have any questions. Thank you again for participating.