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Nonadministrative Employees' Perceptions of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in an Urban Public High School

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2024

Abstract

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) is a schoolwide approach to promote positive school safety in which student academic success can occur. However, at least one third of students in United States schools are suspended once in their K12 school career for violating a school's code of conduct. School suspensions have been linked to lack of student academic achievement, non-inclusive school culture, and meager college and career readiness. However, it remains unclear how a multitiered framework of support can guide a school to improve student academic outcomes and positive student behavior. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of nonadministrative employees regarding the practice of PBIS in an urban public high school in New York City. The study was guided by Dahlberg and Dahlberg's reflective lifeworld theory. Data were collected from semistructured interviews with a representative group of 13 school staff, nonadministrative employees who were teachers and guidance counselors, who work in an urban public high school in New York City. Data were analyzed and five themes emerged: (a) prepared to be successful, (b) New York City Department of Education, (c) case by case, (d) safe school culture, and (e) leadership. These identified themes were used to answer the research questions. The findings of this study have potential implications for positive social change that include increasing understanding into alternative discipline approaches to improve a school culture which can increase student academic success and college and career readiness, resulting in more students leaving high school prepared to contribute to the well-being of society.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my mother, Mary Ida McCoy, whose sacrifices, strength, and undying love enabled me to achieve such an accomplishment. I will always cherish you. May you forever watch over me and may you smile upon the daughter you have made.

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This work would not have been possible without the direction and support of my mentor and chair, Dr. John Harrison. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. This journey was not easy, and I am truly grateful to have had you as my mentor. I would also like to thank the following individuals for believing in me: Dr. Mandy Giust for your invaluable patience and direction throughout this process. My niece, Mary LaShawn Blandin, for being patient and a beacon of strength; I have learned from you to stay strong—how we can persevere through anything. My family and close friends have been there from Day 1, pushing me to be focused and to stay strong. I am forever in your debt. I am who I am because of you. I will cherish your mentorship, leadership, friendship, and love. Thank you!

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) is an evidence-based prevention framework that establishes positive school climate and student behavior (McDaniel & Bruhn, 2019). In academic institutions, the framework is intended to provide a proactive system that promotes student academic success by employing a multitiered continuum of support comprised of evidence-informed behavior interventions for all learners (Baule, 2020; McDaniel & Bruhn, 2019). However, schoolwide implementation and support of PBIS in urban public high schools where violence occurs may not formally address student misbehavior problems (McDaniel & Bruhn, 2019; Tyre et al., 2020). Reports have indicated that school staff support is a critical factor in the sustainability of PBIS when addressing negative student behavior in schools where zero-tolerance exists (Lustick, 2020; Tyre et al., 2020). Examining the experiences and perceptions nonadministrative employees have regarding PBIS is necessary for academic institutions that want to establish a school culture where appropriate student behavior is the norm (Tyre et al., 2020).

Tyre et al. (2020) found that school staff support is an important factor in the implementation and sustainability of PBIS at secondary academic institutions. School staff not buying into PBIS is the primary barrier to the program's success (Feuerborn et al., 2019). Nonadministrative employees agreed lack of support for PBIS at a school by its leadership can hinder a school from being nurturing, impeding the academic success and social development of its learners (Baule, 2020; Tyre et al., 2020). School staff are

primary stakeholders because they have experience and knowledge of PBIS and its efficacy (McDaniel & Bruhn, 2019). The ability for PBIS practice to improve a schools' overall climate may be a solution to increasing a school's level of college and career readiness (McDaniel & Bruhn, 2019). Identifying these concerns, nonadministrative employees at an urban public high school addressed factors that determine the efficacy of PBIS.

The extent to which PBIS has been studied in urban public high schools from the experiences and perceptions of school staff remains in question. School staff at some schools oppose PBIS and prefer punitive punishment versus restorative practices for negative student behavior (Rosenbaum, 2020). Staff perceptions, experiences, and understandings of PBIS have direct correlation to schools implementing initiatives that promote a healthy climate that fosters high-pitched academic expectations (Zysberg & Schwabsky, 2021).

Background

A formal introduction to the topic of school violence and its impact on school climate and student academic scholarship sheds light on the creation and implementation of PBIS and its efficacy on youth in urban public high schools in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) contended that school violence is a major topic of concern for U.S. society due to its long-lasting effects on youth (Peguero et al., 2021). School violence is defined as violence which occurs on school property, to or from school, or at a school-sponsored event (CDC, 2020). School violence can be considered, but is not limited to, defying or disobeying the authority of school personnel

in a way that disrupts the educational process or that poses danger to a school community, bullying, gang violence, possessing property belonging to another without authorization, fighting, sexual misconduct, and possession of a weapon (New York City Department of Education [NYCDOE], 2019). In some instances, teachers have reported being victims of school violence. CDC (2020) reported teachers and other school staff face violence daily in the workplace. Specifically, teachers experienced a rate of 39 incidents of violence per 1,000 teachers (CDC, 2020).

Students who commit acts of violence in or around schools have been suspended in-school or out of school for their behavior. The NYCDOE reported 32,801 suspensions in school year 2018–2019 and 18,215 suspensions in school year 2019–2020 (NYCDOE, Biannual Report, 2019). According to Rosenbaum (2020), suspended youth have more negative outcomes then non-suspended youths as adults. Youths who have been suspended are less likely to graduate from high school with a high school diploma or to earn a degree from a college or university but are more likely to be placed on probation or arrested (Rosenbaum, 2020).

Many school districts in the United States enacted discipline consequences based on the 1994 Federal Gun-Free Schools Act. The Federal Gun-Free Schools Act showed increased suspension due to the zero-tolerance nature of this policy. School suspensions remove students from the instructional environment, by giving students in-school or out-of-school suspensions, for schools to have a safe environment for students to learn in. The zero-policy initiative, however, creates a school culture that often shifts school discipline from educative to punitive (Lustick, 2020).

Long-term effects of punitive discipline policies have led to the development of positive behavior intervention. PBIS is an evidence-based scaffold employed by academic institutions to create institutions that support desired behaviors of learners to foster an environment in which all students can succeed (Bastable et al., 2021; Tyre et al., 2020). While many researchers have studied school suspensions and their impact on student scholarship, it remains unclear how this multitiered framework of support can guide an organization to improve student academic outcomes and positive student behavior (Freeman et al., 2019).

In 2014, the U.S. federal government promoted the positive school discipline initiative (PSDI). The PSDI required school districts to reduce school suspensions and address the racial disparity of suspensions among minority and majority students (Lustick, 2020). In September of 2014, NYCDOE under the direction of its mayor, Bill de Blasio, stated schools would scale back on suspensions (Lustick, 2020), specifically in high schools.

Use of PBIS can create institutions that support desired behaviors of learners to foster student academic success (Tyre et al., 2020). Melloy and Murry (2019) contended multitiered systems like PBIS are fair and equitable discipline systems designed to serve all students to reduce student suspensions to improve a school's student scholarship. In a study on closing the achievement gap in postsecondary schools by Anderson et al. (2019), school staff members' perceptions of urban practice and consequences of school suspensions showed that associations between suspensions, PBIS, and student outcomes persist if school personnel are not versed on strategies such as social and emotional

learning that may reduce students committing negative behavior that leads to suspension. Many students lack support and preparation for postsecondary education (Anderson et al., 2019). Students are suspended to appease primary stakeholders, such as teachers, district leaders, and parents (Lustick, 2020). Although there is a vast body of research focused on the impact of PBIS on student academic achievement (Freeman et al., 2019) and behavior outcomes in urban high schools, current research focused on school climate and student misbehavior where PBIS is present lacks teachers' perspective and support (Feuerborn et al., 2019; Reaves & Cozzens, 2018). In urban public high schools where PBIS is present, student misbehavior occurs, and students are not prepared for postsecondary education or the 21st century workplace (Anderson et al., 2019).

The gap in understanding addressed by this study is the lack of knowledge regarding nonadministrative employees' experiences and perceptions of the influences of PBIS on improving school climate and students' transition from high school to pathways after graduation. The study is needed to understand the role of behavior support of nonadministrative employees, teachers, and guidance counselors. School staff work directly with students (Feuerborn et al., 2019). Feedback from the life experiences of nonadministrative employees could lead to positive student behavior and improved student academic success.

School suspensions in New York City (NYC) public high schools have been correlated to lack of student academic achievement, non-inclusive school culture, and meager college and career readiness (Dahir, 2020; Rosenbaum, 2020). While many students in New Yok City public high schools attend postsecondary schools upon

graduation, not all students are able to (NYCDOE, 2021; Zysberg & Schwabsky, 2021). In school year 2018–2019, less than 30% of students at a NYC public high school graduated college ready or enrolled in a college or other postsecondary program within 6 months of graduation from high school. In school year 2019–2020, less than 35% of students at a NYC public high school graduated college ready or enrolled in a college or other postsecondary program within 6 months of graduation from high school (NYCDOE, 2021). Suspensions have been correlated to negative student success (Anderson et al., 2019). The restorative practice of PBIS is meant to reduce suspensions and improve school culture, increasing student academic success. When suspensions rates decrease, student academic achievement increases as does a positive school climate and student postsecondary readiness (Dahir, 2020; Lustick, 2020).

American society considers academic success—high school and postsecondary school graduation—to be an essential part of youth becoming upstanding citizens in the future and being successful in an increasingly multifaceted society (Dahir, 2020). Former first lady Michelle Obama stated, “Higher education is the expectation, not the exception… the American society should uplift all children to fulfill their potential to reach success beyond high school” (Dahir, 2020, p. 1).

Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this study was that little is known regarding the efficacy of PBIS at an urban public high school in NYC from the experiences and perspectives of nonadministrative employees. How a multitiered framework of support can guide a school to improve student academic outcomes and positive student behavior

is not well understood. Positive behavior support programs in secondary institutions have been shown to reduce antisocial behavior in schools among students (Feuerborn et al., 2019). However, many schools struggle with achieving prosocial and academic success due to the lack of teacher involvement (Feuerborn et al., 2019). School staff are instrumental and at the forefront of change in schools. Reform can only occur if school staff, instrumental personnel, are involved in the process (Reaves & Cozzens, 2018).

High schools play a critical role in preparing youth for academic success in college, the 21st century workplace, and to be global competitors (Dahir, 2020). With teachers at the forefront of student social and academic success, their experiences should be key to the success of a school. The theory of reflective lifeworld argues that studying a phenomenon can be best addressed from the experience of its participants (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2020). Lack of feedback from nonadministrative employees based on their experiences is a gap in understanding of school violence and its effect on student academic success and college and career readiness. School staff work directly with students so obtaining their perspectives is needed to understand the effects of school violence on school climate and student scholarship (Feuerborn et al., 2019).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of nonadministrative employees regarding the practice of PBIS in an urban public high school in NYC. The urban public high school where the study took place advertises PBIS. Under Mayor Bill de Blasio's restorative justice, from the 2014 federal government positive discipline initiative (Lustick, 2020), NYC public schools will

implement PBIS to reduce student suspensions, improve equity, student academic success, and school climate and for students' transition from high school to pathways after graduation.

NYCDOE (2019) mandated all schools to establish a schoolwide multitiered system to ensure schools are implementing progressive discipline—in this case, PBIS. Knowledge of staff perceptions of PBIS can enhance future outcomes with a successful school climate and college opportunities for secondary learners by understanding school suspension options versus the use of PBIS strategies, which may lead to increased student success in postsecondary education. The approach in this study was from the qualitative lifeworld perspective of nonadministrative employees. This approach is used to pursue narratives from individuals regarding their feelings and experiences about a phenomenon (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2020)

Research Questions

PBIS is designed to improve student behavior and academic outcomes (Noltemeyer et al., 2019). One approach to addressing positive school climate is PBIS. The research questions for this study were developed based on the literature reviewed and the framework used. The data used to answer the research questions provided insight into how a multitiered framework of support can guide a school to improve student academic outcomes and positive student behavior. The following research questions address the problem and guided this study:

RQ1: How do nonadministrative employees in an urban public high school in NYC perceive the practice of PBIS on student college and career readiness?

RQ2: What are nonadministrative employees' perceptions of PBIS in their urban public high school?

RQ3: How do nonadministrative employees describe the practice of PBIS on school climate in an urban public high school in NYC?

Conceptual Framework

The framework for this study was conceptual. The conceptual framework was guided be Dahlberg and Dahlberg's (2020) theory of reflective lifeworld, which holds that humans take a natural standpoint without intentionally reflecting on their actions or experiences (Åberg et al., 2020). The theory of reflective lifeworld draws on five principles: temporality, intersubjectivity, spatial, mood, and embodiment. The five principles are rooted in epistemological and ontological philosophy. The principles embrace understanding lifeworld views of a community's members. Community members are stakeholders whose experiences can be gleaned to understand a particular phenomenon.

In this inquiry, teachers and guidance counselors are the stakeholders, whose experiences and perceptions provide understanding on the practice of PBIS in an urban public high school in NYC. Logical connection exists between Dahlberg and Dahlberg's (2020) theory of reflective lifeworld and the five principles within the conceptual framework. For example, nonadministrative employees employed at an urban public high school in NYC can describe the practice of PBIS refraining from preconceived notions because accusations are from experiences and perceptions of those who experience them, which can lead to understanding a phenomenon from the perspectives of people involved

(see Becker & Schad, 2022). Further, understanding can be articulated by nonadministrative employees through the five elements (see Ogden et al., 2020). Through memories, the environment, and the state in which experiences occurred, teachers and guidance counselors base how they see themselves in relation to tradition and culture (see Ogden et al., 2020) and how one experiences the world.

Dahlberg and Dahlberg's (2020) the theory of reflective lifeworld is a tool necessary to help analyze data collected from nonadministrative employees' perceptions of PBIS in an urban public high school in NYC. The theory enables a unique understanding of a phenomenon from testimonies of an individual experiences (Penkauskienė, 2019). These experiences will bring an intersection of idealism and realism to answer a research phenomenon (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2020). The conceptual framework informed the purpose of the study to explore the experiences and perceptions of nonadministrative employees regarding the practice of PBIS in an urban public high school in NYC. Testimonies from nonadministrative employees' on PBIS were gathered from interviews and used to answer the research questions. The research questions aligned with the conceptual framework because they allow for the probe of the key elements of the framework as described by Dahlberg and Dahlberg.

Additionally, the interview protocol explored participants' experiences and perceptions of the key elements of the conceptual framework. First, the protocol addressed Dahlberg and Dahlberg's (2020) theory of reflective lifeworld, which stipulates a phenomenon can be defined by lived experiences of the study's participants. Second, the interview protocol addressed the five principles: temporality,

intersubjectivity, spatial, mood, and embodiment. Further, the conceptual framework provided a lens to ground and drive the data collection and analysis. Semistructured interviews in a natural setting with open-ended questions were used to explore the perceived efficacy of PBIS from the point of view of the research participants. The use of semistructured open-ended questions aligns with a basic qualitative research approach in which the data are collected based on the deep exploration of participant experiences and perceptions of a phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

PBIS reduces negative student behavior and increases positive school culture and student academic success (Feuerborn et al., 2019). Nonadministrative employees, in turn, shared their perspectives of the efficacy of PBIS from their experience as teachers and guidance counselors at an urban public high school in NYC, where PBIS is used to facilitate a strong school culture that engages youth validly for positive norms and behavior, which can benefit an academic institution and the community (Lustick, 2020). The theory of reflective lifeworld takes a natural stance describing the efficacy of PBIS as experienced by participants (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The theory is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

This qualitative study was a basic qualitative study exploring the experiences and perceptions regarding PBIS of nonadministrative employees who work in an urban public high school in NYC. Ravitch and Carl (2020) declared a qualitative study to be an attempt to understand participants and phenomena in a lifeworld setting that reflects what people experience. A basic qualitative study approach focuses on individuals or small

groups' experiences in a specific setting (Lodico et al., 2010). Also, Creswell (2012) explained that qualitative research relies on the views of participants and data collected based on their responses to questions generated on a phenomenon of which little is known.

Participants of the study were nonadministrative employees of an urban public high school in NYC. Data were gathered from face-to-face semistructured interviews. According to Wengraf (2001) semistructured interviews include open-ended questions in which responses from participants cannot be predicted. Use of semistructured interviews allows for the collection of open-ended data that provide beliefs and life experiences of participants for a particular phenomenon.

Definitions of Key Terms

College and career readiness: A concept that emerged from secondary school reform exertions that involve academic and nonacademic factors that prepare students for postsecondary education and long-term careers (Hackmann et al., 2019).

Positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS): An evidenced-base scaffold to prevent and treat negative behaviors in schools for a desired school culture (McDaniel & Bruhn, 2020).

Restorative practice: A model of conflict resolution intended to reduce punitive discipline via community-building circles and peer mediation (Lustick, 2020).

School climate: An environment in academic institutions in which staff and students follow school rules and policies and treat each other with respect (Kloo et al., 2023).

Zero tolerance: A nationally recognized initiative under the Ronald Regan administration in the mid-1980s that focused on the violent drug trade (Morgan, 2021). This initiative was imported into the public school system in the United States as severe predetermined consequences for unsafe or unacceptable student misbehavior.

Assumptions

Assumptions are viewpoints that are conceivable but cannot be proven to be true (Creswell, 2012). To draw conclusions from research, assumptions must be addressed (Creswell, 2012). Assumptions help to provide the integrity of a study. For this basic qualitative study, I assumed the participants would be honest in their responses. Next, I assumed that participants would bring distinct perspectives based on their personal experiences, and finally, I assumed that participants selected for the study would be motivated to participate in the inquiry. These assumptions were necessary in the context of the study because they brought an understanding of nonadministrative employees' perceptions of PBIS at an urban public high school in NYC. To support these assumptions, I used member checking to confirm that the evidence provided by the research participants was factual and consistent with the interviews. Member checking relies on the assumption that a truth can be accounted by a researcher and confirmed by a research participant. Research participants validate their accounts for accuracy and resonance by member checking (Creswell, 2012).

Scope and Delimitations

Delimitations are the parameters a researcher sets for a study (Andres, 2012). This study was delimited to nonadministrative employees at an urban public high school. An

urban public high school in NYC was chosen as the study site because NYC has the largest public school system in the United States. This public school system has over 1 million students with over 75,000 nonadministrative employees (New York University, Steinhardt, 2022). With such a large school system, NYC is not new to student negative misbehavior. In 2011–2012 69,643 students were suspended, and 35,234 students were suspended in 2016–2017 (New York University, Steinhardt, 2022). Punitive discipline frequently creates hostile learning environments, increases student dropout rates, and increases the gap in achievement among secondary school learners (Dahir, 2020; Freeman et al., 2019). This study's boundaries excluded private or Catholic high schools in NYC, which are governed by the diocesan Catholic Department of Education or a Catholic religious order (NYCDOE, 2021; U.S. Department of Education, 2019). Private/Catholic high schools in NYC embrace educating and developing students to be contributing members of society based on religion (Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of New York, 2023).

The conceptual framework most related to the area of study that was not investigated was concerns-based adoption model (CBAM) and restorative theory (Feuerborn et al., 2019). CBAM is a theory of educational change geared toward understanding stakeholders' concerns that enable change that benefit the needs of the participant (Feuerborn et al., 2019). CBAM was excluded because the model is a framework focused on the needs and concerns of individuals, rather than individuals' lived experiences (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2020).

Restorative theory is a theory adapted by the Western justice system as an alternative to criminal practices (Lustick, 2020). The theory was excluded because it does not focus on student negative behavior. Instead, restorative theory looks to change a school culture through community building circles and empathy, enabling offenders to benefit not the program's efficacy to reduce negative student behavior and improve academic scholarship from the lifeworld experiences of nonadministrative employees (Lustick, 2021).

Transferability refers to results in a qualitative research study that can be transferred to settings or other contexts while maintaining context specific richness (Andres, 2012; Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Transferability provides evidence to assess research integrity applicable to practice and future research in which results of the study apply to other contexts or people (Daniel, 2019). Transferability requires validity, providing detailed data and specific location of the study. Specific settings, contexts, and detailed descriptions of data for an audience to take in contextual factors versus reproducing a design (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). An urban public high school in NYC was used for the study. Describing the location can help the reader understand the study's participants.

The scope of this research was one urban public high school in NYC. One urban public high school in NYC was selected because PBIS was implemented, nonadministrative staff could provide an unprecedented breadth of perspective on the practice of PBIS, and there is a need for research on PBIS in high schools to improve student outcomes (Herman et al., 2020; Lustick, 2021). Participants of this study were

school staff from one public high school on a brick-and-mortar campus. The inclusion criterion for participants were nonadministrative employees in an urban public high school where PBIS is presently practiced. Nonadministrative employees included in this study were teachers and guidance counselors. Nonadministrative staff are staff who engage with a large percentage of students daily, who can reflect experience pertinent to the inquiry (Malin & Hackmann, 2019; NYCDOE InfoHub, 2023). In addition, nonadministrative staff implement and direct PBIS programs in high schools (Rainbolt et al., 2019). Administrative staff, such as principals and assistant principals, do not engage with a large percentage of the student body populace on a daily basis. Therefore, administrative staff were excluded from the study.

Limitations

All research approaches have limitations. Findings from this inquiry may have limited transferability to the settings and contexts of other urban public high schools in NYC (see Lustick, 2021), and there is decreased dependability in that the study cannot be repeated by another researcher to reveal similar findings at another urban public high school in NYC as the experiences are unique to the study setting (see Lustick, 2021). Participants' experiences and perceptions might not represent nonadministrative staff at other urban public high schools in NYC.

Limitations are contexts or influences outside a researcher's control (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Limitations are problems or potential weaknesses in a study identified by the researcher (Creswell, 2012). This research study possessed several limitations. First, participants could have provided socially acceptable responses that were only

positive because they may have felt obligated to share only optimistic experiences (Chen et al., 2021). To address this study's limitations, participants were assured that their identity and responses would remain confidential. According to Andres (2012), providing assurances of confidentiality to study participants is critical and can bring about maximum participation. Next, face-to-face interviews could have taken longer due to COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic had subsided, and cases were low (CDC, 2021), but there was a chance of one or more participants not participating due to illness. The option existed to conduct interviews virtually through online sources, such as Zoom, if a face-to-face interview was not feasible (Andres, 2012).

Thirteen nonadministrative employees were selected to participate in this study. Participants were from one school on an academic campus that houses three urban public high schools, where PBIS is advertised. Data were collected from one public high school. The participant sample size was limited; 13 participants may not be enough to allow for in-depth data collection of participant perspectives (see Ravitch & Carl, 2020). A final limitation was the possibility of researcher bias. Being employed at the site of the research investigation, I could have unintentionally influenced participant perspectives in favor of the outcome. Researcher bias was reduced by analyzing data collected thematically. Data interpretation and thematic analysis, in qualitative research, enables a researcher to create rich data from the participants' own words (Peel, 2020).

Significance

This research has the potential to contribute to the field because it can address the practice of PBIS in urban public high schools to improve student academic outcomes and

positive student behavior based on the experiences and perceptions of nonadministrative employees. Providing a discipline approach that focuses on prevention and that provides behavior expectations and strategies for each student in an urban public high school could improve students' college and career readiness. I sought to make a difference in my professional enterprise by addressing an underresearched area of urban secondary schools (see Lustick, 2020) among teachers and guidance counselors based on their experiences (see Zysberg & Schwabsky, 2021).

The results of this research contribute to positive social change by providing feedback from participants, nonadministrative employees, on the importance of using an alternative discipline approach to improve a school culture, thereby increasing student academic achievement and college and career readiness, resulting in more students leaving high school prepared to contribute to the well-being of their community. Students prepared for college understand the norms and values of society and are less likely to be associated with juvenile violence and more likely to become productive citizens (Peguero et al., 2021).

Summary

In this chapter, the concept of PBIS and school climate, school suspension, college and career readiness, and lack of literature on nonadministrative employees' lifeworld experience on the topic of student postsecondary academic achievement were discussed. The school of choice in this study was an urban public high school in NYC, and participants were nonadministrative employees at the institution of choice to foster a relationship between school climate and scholastic achievement. Gaining knowledge and

understanding of PBIS may help local schools and society produce successful secondary learners for the 21st century workforce who are upstanding citizens and able to compete in global enterprise. Chapter 2 will provide an in-depth literature review of relevant material to the research problem for the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The CDC has maintained student misbehavior is a key concern of the public (Peguero et al., 2018). Adolescent suspensions from school have had a negative impact on youth academic achievement and social development. In 2014, the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education established the PSDI, federal guidance to improve school climate by reforming school discipline practice (Lustick, 2020). Many cities, like Denver, Los Angeles, and NYC, have reacted to the federal direction by shifting school discipline from a punitive or zero-tolerance approach to a positive or restorative approach (Lustick, 2020). The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore PBIS from the experiences and perceptions of nonadministrative employees who work at an urban public high school in NYC, where student misbehavior is present. PBIS has been found to be an equitable approach to reducing student misbehavior and enhancing student social development that leads to positive school climate and positive student academic success (Lustick, 2021; NYCDOE, 2021).

Future outcomes for youth suspended in their K–12 school career for negative behavior have been shown to be worse than those outcomes for non-suspended youth (Rosenbaum, 2020). School staff in one NYC public high school described their school climate under the zero-tolerance policy as resembling a prison (Lustick, 2020). Zero-tolerance policies have had a negative impact on school culture and overall student success (Lustick, 2020). Recent studies have investigated an alternative approach to reducing student misbehavior in urban high schools from the perspectives of school staff

(Dahir, 2020; Lustick, 2020; Tyre et al., 2020). Research questions used in this study were as follows:

RQ1: How do nonadministrative employees in an urban public high school in NYC perceive the practice of PBIS on student college and career readiness?

RQ2: What are nonadministrative employees' perceptions of PBIS in their urban public high school?

RQ3: How do nonadministrative employees describe the practice of PBIS on school climate in an urban public high school in NYC?

In this review of literature, PBIS is explored from the descriptions of teachers and guidance counselors. Topics covered in the literature review include PBIS, school climate, perspectives of nonadministrative employees regarding PBIS at an urban public high school, and college and career readiness in an urban public high school. Finally, this section contains a discussion of the conceptual framework and the literature search strategy.

Literature Search Strategy

In this literature review, I used the Walden University library as the primary source for research. I conducted an exhaustive literature search strategy that employed multiple databases that validated the gap in the literature for this study. Literature was gathered from, but not limited to, SAGE, ProQuest, ERIC, and Google Scholar. Search for literature encompassed peer-reviewed literature published between 2018 and 2023 to minimize outdated sources. Key terms and the combination of phrases used to narrow the search were *restorative practices and NYC secondary schools, NYC public high schools'*

college and career readiness, positive behavioral interventions and supports and NYC high schools, school culture or school climate or school environment, and *teacher perceptions of school violence.*

Conceptual Framework

In this research study, I explored the practice of PBIS from the experiences and perceptions of nonadministrative employees who work in an urban public high school in NYC where PBIS is present. The conceptual framework supporting the study was the theory of reflective lifeworld (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2020). Reflective lifeworld serves reasoned practices in education drawing on the experiences of its participants (Hörberg et al., 2019). The concept of reflective lifeworld theory is a rigorous approach that is objective, valid, and general and that rationalizes a phenomenon from the description of its participants' life experiences (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2020; Penkauskienė, 2019). In academics, a reflective lifeworld approach attempts to reduce confirmation bias thereby enabling a researcher to reveal a phenomenon from the perspectives of the study's participants and not impose the researcher's ideas (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2020). Dahlberg and Dahlberg (2020) and Åberg et al. (2020) asserted that human experiences are taken for granted and a phenomenon cannot be investigated from a distance but from the knowledge of its participants. Schools employing reflective lifeworld practices provide a foundation to address a phenomenon to the attunement of what it is like from the perspective of its staff (Hörberg et al., 2019).

Reflective lifeworld is a theory rooted in epistemological and ontological philosophy that draws from perspectives of a lifeworld by philosopher Edmund Husserl

(Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2020; Hörberg et al., 2019). Ogden et al. (2020) asserted understanding the lifeworld could be articulated through five principles: temporality, intersubjectivity, spatiality, mood, and embodiment. Temporality denotes time as experienced by humans, and memories emerge from past experiences (Ogden et al., 2020). Intersubjectivity is how people are with others based on how they see themselves and them in relation to tradition and culture; individuals are continuously interacting with the world and others (Ogden et al., 2020). Spatiality refers to human experience in an environment; human experience can be negative or positive based on the experiences with the world (Ogden et al., 2020). Mood is the state a person is in at a point in time that can be influenced by mental and physical well-being. Finally, embodiment is how one experiences the world.

Toft et al. (2021) later added to Dahlberg and Dahlberg's (2020) work that a lifeworld approach is person-centered and can provide understanding and insight to lived experiences. Toft et al. (2021) focused on how ethics and intersubjectivity are related to well-being, with well-being being the meaningful part of everyday life. The reflective lifeworld theory takes a natural stance. Penkauskienė (2019) posits self-reflective attitudes of a study's participants, if kept whole, can disclose essential importance. Inquiries from a lifeworld approach accomplish both value and voice (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2020).

In employing reflective lifeworld research, a researcher can present untampered findings that express the experiences of its participants. Dahlberg and Dahlberg (2020) added to Husserl's (1989) work by stating that it is important that researchers hold back

the preunderstanding of a phenomenon to eliminate any discourse that could taint an idea. Åberg et al. (2020) described and explored the essential meaning of lived experiences of a phenomenon from the everyday life of participants in an inquiry. Dahlberg and Dahlberg (2020) coined this process *bridling*. Bridling prevents accusations of a phenomenon too swiftly, too haphazardly, and not defined by participant experience (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2020). Penkauskienė (2019) presented two examples of bridling. In the first example, students at a university shared experiences about being provoked to learn (Penkauskienė, 2019). Closer examination of students' lived experiences surfaced revealing they longed for directed learning. The second example is a study of the willingness of older people to die (Penkauskienė, 2019). However, upon being interviewed, deeper understanding revealed participants had a gleam of hope to live longer. As a result, the two examples revealed lived experiences are important in a study, need to be studied in context, and are present due to bridling, providing validity and scientific rigor (Penkauskienė, 2019).

The theory of lifeworld is linked to the theory of intentionality. According to Hörberg et al. (2019), the theory of intentionality stipulates human consciousness always experiences something; this experience is natural and a reflection of itself. Human consciousness is found to be in two directions (a) a natural attitude toward objects and (b) self-reflection or the natural attitude toward oneself (Hörberg et al., 2019). Combining human consciousness directions has the potential to promote factual experiences and well-being (Toft et al., 2021).

In the academic enterprise, school employees are primary stakeholders whose perspectives are essential to understanding, implementing, and maintaining initiatives (Feuerborn et al., 2018). Feuerborn et al. (2018) and Lustick (2020) concluded that natural experiences can contribute to the success of PBIS at an academic institution. Academic institutions employing nonadministrative employee feedback can be successful in increasing student scholarship and reducing student suspensions/misbehavior, thereby developing youth to be upstanding citizens prepared for pathways after secondary school and the 21st century workplace (Chu & Ready, 2018; Lustick, 2020).

This study was designed to explore the experiences and perceptions of PBIS by nonadministrative staff who work in an urban public high school in NYC. The reflective lifeworld theory stipulates the importance of participant experiences in a study for inquiry validity and credibility. Trustworthiness and credibility are evidence that the method for the research has the potential to expose the main meaning of the phenomenon because research is meaning oriented (see Penkauskienė, 2019). Readers can draw and compare conclusions about transferability to other perspectives (Åberg et al., 2020). Results of the study provide insight on how a multitiered framework of support can guide a school to improve student academic outcomes and positive student behavior.

McDaniel and Bruhn (2019) conducted a case study using lifeworld and examined how PBIS was implemented from the perspectives of stakeholders in a high-need school district. Research participants were selected using purposive selection. A semistructured focus group was used to record responses to questions regarding the experiences of the research participants (McDaniel & Bruhn, 2019). Themes developed from transcripts

provided lifeworld responses of participants in their natural setting that have voice and value (McDaniel & Bruhn, 2019). In another inquiry, Macy and Wheeler (2021) examined the factors that influence teacher buy-in. Interviews and a focus group were used to capture the perspectives/lived experiences of the research participants. Macy and Wheeler (2021) concluded that stakeholder buy-in is needed for PBIS to be successful at an academic institution. Teacher incentives and teacher professional development were identified as the driving factors that lead to teacher buy-in (Macy & Wheeler, 2021). Lifeworld theory, therefore, provides an appropriate lens through which to view PBIS in this study.

Literature Review

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

PBIS is a prevention approach to promote positive student behavior and school safety. PBIS is an evidence-based three-tiered framework for preventing and treating disruptive student behavior in academic institutions to improve student scholarship and school climate (McDaniel & Bruhn, 2019). The three-tiered system necessitates all school staff personnel to participate and receive repetitive professional development to safeguard fidelity (Gage et al., 2020). Tier 1, primary or universal behavior support tier, applies to all students in the school, should be implemented by all staff, is a proactive approach that outlines and teaches expected student behaviors, and develops positive student/teacher relationships, establishing the foundations for positive school climate (Gage et al., 2020). Tier 2, secondary or targeted behavior support tier, supports students where Tier 1 was not effective, who demonstrate behaviors that may equate to the student

receiving a suspension and involves the family and community of the student in question (Horner & Monzalve-Macaya, 2018). Tier 3, tertiary or intensive individualized support tier, is the most rigorous tier and targets 3%-5% of students in a school who require individualized attention due to emotional, social, and physiological concerns (Horner & Monzalve-Macaya, 2018). PBIS is a proactive discipline approach that has been shown to improve student academic outcomes in U.S. schools (Gage et al., 2020).

History of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

For many years, discipline practices in U.S. schools were reactive and seen as ineffective, bringing about the recommendation of a proactive method that could be used to create positive and safe school environments in which learning and social development could occur (Lewis, 2023). On June 4, 1997, President Clinton reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA strengthened the accountability and expectations of learners in U.S. schools with disabilities by bridging the academic gap of what curriculums expected (National Association of Special Education Teachers, 2022). IDEA (1997) also encouraged special education teachers and mainstream teachers to consider positive social, academic, and behavioral interventions for all learners (Keller-Bell & Short, 2019), resulting in a proactive shift in discipline, a multi-tiered model called PBIS (Lewis, 2023). PBIS was added to IDEA (1997) by Congress to address student misbehavior and improve the educational outcomes for students with or without disabilities in U.S. schools (Scherer & Ingle, 2020).

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in U.S. Schools

Currently used in over 23,000 schools in the United States, PBIS looks to increase student social behavior and academic success (Gage et al., 2020). Central to PBIS, in U.S. schools, is implementation and stakeholder buy-in (Lewis, 2023). There is no one-size-fits-all approach to implement PBIS. In 1998, the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports was established by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Supportive Schools (OSSS) and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to assist educational agencies in establishing and sustaining PBIS (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). To successfully implement PBIS in U.S. schools, several steps should be employed: teaching schoolwide expectations, proactive schoolwide and classroom management, reinforcement of positive or appropriate student behavior, use of multiple data sources to track and improve negative student behavior where needed, and use of an external agency or coach to monitor the progress of a schools' PBIS program (Gage et al., 2020). Implementation of PBIS with fidelity can decrease negative student behavior, resulting in positive long-term outcomes for youth (Gage et al., 2020). As of the time of this literature review, all 50 U.S. states and at least 29 countries had implemented PBIS with varying outcomes at varying academic levels (Freeman et al., 2019; Lindstrom Johnson et al., 2020).

PBIS in elementary schools in the U.S. reduces negative student behavior and increases positive student outcomes but shows to be a struggle in secondary schools (Scherer & Ingle, 2020). Implementation and use of PBIS in high schools in the United States is occurring but at a slower rate compared to elementary and middle schools

(Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, 2019). High schools in the United States encompass about 34% of schools (PBIS, 2022). The cost to implement PBIS is estimated to be approximately $60,000 per district, less than $50 per student but costs could be offset if the school is classified as Title 1 (Lindstrom Johnson et al., 2020). Title 1 schools are U.S. schools under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that have a high percentage of students from low-income families. ESEA (1965) was one of the focuses of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty". The act provided funding for disadvantaged students in primary and secondary schools, considered at-risk (Center on PBIS, 2022). In 2015, President Barack Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA (2015) is a bipartisan act stipulating all school districts receive funding, extending President Johnson's act and other activities to include evidence-based and place-based interventions for all American students (Center on PBIS, 2022). One evidence-based practice for school improvement was PBIS.

One high school, on the central coast of California, experienced challenges and successes implementing 'all three tiers' of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SW-PBIS), during one school year period (Griffiths et al., 2019). Contributing factors involved higher rates of disabilities and antisocial behaviors, unique emotional and social needs unique to adolescents, and student transition from a court school to an alternative community school (Griffiths et al., 2019). The case study involved 155 student participants receiving tier 2 service of the PBIS framework and administrative and nonadministrative staff training on the frameworks of PBIS (Griffiths et al., 2019). Student behavior records were obtained from office discipline referrals

(ODRs), observations, and the School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET) to gauge PBIS implementation. PBIS was introduced to address student challenges. School staff and students were observed by experienced researchers (Griffiths et al., 2019). The researchers observed the outcome of the implementation of PBIS. The research team helped address any implementation issues (meeting the needs of students in an alternative school) and implementation barriers (teacher buy-in, school climate) (Griffiths et al., 2019; Tyre et al., 2020). PBIS implementation was promising. Successful implementation of PBIS at the high school took several years (Griffiths et al., 2019). ODR and negative student behavior decreased. The school saw minor improvement (Griffith et al., 2019). Students at the high school exhibited more extreme behaviors than students in mainstream high schools (Griffiths et al., 2019).

Similarly, a correlation between SWPIS, specifically Tier 1, implementation, student attendance, behavior, and scholarship exists in U.S. high schools (Freeman et al., 2019). In alignment with Keller-Bell and Short (2019), Freeman et al. (2019) discussed PBIS implementation, in schools called school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SWPBIS). SWPBIS improves student scholarship, and school climate, and reduces inequitable discipline in secondary institutions. From one Midwestern U.S. state, 15 high schools, 12,127 student participants, grades 9-12, from 2005-2011 partook in a study. The study revealed that schools not implementing SWPBIS showed student academic performance lower than state requirements, lowered student attendance, and increased incidents of negative student behavior compared to high schools that

implemented SWPBIS. In summary, implementing SWPBIS with fidelity, in high schools measured higher positive outcomes for youth academically and socially.

On the same topic, several dynamics should be considered to successfully implement PBIS at a U.S. high school: school size, school climate, stakeholder buy-in, and funding (Martinez et al., 2019). U.S. high schools are typically larger in size and student body and have compartmentalized classes that inhibit school staff and students from effective collaboration. Compartmentalized classes obstruct the school-wide implementation of a multi-tiered system (Martinez et al., 2019).

Lastly, in a report by Bastable et al. (2021) the experiences, pros, and cons, of teachers towards the implementation of PBIS were the focus. From four elementary schools, five administrators, one district administrator, two school counselors, nine teachers, and four para-educators participated in a qualitative study, that used semi-structured interviews to address: (a) What observable events or experiences hindered educators from implementing PBIS?; (b) What observable events or experiences helped educators to implement a school-wide approach to improve disciplinary equity?; and (c) What observable events and experiences do educators report would have made it easier to implement from the outset? (Bastable et al., 2021). Responses provided detailed experiences of participants that would support or refute the implementation of PBIS in school. Implementing PBIS, from the perspective of school personnel, is challenging, requires school personnel to address racial inequities before PBIS implementation, be trained on the multi-tiered system framework, and be allowed various approaches to

implementing PBIS instead of the use of a one-size-fits-all standard (Bastable et al., 2021).

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and School Stakeholders

Nonetheless, teacher buy-in of PBIS in academic institutions in U.S. public schools is a whole-school approach (Macy & Wheeler, 2021). PBIS at the classroom level is school-wide positive behavioral interventions and support. SWPBIS is not mandated but is a recommended platform schools can utilize to create safe and nurturing environments in which a developed school climate and scholarship can exist (Keller-Bell & Short, 2019). In alignment with the beliefs of Martinez et al. (2019), SWPBIS addresses negative student behavior in a school, creates safe environments in which learning can take place, and requires key stakeholder buy-in, to be successful and sustainable (Macy & Wheeler, 2021). From SRHS, a public high school in Atlanta, Georgia, 19 high school teachers were interviewed with two research questions: What are teachers' perceptions regarding teacher buy-in of the PBIS system? Themes: consistency, administrator support, teacher incentives, and professional training. And what factors hinder teacher buy-in of the PBIS system at SRHS? themes: time, consistency, and administrator support (Macy & Wheeler, 2021). Teacher buy-in, due to lack of time, consistency, and administration support hindered SWPBIS's success at this academic institution (Macy & Wheeler, 2021).

PBIS has the potential to reduce student misbehavior and improve a school's climate, dropout rate, and student scholarship. PBIS is not a curriculum or a program of prescribed strategies but an organizational framework that is evidenced-based (Keller-

Bell & Short, 2019). The U.S. Department of Education, Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, created a blueprint that individual states can use to implement PBIS. The blueprint contains six implementation recommendations: (a) commitment and readiness agreement by school stakeholders precede PBIS implementation; (b) PBIS implementation move through a series of phases; (c) implementation be directed and coordinated by a designated team that contains key stakeholders; (d) implementation support with fidelity to enable development and maintenance of the program; (e) professional development for school staff is data-driven, PBIS centered and supports state and local schools goals and values; (f) leadership team works from a data-based action plan (Gage et al., 2020). PBIS, if implemented effectively, can decrease factors that impact negative short- and long-term consequences for youth.

College and Career Readiness

College and career readiness refers to the skills, dispositions and knowledge needed to enter post-secondary education or career pathway and is seen as a gateway to social mobility and financial security (Lindstrom et al., 2022). High school students who are college-ready must have a solid foundation in critical thinking, content knowledge, and social and emotional learning, and they must master four tactics: cognitive strategies, learning skills and techniques, content knowledge, and transition knowledge and skills to successfully transition and complete college (Conley, 2012; Lindstrom et al., 2022). The preparation of students for graduation from high schools in the United States has been a priority of American society for some time; however, emphasis has shifted to promoting

the successful entry of students to post-secondary education and the workforce (Morningstar et al., 2018).

The emphasis on college and career readiness in the United States stems from the concern that most new jobs created in the United States by the year 2018 would require a college degree (Finley, 2021). Some jobs identified requiring a college degree are accountants, medical doctors, computer and information systems managers, teachers, and general and operations managers, to name a few (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). In 2021, 62% of high school graduates enrolled in college and an estimated 39% of students that year dropped out of school, looked for employment or entered the workforce inadequately prepared, to be successful (U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2022). To curtail this trend, in 2002, President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to increase political influence in education and incorporate standardized tests as a way for American students to be competitive in the global market (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). And in 2015, President Barack Obama signed the bipartisan reform Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), to incorporate measures to close the achievement gap among scholars in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2022).

Student enrollment in post-secondary schools has been successful (Britton et al., 2022). School-based development programs for college and career readiness address the gap in academic achievement among diverse students and increase student pathway opportunities to college and the workforce (Kramer et al., 2020; Lindstrom et al., 2022). College persistence and degree completion have not increased as evidenced by U.S.

federal legislations, like NCLB and ESSA (Britton et al., 2022). School discipline problems, increased dropout rates, and student disengagement have been seen as contributing factors hindering positive youth development (PYD) and success (Freeman et al., 2019; Kramer et al., 2020). The research established key stakeholders, such as teachers, school counselors, and policymakers prepared youth for college and the workforce after college by incorporating school-based career activities on student retention, student achievement, and transition to post-secondary pathways or careers in the workforce (Duncheon, 2021). Career development, in U.S. schools, begins during learners' K-12 studentship but lacks equity, guidance, and equitable college readiness, so many students do not have access or success (Dahir, 2020; Duncheon, 2021). Data showed in the Fall of 2010, 21 million students enrolled in college and in the Fall of 2020, that number decreased to 19 million students (National Center for Statistics, 2022). Diploma rates from three cohorts of students in the 9th grade in traditional New York State public schools, from 2010-2012 were collected (Kramer et al., 2020). School visits encompassed 63 interviews and 68 focus groups for a total of 309 participants. PYD is evident in schools that incorporate essential support strategies: relationship building, youth-led identity development and goal setting emphasized social-emotional development, and developing of youth leadership (Kramer et al., 2020). PYD practice improves youth, connects families and communities, and improves college and career readiness among varied learners in urban public high schools in New York State (Kramer et al., 2020).

Youth in *urban* public high schools, from low socioeconomic standing face increased barriers than their white counterparts. Urban is a stereotype that has come to be associated with black and brown public communities and a code for poor public schools in, or around dangerous neighborhoods with few opportunities for college preparation or social mobility in the 21st-century workforce. Falco and Steen (2018) associated academic achievement with college and career readiness and stressed youth develop a sense of purpose for achieving short- and long-term goals when exposed to college and career development in primary and secondary school, K-12, for transition to post-secondary education or the work world.

Closing the postsecondary gap in high school students would require college and financial readiness, college enrollment, and degree acquirement (Dahir, 2020). This gap, in scholastic success in the United States, is ultimately faced by students of low socioeconomic standing who attend mostly urban schools. Equity is the core value necessary to build efficacious communities in which every student can triumph (Dahir, 2020). The New York Institute of Technology (NYIT) school counseling department and a high school in NYC collaborated on a mixed-action research study. Seniors, and 12th graders, of a local high school participated in the study. School administration of the local high school provided quantitative data, student demographics, and graduation rates. Observations, journal annotations and reflections, and open-ended questions drove the qualitative data. Findings announced the introduction of college, career, and financial planning is key to closing the achievement gap between students of different socio-economic standing and race in urban public schools.

In another study by Britton et al. (2022) students' persistence in early college initiative (ECI) high schools, in NYC, closed ethnic and racial gaps in postsecondary outcomes. NYC is the largest school district in the United States with a student body populace of 976,771 in 2017, 960,484 in 2018, and 1,033,669 in 2020 (National Center for Statistics, 2022; New York State Department of Education, 2022); that grapples with college readiness. Under Mayoral governance, NYC public school system academic reforms are a political agenda. Mayor Giuliani and Mayor Bloomberg replaced poor-performing high schools with small high schools called small schools of choice (SSC), which average 400 students and whose admissions are based on an application process. Domanico (2022) Mayor De Blasio ended SSC. Incoming Mayor Adams, reformed NYC's public high schools to service students with diverse learning abilities due to youth left behind academically being more likely to be incarcerated, obtain low-income jobs, and have a lower chance of being productive citizens of society (Dahir, 2020). From 20 schools 3,271 students participated in a study. NYCDOE's Automate the Schools (ATS) and the City University of New York (CUNY) Institutional Research Databases (IRDB) discovered students in CUNY ECI programs attended and succeeded higher than students not in the program, regardless of race. However, further research is needed to determine the success of CUNY ECI by the school district.

Relating to student academic success in public high schools, high schools implementing PBIS with fidelity see improved student outcomes beyond reduced office discipline referrals (ODRs) (Freeman et al., 2019). PBIS is a multitiered support system (MTSS) with a response to interventions (RTI) that when used effectively reduces

behavioral issues, like bullying, and improves social behaviors that increase school attendance, climate, and academic outcomes (Freeman et al., 2019). From 15 high schools (12 urban, 2 local, 1 suburban), data was pooled on 12,127 students, grades 9-12. A significant relationship was found between PBIS fidelity and student attendance. PBIS with fidelity had positive student outcomes, fewer unexcused tardies, absences, suspensions, and ODRs.

Similarly, combining college and career readiness with an MTSS will merge behavioral, academic, and nonacademic factors, and increase student success in American high schools regardless of academic standing, after graduating from secondary school (Morningstar et al., 2018). MTSS framework comprises several moralities: ensuring a continuum of evidence-based practices and interventions across increasingly intensive supports, implementing screening and progress monitoring, using data for decision-making and problem-solving, creating multilevel prevention systems to increase student academic skills and improving behavior, and providing schoolwide supports for students, staff, and family members (Morningstar et al., 2018). CC&R and MTSS provide adolescents in secondary schools' necessary tools for college and careers, for all students, after high school.

Completion of education beyond secondary school in the U.S. is the expectation and should be the goal of every youth in the country (Dahir, 2020). College and career readiness in secondary schools can prepare youth for the transition to post-secondary education, close the postsecondary gap, and bridge a gateway to social mobility and economic security (Dahir, 2020; Falco & Steen, 2018). college and career readiness

success is a joint effort. Success is based on school-based career development activities and the support and collaboration of key stakeholders. Ultimately choices youth make in school decide their career options later in life.

School Climate

School climate is a significant factor that influences students socially, emotionally, and academically and is based on student patterns that reflect the values, goals, teaching, learning and organizational structures of a school (Chirkina & Khavenson, 2018; Davis & Warner, 2018). The key pattern of students contributing to a school's climate is behavior. The U.S. Centers for Disease and Prevention maintains negative student behavior, like bullying, school shootings, and chronic absenteeism has lasting physical and emotional effects on students (Hamlin, 2021; Peguero et al., 2018). Negative behavior of youth in and around academic institutions is an endemic problem (Hamlin, 2021). During the 2015-2016 school year, the U.S. Department of Education reported 1 in 5 students missed at least 15 days of school, equating to about 7.8 million students identified as chronically absent (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). School climate is multilayered, and the character of an academic institution is based on the perceptions of stakeholders (students and school staff) (Bosworth et al., 2018; Zysberg & Schwabsky, 2021). Research contends cultivating a positive school climate favors a positive learning environment that maximizes learning, social and emotional development, and condenses negative student behavior (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018).

School climate is a momentous factor that determines educational achievement (Chirkina & Khavenson, 2018). The principle of school climate dates back to 1908 and was coined by Arthur C. Perry, a principal of a school in Brooklyn, New York, in the 1900s, who asserted favorable school climate fosters camaraderie, esprit de corps, among school personnel, increases academic productivity and success (Chirkina & Khavenson, 2018). Schools, more than a century ago, were private academic institutions for children of elite socio-economic standing, poised to enter elite colleges in the United States (Domanico, 2022).

Chirkina and Khavenson's (2018) qualitative study, of school climate, entailed a Likert-type administered to over 9,000 eighth graders from 418 schools in Russia, between 2011 and 2012. The empirical and theoretical analysis investigated how school climate is measured, from the perception of students. The inquiry was longitudinal, on a 4-point scale, with questions applicable to the participant's grade level. In summary, teachers and school staff experiences must be taken into consideration when measuring school climate because they are key stakeholders, school climate is subjective and a stable reflection of the institution that cannot be measured but will become stable over time (Chirkina & Khavenson, 2018).

School climate is a multi-dimensional index of a school's social atmosphere (Konishi et al., 2022). Comparably, Konishi et al. (2022) in a qualitative study explored school climate from the perspectives of high school students in Canada. Konishi et al.'s study involved 22, grades 8-11 (ages 13-18) from an English-speaking public secondary school, in Montreal, Canada. Ten dimensions of school climate were identified: adult

support, adult responsiveness, adult acceptance of diversity, school safety, peer support, school belonging, student acceptance of diversity, autonomy and opportunities, and discipline/fairness/clarity of rules from guiding research question: what dimensions constitute the school climate from the perspectives of secondary school students? Participants were between 6 to 8 students in three focus groups, who were given open-ended questions in a single session. From the interview, several themes emerged: peer interactions, school order/disorder, school resources, student-teacher relationships, teacher professionalism, leadership, academic support, and community (Konishi et al., 2022); with school climate being a collective atmosphere in which the personal relationships and perceptions of individuals, from the perspectives of students, defined the institution (Chirkina & Khavenson, 2018).

In another study, the impact of school climate on Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) Reading and Math achievement, in Georgia schools (Smith & Shouppe, 2018). According to Smith and Shouppe (2018), more attention is being placed on whether schools are welcoming and comfortable settings where one can have a startling experience. Schools should necessitate a positive school climate and culture. School climate can positively or deleteriously impact students, parents, staff, and student achievement. Culture is the values and beliefs while climate is the perceptions of the values and beliefs. School culture is the values and beliefs of a school and school climate is the individual experiences that stakeholders such as students, teachers, and administrators have about the school (Smith & Shouppe, 2018). In Georgia, the health of schools is measured using the Georgia School Climate Star Rating (SCSR). From 31

elementary schools, 12 middle schools, 13,124 students in Math and Reading, and 13,023 students in Reading, grades 3-8, from 2013-2014, participated in an inquiry. Georgia School Star Rating (SCSR) is comprised of four main components: school climate, student discipline, safe and substance-free learning environment, and school attendance (Smith & Shouppe, 2018). The CRCT measures how well students are Reading and Math, for elementary and middle schools. From the probe, school climate impacts the Reading and Math achievement of students significantly, in the positive direction; however, schools where students felt unwelcomed and unsafe, had social development and academic achievement beneath state requirements; finalizing school climate should be at the forefront of a school's initiative to achieve the social and scholastic achievement of its scholars.

School climate and student's academic success are also mediated by academic self-efficacy (Zysberg & Schwabsky, 2021). Moreso, perceptions of students and school staff and their association between their lived experiences at school and academic achievement. The unique study recognized academic efficacy as the primary factor bridging school climate (organization) to individual outcomes in academic settings (Zysberg & Schwabsky, 2021). The framework introduced interdisciplinary theoretical theory. Interdisciplinary theoretical theory is carted on principles of change, power and culture grounded in school transformation (Larson & Nelms, 2021). Participants in this investigation totaled 1,641 middle and high school students, from grades 7 to 12, from various religious affiliations (Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Other), genders, and socio-economic standing. The survey employed a self-reported questionnaire to measure

variables. The investigation resulted in a correlation between academic self-efficacy, perceptions, and school climate. Academic self-efficacy accounted for student achievement in academia. Student perceptions changed based on their learning experience and the academic outcome they wanted to achieve. School climate shapes student experiences thus shaping their academic efficacy. Further research could assist with the development of evidence-based interventions to improve the learning experience in academia (Zysberg & Schwabsky, 2021).

School climate is a key factor determining the success of students in school. School climate is linked to student achievement, educational activities of students, and student dropout rates (Chirkina & Khavenson, 2018). When measuring school climate, it is very important to consider the perspectives of all stakeholders that participate in the learning process, specifically students. Student perspectives can show school personnel how students perceive their school and why disruptive behavior occurs A positive school climate promotes students' emotional and social competencies and learning (Konishi et al., 2022). A positive school climate can be accomplished if a school has norms of practice. Norms of practice involve encouraging and maintaining a respectful, trusting, and caring environment, that fosters safety and promotes academic success (National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, 2022).

School Discipline and School Staff

Discipline has been associated with education in U.S. public schools. Until the 19th century, corporal punishment was the most common form of discipline, in American schools (Warnick & Scribner, 2020). Corporal punishment is using physical force to

intentionally cause harm to another. In the United States, corporal punishment stems from society being patriarchal; where slaves, women, and criminals could be flogged by their superiors for minor transgressions (Lohmann, 2019; Warnick & Scribner, 2020). Such actions rolled over into schools, where teachers, and nonadministrative staff, used rulers, and switches to address behaviors that were frowned upon in schools, like being late for class, and not paying attention (Warnick & Scribner, 2020). In 1977, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that corporal punishment is constitutional and deemed states to have the authority to use this type of discipline if they choose (Lohmann, 2019). Currently, 19 states in the United States allow corporal punishment as a form of discipline in K-12 academic institutions.

Adverse effects have been noted as outcomes for students disciplined under corporal punishment (Warnick & Scribner, 2020). Bureaucratic influence on education in the United States school system has raised several questions: How did we get to this point of punishment in schools? What do we do now? (Warnick & Scribner, 2020). Corporal punishment and zero-tolerance punitive punishment in schools have taken away the correlation between schools as moral communities and has been said schools resemble prisons (Lustick, 2021). The move towards a socially just behavior system for addressing discipline issues in schools led to the incorporation of restorative or reactive discipline, like PBIS (Oxley & Holden, 2021). Implementation of a restorative discipline practice or schoolwide positive behavior interventions and support in schools requires school staff agreeance and support (Feuerborn et al., 2019).

Collective efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher provenances are linked to PBIS implementation (Nichols et al., 2020). Teachers are primary implementers of school programs. In a county district in Northeastern United States, 96 female teachers and 25 male teachers, between ages 22-64, teach in the school, ranging from 0.5 and 38 years of service, in various subject areas participated in a study. Inquiry hosted observations, interviews, surveys, Collective Efficacy Scale (CES), School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET), Teachers' Attributions for Student Behavior Measure (TASBM) and the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TES) to observe best practices to implement evidence-based practices (EBP) and tiered systems of support (TSS) (Nichols et at., 2020). Studies show teachers are willing to lead beyond the classroom and have an increased level of collective efficacy and positive attributions, which have a profound effect on a school's implementation of tiered frameworks like PBIS (Nichols et al., 2020).

Relatedly, in a mixed-method case study, the implementation, and efficacy of a restorative practice discipline program in a high school are determined by teachers (Rainbolt et al., 2019). Society's fretfulness of discipline in American schools has been a concern since colonial times (Rainbolt et al., 2019). Alogonquin High School (AHS), in Tenakomakah County Public School District, of the mid-Atlantic states, assessed 43 faculty personnel over 2 weeks via a survey. The Likert-type scale survey was comprised of multiple-choice questions and three open-ended questions, about restorative practice implementation: 92% of participants completed restorative practice training, 50% of participants used restorative practice, 19% used restorative practice daily, with 30% stipulating rarely using restorative practice, and one staff member indicating never using

restorative practice (Rainbolt et al., 2019). On efficacy, 33 participants responded, 24 participants indicated restorative practice was most effective, and 19 participants revealed restorative practice fairly. Open-ended questions ask: How could the current use of restorative practice at AHS be improved or enhanced?; Based on your experiences with restorative practices, what suggestions would you have for other schools looking to implement restorative practices?; And, Is there anything else that you would like to share regarding the implementation and efficacy of restorative practices at AHS?, 34 of 39 responses expressed support and positive perceptions of restorative practices at their school (Rainbolt et al., 2019); to announce restorative practices in schools had positive outcomes when implemented from the involvement and experience of the school staff.

Analogously, a qualitative phenomenological inquiry compared perceptions of discipline and discipline problems from the views of high school teachers and students (Sadik & Yalcin, 2018). Phenomenology research looks to obtain a detailed understanding of an individual's narrative lived experiences for a phenomenon. The phenomenological study spotlighted discipline. Leading questions for this investigation: (a) How are the perceptions of teachers and students related to what discipline is?; (b) How are the perceptions of teachers and students related to what discipline is not?; (c) Which behavior is qualified as a discipline problem by teachers and students?; (d) Which discipline problems are experienced mostly in their schools/classroom according to the students as well as the teachers? A vocational high school in Seyhan District of Adana, between 2014-2015, conducted a review involving 18 teachers (eight male and 19 female) and 16 students (two boys and two girls each from Grades 9, 10, 11, 12).

Educators taught various subjects (biology, English, chemistry, mathematics, physics, and Turkish language and literature), with teaching experiences between 5 to 10 years. Note, that student participants were assigned to classes of teachers participating in the study. The interview process was semi-structured and revealed, that teachers and students perceived discipline as not martial law but criticized the implementation of a discipline program that addressed everyone's concerns (Sadik & Yalcin, 2018).

In another study, the perception of student discipline from teacher perceptions addressed three questions: (a) What does the perception of discipline mean to you?; (b) What does the perception of student discipline mean to you?; And (c) What is your sense of discipline you want to constitute at school? (Sadik & Yalcin, 2018). In the qualitative case study, 20 teachers, from 10 secondary and elementary academic institutions, were interviewed face-to-face with open-ended questions. The study exposed teacher perceptions of paramount importance when referring to student discipline, school discipline in school is a concern of teachers, and negative student behavior mirrors violence in society.

The American school system over the past hundred years has become increasingly bureaucratic (Warnick & Scribner, 2020). School discipline moved from physical punishments to structural punishment, to the point that academic institutions have been said to resemble prisons, and school-to-prison pipelines (Warnick & Scribner, 2020). Schools should be safe environments in which learning and social development can occur (Darling-Hammond & DePaoli, 2020). American schools are where youth learn societal values, norms, and culture; And an advantaged place in which individuals from low

socioeconomic standing can become upstanding citizens and succeed in life (Peguero et al., 2018). States in the U.S. have implemented tiered frameworks and evidenced-based practices, like PBIS to address negative student behaviors and increase student scholarship and positive social development. Key stakeholders in any school reform are school staff (administrative and nonadministrative) and students. Reform entails self-efficacy, collective efficacy, decision-making around disciplinary incidents, restorative practice implementation with fidelity, and teacher perceptions and views of restorative practices in schools (Bastable et al., 2021; Lustick, 2021; Rainbolt et al., 2019).

Summary and Conclusions

This literature review contained scholarly journals and peer-reviewed articles relating to PBIS in an urban public high school. Topics covered in this chapter were PBIS, college and career readiness, school climate, school discipline and school staff. This chapter touched on the punitive and restorative disciplines, their efficacies in and around academic institutions, and their relationship to school climate and student scholarship; along with, the social and political actions that lead to the implementation of PBIS in U.S. schools and the pros and cons of PBIS in urban secondary public high schools specifically. In this chapter, college and career readiness was defined, to include how college and career readiness correlates to urban public high schools and its impact on student success post-secondary and in the workforce. Additionally, school climate and how it differs from school culture, and the influence of school climate on student scholarship and student social development, tie in research found in earlier studies of school climate and how school climate is a contributing factor to restorative practice in

schools today. Restorative justice instead of punitive discipline, from the perspective of school staff, explicitly in U.S. urban public schools, improves school climate.

Much research has been conducted on administrative and parent perspectives of school discipline in schools in the United States; however, there is a lack of research on nonadministrative employees' perspectives on PBIS in urban public high schools in the United States. Understanding the perspectives of nonadministrative employees, such as teachers and guidance counselors, can help administrative and community leaders determine effective pathways to implement and maintain restorative justice practices, to alleviate negative student behavior and increase student academic achievement. The goal of this study was to examine the perspective of nonadministrative employees of PBIS in an urban public high school in the United States, this study helped fill the gap in the literature about the efficacy of PBIS from the nonadministrative employee perception.

Chapter 3 will provide details of the methods used for this research study. The chapter will include information on the researcher's role, instrumentation, methodology, participant selection, procedures to collect data, analysis of data, credibility, and ethical concerns.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and perceptions regarding the practice of PBIS of nonadministrative employees who work in an urban public high school in NYC. Descriptions by nonadministrative staff provided discernment on the use of PBIS, in an urban secondary school environment. Chapter 3 includes the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, methodology, study participants, study procedures, and issues of trustworthiness. In the first section, research design and rationale, I provide an explanation for undertaking the study, research approach, research questions, and phenomenon of the study. In the role of the researcher, I reveal the personal and professional relationships between the researcher and research participants, how biases were managed, and ethical concerns. In methodology, I identify participant population and sampling strategy, criterion for participant selection, relationship between saturation and sample size, and identification of each data collection instrument. The fourth section contains a discussion of the issues of trustworthiness, establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, along with ethical procedures. The chapter closes with a summary and transition to Chapter 4.

Research Design and Rationale

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of nonadministrative employees regarding the practice of PBIS in an urban public high school in NYC. Research questions that guided the study were:

RQ1: How do nonadministrative employees in an urban public high school in NYC describe the practice of PBIS on student college and career readiness?

RQ2: What are nonadministrative employee's perceptions about PBIS in their urban public high school in NYC?

RQ3: How do nonadministrative employees describe the practice of PBIS on school climate in an urban public high school in NYC?

The focus of this study was PBIS. PBIS is an alternative approach to punitive discipline. PBIS implemented with fidelity in academic institutes in the United States has positive outcomes, improves attendance and scholarship, and reduces suspensions for discipline problems (Freeman et al., 2019). Discipline is a social problem that exists in public schools in the United States and has been identified as a key factor of underachievement of African American learners (Bell & Puckett, 2020). This study examined PBIS from the experiences and perspectives of nonadministrative employees who work in an urban public high school. The approach was a basic qualitative study, with face-to-face semistructured interviews. A qualitative study facilitates the examination and understanding of participants' experiences of a phenomenon in a lifeworld setting, systematically and contextually, to make meaning of the experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Creswell and Poth (2016) asserted qualitative research efficacy is prevalent when done in the field at the location where research participants experience the problem of the study.

Inquiry provided the experiences of nonadministrative employees in an urban public high school in NYC where PBIS and student misbehavior was present. This basic

qualitative study with face-to-face semistructured interviews sought to understand the phenomenon not only from the perspectives of its participants but also to gather the experiences in progress to have accurate data (see Creswell & Poth, 2016). Qualitative case studies explore a phenomenon through innumerable data sources. The intent of a qualitative case study is to understand a phenomenon within a setting through assorted data sources and was not chosen for this study. Qualitative research is an interpretive field inquiry that attempts to make sense of phenomena (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Using a basic qualitative design provides data from the experiences of key stakeholders who can support or refute a phenomenon. Ethnographic design was not used in this study because that approach looks to analyze and interpret shared patterns, beliefs, behaviors, and language of a group over a period (Creswell, 2012), instead of investigating individuals.

A phenomenological approach was considered for this study. Phenomenology seeks to understand the meaning of a phenomenon from the lived experiences of individuals. Phenomenologists rely on the essence of human experiences, which is subjective (Lodico et al., 2010). Outcomes can contain researcher induced biases. A phenomenological approach was not selected in this study, as phenomenological approach could cause difficulty establishing credibility, integrity, and authenticity.

Grounded theory uses an inductive method to research and was not chosen for this study. Grounded theorists tend to yield large volumes of data that can be tiring to manage (Lodico et al., 2010). Data compiled from a grounded theory approach are analyzed by constant comparison versus triangulation. Constant comparison compares components of

the data collected with other data collected to determine similarities and differences to develop theories to describe a situation to perceive a phenomenon (Lodico et al., 2010).

Quantitative research is data driven, has little to no interaction with research participants, and uses variables to determine a cause and effect relationship (Mills, 2000). Mixed-methods research incorporates qualitative and quantitative techniques for an analysis. This approach is costly, takes more time, is multidisciplinary, and may require multiple researchers (Mills, 2000). A basic qualitative study approach was the appropriate choice for this study because I targeted a specific group of participants and allowed participants of the study to share their experiences firsthand. A basic qualitative approach is flexible and subjective (Lodico et al., 2010).

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is the primary instrument in a study and must remain neutral and observant during interactions with research participants (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument for data collection. For this study, my role was interviewer. Participants were interviewed on a phenomenon in their natural setting, enabling me to interview research subjects in an environment that is not structured. I do not have any supervisory role affiliated with the research or its participants. I am a teacher in the district and on the campus of the school where the study took place. I worked as a dean of discipline in an urban public high school in NYC for 14 years. My duties, as a dean of discipline, included making decisions on student disciplinary outcomes like suspensions, detention, and parent conferences. I remained

neutral in the research to prevent personal beliefs or past experiences to influence the research.

Bias occurs in all research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To minimize the chance of bias in this study, the research design focused on researcher reflexivity, rigor, and validity. I remained vigilant and frequently reassessed and reflected on my prejudices and positionality. Member checking was also used to reduce bias.

Methodology

In this study, the experiences and perceptions regarding the practice of PBIS of nonadministrative employees at an urban public high school in NYC were explored. The method was a basic qualitative study in its natural setting. The study explored the experiences of 13 nonadministrative staff participants.

Participant Selection Logic

Nonadministrative staff employed at urban public high schools in NYC were the population of the study. NYC employs over 100,000 nonadministrative staff (NYCDOE, 2021). The target population were teachers and guidance counselors of the site selected for the study. The site employed 57 nonadministrative staff. Participants were recruited via email invitation. Participants for the study were teachers and guidance counselors in one public high school in NYC recruited from the target population. The technique used to select participants from the target population was purposive sampling. Research participants were from various demographics (Asian, Black, or African American, Latino, Caucasian; married or single; educators of math, science, history, English language arts, special education or guidance counselors) with teaching experience

between 1 and 40 years in a public high school in NYC. A diverse population makes a study transferable and trustworthy (Andes, 2012).

Research participants were selected using the purposeful sampling strategy. Purposeful sampling is the principal sampling approach in qualitative research. Purposeful sampling is used to select participants who are relatable to the core constructs and contexts of the study's research questions—participants who have knowledge of the phenomenon of study, who work or live in the environment being studied, and who have had experience with the phenomenon (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). For a basic qualitative research study, purposeful sampling provides in-depth, rich information and understanding (Staller, 2021).

For this study, research participants were selected based on their employment occupation as nonadministrative staff and their location of employment. Nonadministrative staff—teachers and guidance counselors—from a selected public high school in NYC comprised the sample. Individuals with specific occupation in the NYCDOE, employed in the high school are licensed or certificate equivalent employees of the NYCDOE, interact with a large percentage of a student body populace, have a breadth of knowledge about a school's culture and students and have a stake in the success of an academic institution could participate. Participation in the study was voluntary.

Educators in NYCDOE public high schools are considered content teachers. Content teachers hold one or more licenses or certificates equivalent in a specific content are that enables them to teach or provide services in that area to adolescents or students in

Grades 7–12. Some content areas are science, mathematics, English, history, language arts, physical education, and special education. Other nonadministrative staff, such as speech pathologists, guidance counselors, or social workers, may have a license or certificate equivalent that enables them to work in the public high school setting in their specific area. Participants' years of experience ranged from first year teaching to 40 years of experience.

Paraprofessionals were not included in the study because, under the NYCDOE, paraprofessionals are teaching assistants who provide instructional services to one student. Instruction of one student does not enable a paraprofessional to give a breadth of knowledge about a school's culture or students. Administrators were not included in the study because, under the NYCDOE, administrators teach at a maximum of one class and are primarily responsible for managing people, data, and budgets; supervising teachers; and developing, implementing, and evaluating instructional practices (NYCDOE, 2021). Administrators are not directly engaged with a considerable number of learners in their school. Administration was also not selected due to the possibility of administrators not being willing to participate in the study because of possible negative outcomes in the school they oversee. Nonadministrative staff have schedules that are readily available, and they are more willing to see study outcomes that can contribute to improving learning opportunities and learning environments.

The site identified for the study was one of three NYC public high schools housed on a school campus in NYC. The school was Title 1, with approximately 450 students in Grades 9–12 eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Due to COVID-19, school rating for

school year 2020–2021 was not available (NYCDOE, 2022). Data for school year 2022–2023 are currently pending.

A meeting was scheduled with the site administrator to be granted approval for the research. Approval entailed site authorization by site administrator (see Appendix A) with signature. Research participants were contacted by their employee email. The initial email opened the study to the nonadministrative staff and gave them a brief synopsis (Appendix B). Nonadministrative staff who participated in the study were given an informed consent form that outlined the purpose of the study and approval by Walden University Institution Review Board (IRB) and informed them that their identity and responses would be confidential. The first 13 replies constituted the sample. A $20 Amazon gift card was offered to all participants for participation in the study. A second email was sent stipulating "individuals that participated in the research study received a $20 Amazon gift card upon completion of their interview." The participant informed consent form was emailed to each participant. Directions stipulated participation in the study was voluntary, interviews would be audio recorded, and their identities would be kept confidential. Participants were informed how to contact Walden University's research participant advocate and were provided the Walden University ethnics approval number for this study. Research participants were asked to reply to the consent email via email within 3 business days.

In qualitative research, participant samples tend to be small and are selected based on the phenomenon being studied (Konstantina Vasileiou et al., 2018). Qualitative research authorities stipulate there is no definite size a sample should be (Konstantina

Vasileiou et al., 2018). Because there are approximately 450 students in the school and the ratio of nonadministrative staff to students is about 12 to 1, selecting 13 participants for the study provided rich data for the study. Saturation occurs when no new themes or valued insights arise (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The number of participants in this study allowed data saturation to be reached. Data saturation was reached when the data began to repeat, data collected were superfluous, signifying the sample size was sufficient for the phenomenon being studied (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022) demonstrating content validity.

Instrumentation

Open-ended questions (see Appendix D) via face-to-face semistructured interviews of 13 nonadministrative employees at a public high school in NYC were applied. The face-to-face interviews were individual, audiotaped, and documented by notes. Face-to-face semistructured interviews enabled participants to provide their perceptions at ease, in a comfortable setting, and at their convenience, reducing data collection costs, and stress.

Permission was asked of the school administrator (see Appendix A) to confirm that the study would be allowed at the school. Upon approval by the university Institutional Review Board, staff participation in the study was voluntary. The instrument used in the study was researcher-created interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to gather staff descriptions of the efficacy of PBIS at their academic institution to understand the concerns and needs of the program. Interview questions were researcher-produced and grounded in the study framework.

More than one construct may appear in the research. Measuring all facets of a construct can be difficult. The possibility of reaching content validity was acquired by delimiting what is doable in a study by having clear and well-defined content (Andres, 2012). Countering deficit orientation addressed context and culture-specific issues that alleviated bias. Deficit orientation refers to individuals or groups of people who lack skills, values, and certain knowledge (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Researchers stipulate all participants are experts in their experiences, their descriptions and knowledge are valuable and contribute positively to the development of the instrument.

Researcher-Developed Instruments

The instrument for this basic qualitative study was grounded on the framework of the study. The interview questions were formatted to collect the detailed experiences and perceptions of teachers and guidance counselors, at an urban public high school in NYC. Interview questions were semistructured to ask probing questions. Interview questions were applicable and capable of acquiring thorough answers to the research questions (Roberts, 2020). Interviews captured qualitative data that aligned with the goal of the study. The interview is provided through dialog that makes sense of and determines the meaning of the phenomenon of study (Roberts, 2020).

The interview protocol was researcher-developed, and based on asking unbiased questions, allowing for answers to reflect responses from the research participants and the order of interview questions, broad to narrow and non-restrictive (Rubin & Rubin 2011). The interview protocol addressed the key principles of the reflective lifeworld in

alignment with the conceptual framework. Interview questions corresponded to a research question in the study.

Three research questions drove this study:

RQ1: How do nonadministrative employees in an urban public high school in NYC describe the practice of PBIS on student college and career readiness?

RQ2: What are nonadministrative employees' perceptions about PBIS in their urban public high school in NYC?

RQ3: How do nonadministrative employees describe the practice of PBIS on school climate in an urban public high school in NYC?

The interview questions provided rich data needed to answer the research questions. The interview questions were open-ended. Open-ended questions are used to uncover as much about the participants and their knowledge of the subject, supporting or refuting information found in the literature review (Andres, 2012). Appendix D shows the interview protocol, including questions and the framework elements from which they were derived.

Assistance was conducted on the instrument, by field testing the interview questions on two nonadministrative employees, of a public high school in NYC, who are not participants in the study. Practice using the instrument informally helped to determine and elicit how interview questions aligned with the research questions. The practice also helped pace the timing of questions that each interview would require. The nonadministrative employees who helped with the practice are not staff of the school where the study took place. Their responses were not logged in for data analysis but

logged into my journal as a reference. Participants from the field test stipulated that the interview questions were not biased, were doable for the suggested interview time, and solicited critical thinking. Content validity and credibility were established by member checking (Creswell, 2017). Member checking is the process in which the researcher asks one or more research participants in the study to check the accuracy of the report (Candela, 2019). Transcripts were cleaned of obvious transcription errors and words such as "um" were removed. Research participants were emailed cleaned transcripts following their interviews and were asked to return any changes within five business days. After this time, the transcripts were considered to be accurate.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection were delineated in this section. Purposeful and criterion sampling were used for the research. Before participant recruitment, a meeting was scheduled with the school administrator to seek permission to conduct research at their school using nonadministrative staff. A letter, of permission to conduct research consent form, provides a brief outline of the research method and approval or disapproval to conduct research. For recruitment, an email was sent to each participant at the school selected for the investigation. The email explained the basic elements of the study. Individuals interested in participating in the study received a consent form inviting them to partake in the research study, provided study purpose, interview procedures, nature of the study, risks, benefits of being in the study, privacy, how to contact me or Walden University's research participant advocate if they had questions and obtainment of their consent to participate. The first 13 responses to

volunteer for the study were the research participants. Research participants were notified via email of their selection to participate in the study. The recruitment process took approximately three weeks.

Research participants were scheduled for an individual face-to-face semistructured interview (see protocol in Appendix D). Interviews were audiotaped via Google Meet. Google Meet is the primary video conferencing software used at the site of research. Video conferencing allowed for real-time communication between the interviewer and interviewee. Interviews were held during the research participants' non-academic hours, before work, after work or during their lunch period. The interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes. Interviews were held in seclusion, for example, in the research participant's classroom, to foster a sense of comfort, for participants to feel comfortable and speak candidly. Research participants were emailed a copy of their interview transcripts to review and asked to return any edits or changes within one week of receipt. No replies conceded interview transcript was accurate as transcribed.

Data Analysis Plan

Semistructured interviews were the data collection method used for this basic qualitative study. Interviews for this qualitative study looked to understand nonadministrative staff descriptions of PBIS in an urban public high school. Interviews were one-on-one face-to-face semistructured. The framework helped tailor the research method and approaches.

The thematic analysis identifies patterns from interview transcripts that in turn generate themes. I became familiarized with the data to create a set of codes that

represented meanings presented in the transcript from the interviewee. Judgment by the researcher is vital to establish a theme (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Thematic analysis is not linear but recursive, it is flexible, and there is no wrong or right way to determine a theme (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Braun and Clarke (2012) identified six phases used to conduct a thematic analysis. The six phases of thematic analysis are: familiarizing yourself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining, and naming themes, and producing the report.

Phase 1, familiarizing yourself with your data, began early. Reflexive journal notes were taken during interviews. Data from the interviews were read through in their entirety to become familiar with the breadth and depth of the content. Data were transcribed and ideas for coding originated. Phase 2, generating initial codes, initiated from the excerpts found in the data from Phase 1. Excerpts with the same meaning were given the same code. New excerpts were given a different code. Codes were collated to get a deeper understanding of the meaning being conveyed. Codes were then grouped into themes. The themes were meaningful and a reflection of the framework. Themes were re-evaluated to ensure validity. Phase 3, searching for themes, sorted codes into different themes. A visual illustration, a table, was used to organize the different codes into levels of themes. Codes that did not fit with the main themes were coded "miscellaneous." Phase 4, reviewing themes, candidate themes were refined. Collated themes were revisited to ensure they had a coherent pattern. Themes that seem to be not applicable, were reworked for a new theme or discarded. The data set was reread for validity. The thematic map showed correlation, the analysis can move to Phase 5, if no

themes are reviewed and refined until a satisfactory thematic map is generated (Braun & Clarke, 2012). In phase 5, defining and naming themes, themes were reviewed and refined again, until the essence of each theme was captured. Confident themes were turned into a narrative. The narrative constructed contained quotes to back up points from the interview. Analysis was done with pen, paper, and document processor. Phase 6, producing the report, is the story of the data. The story should induce the reader of the value and validity of the investigation (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The data gathered was chunked into smaller units and coded. These smaller units were put into categories. Themes are developed based on the content from the interviews (Ravitch & Carl, 2020).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the point methods, interpretation, and confidence in data that certify the eminence of a study. Trustworthiness emphasizes relevance and rigor in the research process (Daniel, 2019). To achieve trustworthiness, qualitative researchers adhere to four standards: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Credibility is the ability of the researcher to connect the research study's discoveries with reality to demonstrate the truth of the research study's findings. Principal techniques to establish the credibility of a study are member checking, rich description, and prolonged time in the field (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Member checking implies sharing the data, interpretations, and inferences with the study's participants to establish validity. Thick description describes the study's contextual factors and participant experiences to produce interpretations and findings in which the audience can contextualize the meaning of the researchers' findings (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). With

confirmability, a researcher does not claim to be objective (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Instead, they are neutral, look at the world as subjective, and mediate any biases that might be part of one's data. Such goals can be achieved using triangulation, external audit, and researcher reflexivity (Mills, 2000). A reflexive journal was used to keep track of thoughts and reflections as participants responded to interview questions. This was later used as a tool to assist in analyzing data but did not serve as a data source.

Transferability is established when readers are provided evidence that findings from the research study apply to other populations, contexts, and situations (Daniel, 2019). Transferability can be achieved using thick description and variation in participant selection which allows for audience of the study to consider findings instead of attempting to reduplicate the outcomes and design (Daniel, 2019). Descriptions of the phenomenon from the context of the participants can provide readers with a proper understanding that will enable them to compare instances of the phenomenon described to what they may have seen (Shenton, 2004). The context for this inquiry was transferable. Context conveyed the number of research participants involved in the study, the period in which the study was conducted, data collection methods employed, the number of organizations taking part in the study, and any restrictions applicable to people involved in the study (Shenton, 2004), to the reader. In this way, the results of this study will be transferrable to those using PBIS in other settings with a similar curriculum, school structure, retention rates, funding, and student support system. It is anticipated that the results may be more likely transferrable to other urban, large district settings; however, other school districts implementing PBIS may find similar results.

Dependability, as discussed by Ravitch and Carl (2020), refers to the solidity of the research's data. Appropriate strategies to establish dependability, in this study were audit trails. Audit trails are researchers' meticulous and chronological documentation of their research processes and decisions (Carcary, 2020). Documentation was maintained in the form of a reflective journal. The reflective journal was a paper and digital notebook.

Confirmability refers to the point at which the outcomes of a study can be confirmed or substantiated by others. In confirmability, the researcher does not claim to be objective (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Instead, they are neutral, look at the world subjectively, and mediate any biases that might be part of their data. Such goals were achieved using researcher reflexivity, triangulation, and audit trail (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Researcher reflexivity is the description of the context between participants and researcher and can be accomplished using reflective commentary, and journaling, throughout the study. An audit trail is a step-by-step course that allows an observer to trace the research (Shenton, 2004). Inquiry applies a data-oriented approach, showing how the data collected leads to recommendations (Shenton, 2004).

Validity for this research required constant rechecking of data and the researcher not claiming to be objective (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The research was subjective. Constant checks and rechecks of data collected and the analysis confirmed findings from the research that were corroborated. Reflexivity processes can mediate any biases that may have been put in the data interpretation, triangulation, and external audits (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). In qualitative research, researchers are considered primary instruments and must be challenged by others and themselves throughout one's study.

Aspects of trustworthiness in qualitative research are attained using logical processes (Daniel, 2019). For my study, I acknowledged prior assumptions and experiences that I may have about the topic of study (Daniel, 2019). Data were collected via semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. Data from the interviews were analyzed, coded, themed, and categorized. Initial findings were member-checked with research participants to ensure outcomes reflected their experiences and perceptions.

Ethical Procedures

Research participants in this study were professional adults of a secondary public institution in an urban setting. Ethical standards were set by Walden University's IRB and by the local school district. Walden University stipulates IRB approval was required before recruitment of participants, data collection, or data access for any research. An initial conference was held with the site administrator giving them a brief synopsis of my study to determine if they would allow research to be conducted at their institution. The initial conference was followed up by an email seeking authorization to use the site for the study (see Appendix E). Emphasis was stipulated that any interview with research participants would be conducted outside of their academic periods, before work, after work, or during the research participant's lunch period. Beneficence was stressed. Participants were treated ethically, respecting their decisions, and securing their identities, and well-being (United States Department of Health & Human Services, 2022). Participants in the study were voluntary. Participants not capable of self-determination were respected and afforded extra protection if they chose to participate. Research participants not capable of self-determination are those participants who have a mental

disability or illness (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). No burden was placed on any person who volunteered or decided to leave the study. All participant information was treated with confidentially.

Research participants' names were protected. Participant identities were not mentioned anywhere in the study, codes were used in place of names, being careful to not stereotype or essentialize individuals (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). The study was conducted at my school of employment. I am aware that Walden University stipulates data collection may be time-consuming and biased. Careful actions were taken to collect data without biases. Participation in the study was voluntary. Consent forms to participate in the study were sent out to nonadministrative staff who teach in different departments in the school. Interactions with nonadministrative staff on any workday were very minimal due to the secondary school instructional schedule, professional development periods and union contract obligation. Contact with research participants was during one-on-one, face-to-face interviews via Google Meet. The researcher is not in a position of leadership or authority. The researcher does not have subordinates, or responsibility for any research participant performance reviews, salaries, awards, or recognition. The researcher is not an administrator or dean and does not oversee or administer disciplinary actions in connection to student behavior.

Participation in the study was voluntary. Participation in the study was initiated by email. The email contained a brief synopsis of the study. Participants interested in volunteering for the study replied to the email stipulating that they would like to

volunteer for the study. A participant consent form was emailed to each volunteer. The consent form stated the purpose, procedures, nature of the study, risks, and benefits of being in the study, payment, contact and questions information, and their consent to participate in the study. Personnel willing to participate in the study were advised to reply to the email consenting that they volunteered to participate in the study.

Data were collected via face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The interviews were in a setting that was comfortable, quiet, and private. The setting prevented non-research participants from seeing or overhearing the interview. Data are stored securely, on a personal computer that is password-protected for 5 years following the completion of the study and will then be securely destroyed. Participant privacy and confidentiality were of the utmost concern for this study and were constantly checked to ensure their confidentiality was maintained.

Summary

A basic qualitative study was the best choice for this investigation. Research inquiries to understand a phenomenon from the description of people's experiences provide a significant understanding of how people make sense of and interpret their world. The use of nonadministrative staff in this qualitative investigation is of paramount importance. Nonadministrative staff are at the forefront of student academic and social development. Teachers play a role in the implementation, management, and continuation of any program or initiative at an academic institution. Results from research can build teacher knowledge and improve their decision-making and outcomes to enhance themselves as well as their students.

In this chapter, a full explanation and reasoning for the selected methodology, justification for the targeted population, and details on the sampling processes were provided. This chapter also included a narrative of the data collection procedures and instrumentation of the study. Chapter 4 will provide a detailed discussion of the research data collected and the important themes that emerge through analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of nonadministrative employees regarding the practice of PBIS in an urban public high school in NYC. The research questions that guided the study were:

RQ1: How do nonadministrative employees in an urban public high school in NYC describe the practice of PBIS on student college and career readiness?

RQ2: What are nonadministrative employee's perceptions about PBIS in their urban public high school in NYC?

RQ3: How do nonadministrative employees describe the practice of PBIS on school climate in an urban public high school in NYC?

Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the data collected in this basic qualitative study, focusing on exploring the themes that emerged from the responses of the study's research participants to answer the research questions. This chapter is organized into seven sections: setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, results, and the summary.

Setting

This basic qualitative study was conducted in an urban public high school in NYC. The site was one of three public high schools housed on a school campus. The site selected is a Title 1 school, with approximately 450 students in Grades 9–12. The student body population is comprised mostly of a diverse population of Latinos (Mexicans, Ecuadorians, Dominicans, Guatemalans, Peruvians, and Puerto Ricans) and African

Americans. Title 1 schools in NYC are schools where at least 40% of the student enrollment from low-income households (New York State Education Department, 2022). These schools receive funding from the federal government and the state.

The study was focused on nonadministrative staff (teachers, guidance counselors, and deans) in one public high school in NYC. Thirteen nonadministrative employees of the public high school were interviewed (see Table 1). The interviewees were conducted via Google Meet during the research participants non-teaching period or in their home of residence. Research participants were given the option to select an alternative location for their interview. Freedom to select an alternate location for interviewing provided a setting they would feel comfortable in while participating and answering questions during the interviews. Most interviews were conducted at the site of study, the school, during research participants' non-teaching period.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Ethnicity	Years employed	Job title	Students supervised
RP1	African American	3	Special education teacher	60
RP2	Caucasian	4	Physical education teacher	250
RP3	African American	28	Special education teacher	220
RP4	Caucasian	11	English language arts teacher	136
RP5	Asian American	13	Mathematics teacher	170
RP6	African American	20	Special education teacher	136
RP7	African American	12	Science teacher	170
RP8	Latino	12	English language arts teacher	170
RP9	Latino	12	English as a second language teacher	120
RP10	Latino	2	Special education teacher	60
RP11	Asian American	22	Mathematics teacher	170
RP12	African American	14	Special education teacher	60
RP13	Latino	3	Guidance counselor	225

Demographics

Thirteen nonadministrative staff participated in the research study. Research participants came from a diverse ethnic background and were employed at the school in various roles. Table 1 provides demographics of the 13 nonadministrative staff who participated in the study. Demographics includes their ethnicity, years employed, job title, and students supervised.

Ethnicity provides a description of what culture, language, customs, and heritage each research participant relates to, representing the social connection research participants may have with students and staff in the school and the beliefs and values they may hold. Ethnic ratio of the research participants was as follows: 31% Latino (RP8, RP9, RP10, RP13), 39% African American (RP1, RP3, RP6, RP7, RP12), 15% Caucasian (RP2, RP4), and 15% Asian American (RP5, RP11).

Years employed is the number of years and the level of knowledge of the site of study each research participant possesses. The mean years employed for the research participants in this study was 12 years. Four research participants had less than 5 years of employment (RP1, RP2, RP10, RP13) at the site of study, and three had over 20 years of service (RP3, RP6, RP 1) at the site of study.

Job title sheds light on each research participant's employment. Classroom teachers in NYC public high schools are referred to as content teachers. Content teachers teach three to five whole classes per day (RP2, RP4, RP5, RP6, RP8, RP11). Special education teachers in NYC public high schools provide support to students who require special education services (RP1, RP3, RP6, RP10, RP12). Students in a NYC public high

school who require special education services have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), a written statement or plan that outlines what services the child requires to be successful in school. IEPs may require various different services for different students. English as a second language (ESL) teachers in NYC public high schools work with students to develop their skills in speaking, writing, listening, and reading in English (RP9). English as a second language teachers co-teach with content teachers, or they may have a standalone class. Standalone classes are classes in which students have one teacher as the instructor. Guidance counselors in a NYC public high school (RP13) service the school community, students, families, nonadministrative staff, and school leadership. Guidance counselors advocate for services and programs that can provide positive student academic outcomes.

The number of students supervised represents the number of students each participant services. Content teachers in a NYC public high school are programmed with up to 34 students per class, 34:1 ratio. The exceptions are physical education teachers who are programmed up to 50 students per class, 50:1 ratio, and special education teachers who work a 12:1 ratio, with no more than 12 students per class to supervise. Guidance counselors in public high schools in NYC service by grades. They can be an individual grade counselor or a multiple grade counselor. The quantity of students supervised by a guidance counselor in a NYC public high school is based on the grade assignment and the student membership of the school assigned.

Data Collection

Thirteen individuals participated in this basic qualitative study, representing nonadministrative staff at an urban public high school in NYC. Each research participant was interviewed once individually, providing a robust and diverse data set for analysis. Research interviews were conducted during the research participants non-teaching period or on the weekend.

The interviews were arranged by email. This allowed each participant the opportunity to schedule their interview based on their availability. Interviews were carried out during the research participants non-teaching period during the week or on the weekend if they were not available to meet Monday through Friday during their workday. This approach gave the research participants flexibility and provided a comfortable environment where they could speak openly. The length of the interviews varied; most interviews lasted between 30 and 35 minutes. The duration of the interviews allowed for in-depth conversation. Participants were able to share their experiences and perceptions on questions asked.

The interviews were conducted virtually using Google Meet. Google Meet was the platform of choice because it is the primary technology used by school staff for video conferencing such as parent-teacher conferences. Google Meet is a video communication platform. Interviews were only audio recorded. Interviews were recorded and a transcript was compiled. Interview transcripts acquired from the Google Meet recordings were ran through a secondary transcription service, Happy Scribe, that converts audio recording to text.

No unusual circumstances or unexpected variations occurred different from the procedures presented in Chapter 3. The protocol established in Chapter 3, interview techniques, video conferencing platform, and interview procedures were followed as proposed for all research participants involved in the study. The approach used provided a rigorous data collection method that permitted a complete analysis of the data collected.

Data Analysis

Data analysis process was done inductively moving from codes to categories, categories to initial themes, and initial themes to final themes. Codes were identified and labelled based on their relation to the research questions. Codes generated patterns, and patterns generated themes. Data were organized from the interview transcripts using Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel.

Braun and Clarke's (2012) six phases of thematic analysis and content analysis practices were applied to guide the analysis of the data: (a) familiarizing yourself with your data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) searching for themes, (d) reviewing themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) producing the report. Each phase of the analysis is described below.

In the initial phase, I familiarized myself with the data. I read each interview transcript thoroughly and in its entirety several times, concurrently annotating notes in my reflexive journal to become familiar with the breadth and depth of the content provided from the experiences and perceptions of the participants. The interview transcripts from the Google Meet audio recording were reviewed for perceptible errors. Noticeable errors were highlighted in yellow, and the correct term was annotated in red.

Interview transcripts were sent to each research participant for member checking. Participants were allowed 3 days to review the interview transcript for accuracy and respond with changes. No research participant replied with corrections. No corrections to the interview transcript were required to be made following member checking.

The initial coding process required the generation of a comprehensive list of initial codes obtained from the research participants' interview transcript. Each response to the interview questions by the research participant was read meticulously. Excerpts from each response for each interview question by the research participant were highlighted. Each excerpt portrayed an experience or perception from the research participant. Each excerpt was labelled with a code. Excerpts with the same meaning were given the same code. New excerpts were given a different code. The list of initial codes is in Appendix F; 276 initial codes were produced.

After generating the initial codes, I reviewed the list. A search for obviously common terms led to the organization of initial codes into secondary codes and categories. The initial code list was condensed to 61 secondary codes and categories. A list of secondary codes and categories is in Appendix G. Secondary codes and categories initiated the search for themes. Collating the codes provided a deeper understanding of the experiences and perceptions of each research participant through the lens of the framework. Codes captured a pattern of emerging themes within the data.

Secondary codes and categories were re-explored in a search for commonalities. Secondary codes and categories were reviewed in the context of the conceptual framework and literature discussed in Chapter 2. Careful examination showed how the

secondary codes and categories aligned with previous research findings. Secondary codes and categories were reviewed to identify similarities and connections between them. Secondary codes and categories were collapsed based on a shared context. Secondary codes and categories that did not fit into a category were coded *miscellaneous* for later consideration. As a result, 20 initial themes emerged. The initial themes also aligned with previous research findings. The list of the initial themes is in Appendix H.

In this phase, the initial themes were reviewed in the context of the literature discussed in Chapter 2 and the conceptual framework to ensure they display a coherent pattern. Themes not applicable were discarded if irrelevant to the study or reworked into a new theme. The full data set was reread for validity. During Phase 5, initial themes are reviewed and refined until the essence of each theme was captured and defined. Coherent and distinctive themes underwent a second review process in relation to the entire data set to condense the initial themes down to the five final themes: (a) prepared to be successful, (b) NYCDOE, (c) case by case, (d) safe school culture, and (e) leadership.

Theme 1: Prepared to Be Successful

This theme emphasizes the importance of students being prepared academically and socially to be successful in college or the workforce after graduating from a public high school in NYC, where PBIS is practiced. It highlights the need for classes and training, in a safe environment in which learning can take place, that facilitates a successful pathway to post-secondary school. Research participant 6 (RP6) coupled college and career readiness and the workforce. RP6 stated, “College and career readiness is preparing our students for the world of work with skills that they need to perform

work". Research participant 13 (RP13) discussed college and career readiness as skills required for collegiate success. RP13 avowed college and career readiness are "preparing the kids for college by teaching them certain standards and skills so that they'll be ready once they get to college". Research participant 11 (RP 11) highlighted the positive outcomes of students in a school that practiced PBIS. RP11 stipulated, "I feel that the students that are involved in those programs or schools that get PBIS, their success rate academically is higher".

Each research participant emphasized students require being prepared with skills to be successful in college or the workforce post-high school graduation; and, these skills can be refined in a safe environment and in which learning can take place due to the practice of PBIS. This aligns with the framework of reflective lifeworld. Participants elaborated on student success after high school based on their perceptions. Specifically, participants perceived student success as due to PBIS, a practice that produced an environment in which learning took place. Successful learning in the school where PBIS was practiced increased student academic success rates and allowed students to acquire skills to be successful after high school graduation. Nonadministrative staff of an urban public high school are at the forefront of student success. Knowledge of student success is grounded in the concrete experiences of nonadministrative employees at an urban public high school.

Theme 2: New York City Department of Education

This theme stresses NYCDOE as a governing agency. NYCDOE is the governing agency for all public schools in NYC. As a governing agency, NYCDOE manages the

city's public school system. NYCDOE is committed to creating and supporting academic environments that are safe for students and staff, in which learning can take place. Establishing, implementing, and sustaining a schoolwide multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) in NYC public schools would help reduce student negative behavior and increase student academic achievement. NYCDOE mandated PBIS as a multi-tiered system, to reduce negative student behavior and increase student academic achievement. NYCDOE has measures in place to monitor student success.

NYCDOE is a key stakeholder in the academic success of its learners. Student academic success in the NYCDOE is measured by students' performance in core classes, the school's state test results, student preparation to enter the next grade level, the performance of students classified as having higher needs, and the supportive environment.

Accounts of PBIS from the perspectives of nonadministrative employees at an urban public high school in NYC are within the framework of reflective lifeworld. It emphasizes outcomes of PBIS about student success which can contribute to student academic achievement that contributes to the development of youth into upstanding and successful citizens in post-secondary school.

Research Participant 4 (RP4) highlighted staff buy-in of PBIS in their school and shared:

We have the restorative justice program, PBIS, which is a non-traditional approach to discipline in my school. I know it is a big thing at our school. Negative reinforcement just simply doesn't work at all. They (students) tend to do their work if

they're given positive reinforcement. The student the teacher and the restorative justice coach sit down and try to hash out a better outcome so the student won't miss class.

Research participant 6 (RP6) emphasized that PBIS can contribute to positive student outcomes and shared: "I think if we use the positive way where students understand how their behaviors are affecting themselves and others in the classroom and their progress. I think we would have more positive results."

Theme 3: Case by Case

This theme underscores the significance of PBIS on student academic success at an urban public high school in NYC. PBIS is a multi-tiered framework used in academic institutions to reduce negative student behavior to increase student scholarship. The experiences of nonadministrative staff at an urban public high school in NYC align with the conceptual framework of the reflective lifeworld. Reflective lifeworld draws on the knowledge and experiences of its participants to address a phenomenon, PBIS perceived on student academic success.

Two research participants emphasize that PBIS is not a one-size-fits-all approach to student academic success. Student success in an urban public high school in NYC where PBIS is practiced is case-by-case:

Research participant 2 (RP2) highlighted first-hand experience of PBIS in a secondary school setting and shared, "I've seen it work for like a week or two, and then the kid just rolls back into the same routine that they were in before. Whatever the negative behavior was. So, it can work. It might just depend on the kid." Research participant 11 (RP11) seconded a similar experience and stressed that PBIS is not a fit for

all students and shared: “PBIS program is offered to all students and is applicable depending on their circumstances or culture. Students involved in the program have a higher academic success rate.” Experiences of nonadministrative staff at an urban public high school in NYC identified PBIS not as a one-size-fits-all but emphasized PBIS as a case-by-case circumstance.

Theme 4: Safe School Culture

This theme highlights the impact of PBIS on a school’s culture within the conceptual framework of reflective lifeworld. It encompasses the experiences and perspectives of students having the opportunity to succeed based on the atmosphere of an academic institution. The atmosphere of a school is the environment in which learning can occur, where students and staff feel safe and secure.

Research participant 4 (RP4) shared their perspective on the effect of PBIS on school culture, and shared, “I haven’t been at the school very long, but I’ve heard stories about how it was before when I joined the school. So, it seems like it has made a positive impact on the school. Our school is very safe, and the students feel, I think they feel very loved.” Research participant 10 (RP10) highlighted school safety and shared: “I would say that we have a pretty safe environment. Students within our building feel like they can travel without being afraid of someone hurting them, they feel comfortable enough with at least a couple of staff members to talk to them, if there is an issue.”

Research participants 4 and 10 both emphasized the need for a safe environment for students to be allowed to be successful in high school. Research participants 4 and 10 underscored student safety is directly linked to success. Student’s feeling loved promotes

a positive environment in which student success can occur. Research participant 10 speaks about safety coming to school and students feeling comfortable speaking with nonadministrative employees if they have a problem.

The experiences of research participants elaborate on the reflective lifeworld. Research participants base their understanding of a phenomenon on past experiences. Past experiences with school safety provide an understanding and a platform in which problems can be addressed to promote a positive environment in which students can succeed.

Theme 5: Leadership

This theme highlights the significance of the effects leadership has in an urban public high school in NYC from the lifeworld experiences of nonadministrative staff. It focused on the impact of school leadership and safety. Research participant 5 (RP5) emphasized a lack of leadership support negatively impacted nonadministrative employees' knowledge of PBIS at their academic institution. Nonadministrative staff did not know what was expected of them regarding PBIS and shared,

We need to have a sit-down of everybody and a plan should be implemented where teachers know what they're supposed to do in this plan: school aides, deans, assistant principals, and lead teachers. They should all know what they have to do in this plan to make PBIS effective."

Research participant 8 (RP8) stressed the importance of school leadership being proactive, actively engaging with students in their school to produce a safe and secure environment in which students can learn and share: "A very proactive boss. When I say

boss, I mean principals and administrators being vigilant in the hallways and classrooms every morning. The administrators have to be more vigilant. They have to be involved with students".

Research participant 11 (RP11) also emphasized the lack of leadership support and shared: "I believe it has to start with leadership. So, it has to start with the administrator, the principal understanding the culture and the data of what the school needs."

Research participants 5 and 7 (RP5 and RP7) underlined lack of trust by school leadership impacts a school's success and shared: "A good environment is all about trust. It has to build on trust. Students trust the adults. Teachers trust the administrators to create a friendly environment in the school."

Within the theme of leadership, school administration are stakeholders whose actions can impact the success of a school. Experiences and perceptions of nonadministrative employees at an academic institution prevail this conclusion from reflecting on the past which concludes what they believe today about leadership expectations.

The last phase represents the "story" of the data. The story provides a captivating report about the data based on my investigation. The story should convince the reader of the significance and authenticity of the investigation. This process involved analyzing the relationship between the initial codes, secondary codes and categories, and themes. Analyzing these items ensures alignment of the conceptual framework and research

questions and allows for the research questions to be answered. This will take place in the Results section below.

Discrepant Cases

Discrepant cases are exceptions to themes found in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Merriam and Tisdell asserted that researchers should review data collected identifying any data that contest one's themes to increase the credibility of their study. Data collected for my inquiry was reviewed. No evidence was found that showed any significant outliners or contradiction to the data. Member checking was also incorporated to increase credibility.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness for this qualitative study was articulated by four standards: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Daniel, 2019). Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are indicators of rigor in a qualitative study, affirming that findings in a study are accurate to the experiences of the research applicants who have participated in the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). The standards of trustworthiness for this study are discussed below.

Credibility

To prove the credibility of this study member checking was used. Research participants were provided a copy of the interview transcript to review. Research participants were asked to check the interview transcript, for accuracy and resonance. Member checking established the credibility of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Research participant's experiences and perceptions were adequately presented in their

own words, and they were allowed to stipulate a change in the transcript that they felt was not an accurate representation of their experience and perceptions. Member checking confirmed nonadministrative employees' perceptions of PBIS in an urban public high school were accurately represented.

Transferability

Transferability demands that the qualitative research be circumscribed contextually (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). The findings of the qualitative study should not produce statements that can be generalized but rather statements that are context-relevant and descriptive. Participants for this study represent nonadministrative staff in an urban public high school in NYC, whose demographics can be repeated by other researchers who want to conduct a similar inquiry.

Transferability was established in this inquiry. Readers were provided evidence from the investigation that applied to other situations, populations, and contexts. Rich description, detailed research process, outlined previously in Chapter 3, and the variety of participants used in the study allow for the audience to make comparisons to other contexts based on the research findings (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Site setting, research participant's experiences and perceptions offered meticulous insights into the research context, offering strategies readers can use to conduct further research.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the reliability of the research data (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Dependability was established in this study using meticulous and chronological documentation of my research process and decisions. Documentation was maintained

using a reflective journal. The reflective journal was a paper-based notebook. The reflective journal outlined interview locations, times, thoughts, and perceptions.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the point at which the outcomes of the investigation can be substantiated or confirmed by others. The researcher is not objective (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Instead, the researcher is subjective, and neutral, and mediates biases that may occur as part of the data collected. For this inquiry, confirmability was established specifically, using reflexivity and audit trails.

Reflexivity was obtained by journaling commentary on the context of the study between me and the research participant. During the interview process research participants repeated their answers confirming their answers to the questions. Audit trails were accomplished by keeping a journal that shows how data was collected and recommendations. Rechecking the research participants' experiences and perceptions confirms findings from the research that can be validated.

Trustworthiness was accomplished in this study by implementing the strategies of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The strategies assessed the study's rigor. Fidelity of the research participants' experiences, perceptions and methods undertaken to conduct the study produced valid findings, and trustworthy.

Results

Three research questions were the focus of this study. The research questions focused on nonadministrative employees in an urban public high school in NYC perceptions of PBIS on student college and career readiness, PBIS in their urban public

high school, and nonadministrative staff describing the practice of PBIS on school climate in an urban public high school in NYC. Each research question was addressed by several interview questions (see Appendix D).

The theory of reflective lifeworld was the lens used for the data analysis. The theory is articulated through five principles: temporality, intersubjectivity, spatiality, mood, and embodiment. Temporality or past memories are feelings (experiences) that emerge from memories. Intersubjectivity or personal memories is how we view ourselves and others through experiences and perceptions. Spatiality or present memories are the experiences of living in that environment. Mood or influenced memories are perceptions of a situation that can be influenced by the four other principles. Lastly, embodiment or restriction memories are how we experience the world, our perceptions of the situation, possibilities, or boundaries.

The association of principles to interview questions varied. Table 2 displays interview questions with coupled principles. Column one presents the interview question number. Column two notes the interview question. The last column identifies the corresponding principle. The correlation between interview questions and principles varied. Interview questions (IQs) 1 and 4 are associated with one principle. While IQs 2, 3, 5 to 11 are associated with multiple principles. Interview questions drove the interview. Themes emerged from the codes derived from the dataset.

Table 2

Interview Questions and Principles of Reflective Lifeworld

Question #	Interview Question	Reflective Lifeworld Principle
1	What is your understanding of college and career readiness in secondary schools?	Intersubjectivity

2	How are student scholarships 2 or 4 years after high school graduation monitored	Intersubjectivity, mood
3	How do you perceive PBIS on student academic success in your school?	Intersubjectivity, spatiality, temporality
4	How was PBIS implemented at your school?	Spatiality
5	What drove your school to implement PBIS?	Embodiment, intersubjectivity
6	How do you perceive PBIS as a discipline intervention approach at your school?	Embodiment, intersubjectivity, mood, spatiality
7	Has PBIS made a difference at your school? Yes or No. Explain your answer.	Embodiment, intersubjectivity, spatiality
8	How would you describe the overall climate of your school? School climate refers to the level of safety and the relationship of students and staff.	Embodiment, intersubjectivity, mood, spatiality
9	What do you believe would make a good learning environment for students and staff?	Intersubjectivity, mood
10	Describe what circumstances can affect a school's climate, & have you experienced this circumstance at your school?	Embodiment, mood, spatiality
11	How would you describe the relationship between PBIS and your school climate? Is this relationship a positive or negative effect by your standards?	Embodiment, mood

Research Question 1

How do nonadministrative employees in an urban public high school in NYC perceive the practice of PBIS on student college and career readiness?

The first research question explored experiences and perceptions of the practice of PBIS on student college and career readiness, three themes emerged: Theme 1 - Prepared to be Successful, Theme 2 – NYC Department of Education, and Theme 3 – Case by Case. The themes shed light on the impact of college and career readiness and secondary learners' potential success after secondary school.

Theme 1: Prepared to Be Successful

This theme reflects research participants' understanding of what tools secondary students in an urban public high school in NYC need to be successful after graduating high school. Research participants' pathways to being successful after high school graduation focused on academic success, students attending college and being successful academically, or social success, joining the workforce, and being successfully employed.

One research participant, RP12, described skills students need to be successful in college and stated: “Preparing the kids for college by teaching them certain standards and skills so that they’ll be ready once they get to college…essay writing, literary analysis, group discussions, presentations.” Research participant, RP7, described workforce pathways students may take after high school and how their decisions should be encouraged and stated:

So maybe a student does not want to go to college or maybe they want to go to trade school and they want to be a mechanic, or they want to be an electrician or carpenter or whatever it is. These are their interests. Then you kind of stare them towards getting some type of trade school certificate.

Theme 2: New York City Department of Education

This theme describes NYCDOE monitoring of student scholarships 2 or 4 years after graduation from high school from the perception of nonadministrative staff employed in the agency. Nonadministrative staff had mixed perspectives regarding how student scholarships 2 or 4 years after graduating from an NYC public high school are monitored. One research participant, RP7, stated:

I believe there’s a system within the DOE where they track/monitor students 2 or 4 years after graduating. I believe the system kind of goes into how many years they spend in college. I believe that’s how they are tracked/monitored. I am not exactly sure. But I know there is a system that allows them to look at that data.

Note, many nonadministrative staff highlighted being unclear as to how NYCDOE monitors student scholarships 2 or 4 years after graduating high school. One

research participant, RP4, shared their understanding and stated: “I am not sure how they’re monitored.” RP11 and RP13 stated: “I don’t know.”

Theme 3: Case by Case

This theme emphasizes the perception of PBIS on student academic achievement. PBIS is a multi-tiered framework used by academic institutions to improve a school’s climate. Academic institutions utilizing PBIS should have a positive school culture in which student academic and social development are progressive. Participants expressed their experience of PBIS at their academic institution. One research participant, RP2, highlighted outcomes of PBIS are case-by-case, and stated:

So, it can work. It might just depend on the kid. But in my experience, it doesn’t solve the issue. It’s like a band-aid thing. And then the band-aid falls off and the behavior picks right back up where it left off. If a student is coming late, if a student is cutting class and that’s the behavior that is being addressed and then you apply the restorative practice and it works for a little while, they’ll be in class on time every day doing what they need to do. But then once they’re rolling back into their past behavior they’re going to start missing class again, missing whatever subjects, whatever assessments, which will then in turn negatively affect their academic performance.

RP8 echoed their experience of PBIS and stated. “One-on-one direct impact, I find is useful. It doesn’t work for everybody. However, I know that maintaining a positive one-on-one relationship with the student is important. I believe the research shows the same thing.”

The exploration of these themes allows for a deeper understanding of nonadministrative employees' perception of the practice of PBIS on student college and career readiness at an urban public high school in NYC. Experiences shared by the research participants highlight the importance of nonadministrative employees' perspectives on initiatives in academic institutions.

Research Question 2

What are nonadministrative employees' perceptions of PBIS in their urban public high school?

In examining the perspectives of nonadministrative employees regarding the efficacy of PBIS in an urban public high school in NYC, one theme emerged: Theme: 4 – Safe School Culture. These themes shed light on the implementation and practice of PBIS as experienced by nonadministrative staff at an urban public high school.

Theme 4: Safe School Culture

This theme highlights the research participants' perspectives of PBIS on student behavior in an academic institution in NYC that exercises an evidence-based tiered framework that supports student academic, social, emotional and behavior. Participants emphasized student behavior as an integral part of a student's academic, social, and emotional development. One research participant, RP4, described the positive effects of PBIS on students, in an urban public high school in NYC, abilities to recognize and manage their emotions. RP4 shared: "I think it works. Some of our students may have emotional problems. I think reinforcing positive behavior or talking to them commonly

and focusing on their strengths, can help them to focus on the positive aspects of their life or their studies."

RP8 stressed that PBIS is an effective program that has a positive impact on a school community. RP8 shared:

I would say that it's positive. Again, I've been here long enough. I know what it was like before PBIS. So, I know what works and what I've seen. These are just my observations and my understanding of PBIS. PBIS allows for the development of a greater school community and climate for everybody. Students feel more invested.

Research Question 3

How do nonadministrative employees describe the practice of PBIS on school climate in an urban public high school in NYC?

In exploring the practice of PBIS, nonadministrative staff described the efficacy of PBIS on school climate. One theme emerged from the experiences of nonadministrative staff at an urban public high school: Theme 6 – Leadership. This theme sheds light on the impact administrative staff can have on PBIS and school culture.

Theme 5: Leadership

Research participants identified factors that contributed to a positive environment in which learning can occur and where students and staff feel safe. One research participant, RP2 stated and shared:

I think it should come from the administration and hold everyone to a standard. Because in my school there are teachers that let the students out before the bell rings. Even if they don't let them out, the kids just walk out, and nothing comes of it. They fill

up the hallway before the class is over. So, it disrupts the other classrooms, kids looking in the windows, things like that. So, if there was a set of rules and standards that came from the top and went down the line, I think it would be better.

Research participant, RP9, shared and stated:

The administrators have to be more vigilant. They have to be in the hallways and get…How can I say, involved with the students? Because I remember when I was a student and the principal knew my name, I felt like whoa, the principal knows my name. I feel it's that effect that the administrators have to be vigilant. I know I said it a thousand times, but they have to be seen.

Summary

Chapter 4 presented the results of the basic qualitative study, which explored nonadministrative employees' perceptions of PBIS in an urban public high school. Thirteen interviews were held. Each research participant provided insight into PBIS in an urban public high school. This section provides a summary of the research findings and serves as a transition to Chapter 5.

Three research questions guided this study. Research Question 1, research participants expressed students need to be prepared for them to be successful in college or the workforce, after graduating high school. Research participants expressed that not all students will attend a college or university, but they still need some type of skill for them to be able to compete for a job that will enable them to be contributing citizens of society. Schools implementing PBIS with fidelity have an increased opportunity to have students who are successful after graduating high school. Lastly, NYCDOE has a system that

tracks student scholarships 2 or 4 years after graduation. However, the method NYCDOE uses to monitor student success after graduating high school is not clear to all nonadministrative employees.

Research Question 2 investigated the perception of PBIS by nonadministrative employees at an urban public high school. Research participants expressed the efficacy of PBIS is case-by-case. PBIS does not work for every student. Additionally, PBIS was a directed initiative by the mayor of NYC. When PBIS was implemented at the study site was unclear. Research participants require more awareness of the program. Lastly, PBIS when used effectively makes a positive difference in a school.

Research Question 3 conveyed the practice of PBIS on school climate in an urban public high school in NYC. PBIS has had a positive effect on the school climate. Students and staff feel safe and welcomed. Leadership is key to the success of any program at an academic institution. Research participants shared that for leadership to be effective it needs to come from the top down, from principal to assistant principal to nonadministrative staff to students. Lastly, a relationship exists between PBIS and school climate. Research participants highlighted that PBIS and school climate are a work in progress and are here to stay.

Findings from this study shed light on PBIS in an urban public high school. Findings can be used by school districts to implement PBIS with fidelity. Implementation of PBIS with fidelity equates to a positive school climate and increased student academic achievement.

Chapter 5 will provide a comprehensive discussion of the findings from relevant literature found in Chapter 2 and the conceptual framework. Conclusions will highlight key contributions and implications from research participants to the education enterprise. Limitations to trustworthiness, recommendations for further research and the potential impact to future research for positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of nonadministrative employees regarding the practice of PBIS in an urban public high school in NYC. Chapter 5 highlights implications of the study and offers tangible recommendations for administrative and nonadministrative employees at an urban public high school on PBIS as an alternative discipline approach to improve school culture, thereby increasing student academic success and college and career readiness. This can result in more students leaving high school prepared for the 21st century workforce as upstanding citizens in society.

Key findings highlight the importance of PBIS as an alternative approach to student discipline to increase student scholarship and college and career readiness. Experiences and perceptions of nonadministrative employees in an urban public high school provided insight and strategies on the practice of alternative discipline for a positive school culture. Positive school culture equates to increased student academic success and students being prepared for college or the workforce after high school graduation.

Interpretation of the Findings

In this section, I describe the findings of the study in relation to the existing peer-reviewed literature described in Chapter 2. Literature reviewed in Chapter 2 encompassed studies conducted within the past 5 years to ensure the currency and significance of the

findings. Comparing literature reviewed with study findings in this chapter will confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge in the discipline.

Confirmation of Knowledge

Findings from this study confirm several aspects emphasized in the literature. The first confirmed PBIS is a proactive approach that requires implementation by all staff of an academic institution to develop positive student–teacher relationships, increase student academic achievement, and decrease student suspensions, which can lead to positive school culture (Freeman et al., 2019; Gage et al., 2020). Research participant stressed PBIS implementation with fidelity reinforces the literature's emphasis on the importance of PBIS as a schoolwide systems approach (Keller-Bell & Short, 2019; Macy & Wheeler, 2021). Furthermore, research participants' emphasis on being prepared for college or the workforce after graduating high school aligns with previous literature underlining the significance of high school students having knowledge and skills to successfully transition to college or the 21st century workforce as preparation for social mobility (Dahir, 2020; Falco & Steen, 2018).

Disconfirmation of Knowledge

While findings confirm several aspects of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, they also provide perceptions that disconfirm some postulations. For example, Chirkina and Khavenson (2018) found that school climate is defined from the perspectives of students. Participants in this study emphasized that positive school culture should be from the perspectives of all stakeholders of the institution, which better aligns with the functions of Konishi et al. (2022).

Extension of Knowledge

Findings from this study extend the knowledge base of aspects found in the existing literature. First, discipline is associated with student academic, social, and emotional development in U.S. public schools (Warnick & Scribner, 2020). Research participants strongly expressed the assertion that student scholastic success mirrors student behavior. Furthermore, participants noted that the public school system is becoming progressively bureaucratic (Warnick & Scribner, 2020). Research participants stipulated that many school reform initiatives in NYC are mayor-directed (Domanico, 2022).

Analyzing and Interpreting Findings

Analyzing and interpreting findings within the context of the conceptual framework emphasizes the alignment between themes identified and the principles of the framework. The framework is articulated by five principles: intersubjectivity, spatiality, mood, temporality, and embodiment. The theme of being prepared to be successful reflects the framework's principle of intersubjectivity (Ogden et al., 2020; Toft et al., 2021). Students are constantly interacting with nonadministrative employees in an urban public high school in NYC. Students in an urban public high school in NYC are being provided skills, courses, and curriculum by nonadministrative employees employed by NYCDOE to prepare them for success after graduating high school. The themes of NYCDOE and safe school culture align with the framework's principles of spatiality, embodiment and intersubjectivity (Ogden et al., 2020; Toft et al., 2021).

NYCDOE mandated an alternative approach to school discipline, PBIS. PBIS is a multitiered framework for behavioral support. The multitiered framework requires the involvement of a school community for implementation with fidelity and sustainment. How students and nonadministrative staff in a public high school in NYC interact with the world and each other in a school community contributes to how one experiences the world and creates the environment where learning takes place. The theme of case-by-case aligns with the principles on embodiment and mood (Ogden et al., 2020; Toft et al., 2021). How one experiences the world is based on influence. Individuals respond to rules, situations, and other individuals differently.

The analysis and interpretations provided are grounded in the findings and data from this study. Findings confirm, disconfirm, and extend knowledge; interpretations do not exceed the data findings and scope. Further research is necessary to explore the complexities and degrees of PBIS in various public high schools.

Limitations of the Study

All research approaches have limitations. Several limitations resulted from the execution of this study. These limitations have implications regarding the trustworthiness of the findings. First, the study may have limited transferability to settings with different demographics. The study was conducted in a specific urban public high school in NYC. The urban public high school is one of three high schools on a campus. Findings from the study should be considered from within the context of its particular setting. Demographic descriptions can vary from one urban public high school to the next. Varying demographic descriptions may influence the perceptions of PBIS in an urban public high

school in that the study may not be able to be repeated by another researcher to reveal similar findings.

Another limitation is that research participants' experiences and perceptions might not represent nonadministrative staff at other urban public high schools in NYC. Research participants may have provided socially acceptable responses that were positive because they felt obligated to share only experiences of optimism. Additionally, several research participants may have common beliefs and values, as they were teachers who share similar teaching roles.

Furthermore, face-to-face interviews were conducted during the winter months, having potential to take longer due to potential cases of one or more research participants not participating due to illness. The study was conducted during increased COVID-19 incidences and the flu season in NYC. The small sample size and the stress on research participants may have hindered the scientific inquiry.

Finally, my bias as a teacher in the school where the research investigation was conducted represents a potential limitation. Personal experiences could unintentionally influence the perspectives of participants of the study in favor of the outcome. This matter was adequately addressed by analyzing data thematically while remaining objective and relying on the data collection and analysis process to minimize bias.

Regardless of these limitations, the study provides data that are useful. Data were collected through the experiences and perceptions of participants who have a stake in the outcome of the investigation. These findings provide valuable insight on the perceptions

of PBIS at an urban public high school in NYC that can provide future practice and recommendations for this type of research.

Recommendations

Several recommendations for further research based on the strengths and limitations as well as the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 emerge. These recommendations are intended to provide a deeper understanding of nonadministrative employees' perceptions of the practice of PBIS in an urban public high school in NYC.

Stakeholder buy-in: extend the research to include a diverse populace of stakeholders, such as administrators, students, and families to gain a deeper understanding of the practice of PBIS in an urban public high school in NYC. By having incentives and professional training for stakeholders, researchers can obtain rich data that can uncover challenges and potential solutions to effective PBIS in a public high school in NYC.

Lack of resources: Investigate the impact of resource deficiency on nonadministrative employees' perceptions of PBIS in an urban public high school. Research should survey how the lack of afterschool programs, advanced academic courses, bilingual education programs, and funding affect nonadministrative employees' perceptions of PBIS practice in an urban public high school, to have positive outcomes for students.

Longitudinal studies: Incorporate longitudinal studies to measure PBIS from the perspectives of nonadministrative employees at an urban public high school in NYC.

Nonadministrative employees would be studied over time with continuous monitoring to gain insights into the practice of PBIS.

These recommendations do not exceed the boundaries of the study and are within the scope of this design. Studies conducted in the future can build upon this inquiry and expand knowledge to the academic enterprise on nonadministrative employees' perception of PBIS in an urban public high school in NYC.

Implications

Findings from this investigation have the potential for positive social change at the individual, organizational, and societal levels. Positive social change deliberately creates and applies actions to stimulate the development and worth of individuals, institutions, and societies. This study examined nonadministrative employees' perceptions of PBIS in an urban public high school in NYC. By understanding nonadministrative perceptions of PBIS in an urban public high school in NYC several potential areas for positive social change emerge.

The impact of positive social change at the individual level is possible at the level of the research participants and students at the site of the investigation. Most research participants emphasized how several interview questions reiterated the efficacy of practicing PBIS in their school. They stipulated the practice of PBIS in their school has increased positive relationships between teachers and students. And, how this positive relationship between teachers and students is contributing to students being more willing to have positive relationships with other students.

At the organizational level, the potential for positive social change is possible when the practice of PBIS is understood for the perceptions of nonadministrative employees. Nonadministrative employees are key participants in implementing PBIS with fidelity. Nonadministrative employee buy-in of PBIS can open positive discussions with school administration. Effective communication between administration and nonadministrative staff has the potential to have an effective PBIS program. Effective progress at one academic institution can lead to PBIS with fidelity at other organizations.

At the societal level, the potential for positive social change is possible when the academic enterprise buys in, PBIS is implemented with fidelity, and student success is prevalent. An understanding of PBIS from the perceptions of nonadministrative employees in an urban public high school can ignite positive social change. Students have the potential to graduate high school prepared for success in college and the 21st workforce to become citizens who are upstanding and contribute to the well-being of society.

The methodological implications of this study emphasize the importance of a basic qualitative research design to capture the experiences and perceptions of teachers and guidance counselors. The use of open-ended semistructured questions in a one-on-one interview allowed for the deep dive into the insights of teachers and guidance counselors, to provide valuable data that cannot be easily understood with a quantitative approach. This methodological approach addresses the “why” and ‘how” which can provide a foundation in which future research can be accomplished to investigate

nonadministrative employees' perceptions of PBIS in an urban public high school in NYC.

Theoretical implications surface from the study increases knowledge of a multi-tiered framework, PBIS, from the experiences and perceptions of nonadministrative employees in an urban public high school in NYC. Themes that emerged from the study: prepared to be successful, NYCDOE, case-by-case, safe school culture, and leadership contribute to understanding theoretical factors that influence nonadministrative employees' perceptions of PBIS influence on student success in an urban public high school in NYC.

Empirical implications in this study provide perceptions on the challenges faced by nonadministrative employees in an urban public high school in NYC and their perceptions of PBIS. The importance of stakeholder buy-in and lack of resources can provide insight into factors that promote nonadministrative employees' perceptions of PBIS in an urban public high school in NYC. Factors that can promote understanding of the practice of PBIS.

Based on the findings, several recommendations for practice surface. The recommendations are proposed to increase the understanding of the practice of PBIS in an urban public high school from the perspectives of nonadministrative employees and the existing gap in the literature: (a) PBIS practice with fidelity requires teacher buy-in, (b) PBIS achievement with fidelity requires professional training for staff and students, (c) PBIS achievement with fidelity requires effective communication between school administration and nonadministrative staff, (d) conduct longitudinal studies for data

collection over a long term, and (e) practice of PBIS with fidelity in an academic institution requires feedback/perceptions of nonadministrative employees.

The results from this research study can inform the academic enterprise on the practice of PBIS and how it relates to student academic achievement and student social development. Academic institutions can use knowledge from this work to practice PBIS with fidelity in their schools to produce a positive school culture, and increased student scholarship, in which learners develop skills required to be successful after high school graduation.

Conclusion

This study sought to explore nonadministrative employees' perceptions of PBIS in an urban public high school in NYC. The study emphasizes the need for teacher buy-in, effective communication between administration and nonadministrative employees, college and career readiness to prepare students for success after high school graduation, and a positive school culture for PBIS to be successful. The results indicated that nonadministrative staff perceptions of PBIS are a key factor in student achievement, student social development, and a positive school culture in which learning can take place. PBIS with fidelity can lead to students being prepared and successful in college 2 or 4 years after high school graduation. PBIS with fidelity can also lead to students being prepared and successful in the 21st-century workforce, contributing to being productive and upstanding citizens of society.

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Appendix A: Letter to School Administrator

Date

109 XXXXXX Street
XXXXXXXX, NY 1XXXX

XXX High School
XXXX Street
XXXXXXXX, NY 1XXXX

Dear Administrator,

Permission to Conduct Research

My name is Rozela McCoy. I am a student at Walden University, and I would like to conduct a research study to examine the perception of nonadministrative staff on the efficacy of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, in an urban public high school. The study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of a Doctor of Philosophy at the Walden University. I am therefore seeking your consent to conduct interviews with nonadministrative staff at your school.

Interviews can be administered outside of official school hours. Each interview is expected to last approximately 45 minutes. To ensure that the rights of all participants are observed and protected, participants will be informed about the purpose and reason for the study and will be given the opportunity to choose not to participate. Participants will also be informed of their rights to opt out of the study at any time without consequence. Anonymity of the participants will be maintained since the researcher will not use their names in the report. The researcher will provide each participant with an informed consent form which they will be asked to sign prior to participating in the survey and interview.

I am available to answer any questions and clarify any issues relating to the study. I may be contacted by email at rmcco001@waldenu.edu.

I look forward to discussing this with you further.

Very Respectfully,

_____

Rozela McCoy

Appendix B: Email Invitation

"Understanding Restorative Behavior Practice in an Urban Public High School"

Dear Staff,
There is a new study about the experiences of nonadministrative staff and the effectiveness of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in an urban public high school that could help school improve social emotional competency, scholarship, and school climate. For this study, you are invited to describe your experiences of PBIS in your school.

About the study:

- One 30 minute semistructured interview, recorded or online sources, such as Zoom and Google Docs, if face-to-face interview is not feasible.
- Follow-up email to review the transcripts of the interview to ensure they are accurate.
- To protect your privacy, the published study will use pseudonyms.

Volunteers must meet these requirements:

- 18 years old or older
- Nonadministrative Staff (teachers, guidance counselors, and deans)
- Employee of the school

This interview is part of the doctoral study for Rozela McCoy, a Ph.D. student at Walden University. Interviews are anticipated to take place in the Fall of 2023.

Please respond to this email to let the researcher know of your interest. You are welcome to forward it to others who might be interested.

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

You are invited to take part in an interview for a research study that I am conducting as part of my doctoral program.

Interview Procedures:
I will be interviewing professionals (no more than 20) about their work and audio-recording their responses. Opportunities for clarifying statements will be available after I analyze the interviews (via a process called member checking).

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
This study is voluntary. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You are welcome to skip any interview questions you prefer to not answer.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this study would not pose any risks beyond those of typical daily life. This study's aim is to provide data and insights that could be valuable to those in professional roles related to yours. Once the analysis is complete, I will share the overall results by publishing the final study on the Scholarworks website.

Privacy:
I am required by my university to protect the identities of interviewees and their organizations. I am not permitted to share interviewee names, identifying details, contact info, or recordings with anyone outside of my Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy). Any reports, presentations, or publications related to this study will share general patterns from the data, without sharing the identities of individual interviewees or their organizations. Data will be kept secure by password protection. The interview transcripts will be kept for at least 5 years, as required by my university. The collected information will not be used for any purpose outside of this study.

Contacts and Questions:
If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at 612-312-1210. Walden University's ethics approval number for this study is 10-13-23-0095901.

Please share any questions or concerns you might have at this time. If you agree to be interviewed as described above, please say "yes" for the audio-recording when I ask, "Do you agree to be interviewed for this study?"

If you feel you understand the study and wish to volunteer, please indicate your consent by the 3rd business day.

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

INTRODUCTION (Researcher reads aloud)

Good (morning or afternoon). My name is _____. Thank you for taking time to participate in this interview. This interview will be one-on-one face-to-face open-ended semistructured. The purpose of this interview is to get your perceptions of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) at your school. There are no right or wrong or desirable or undesirable answers. I would like you to feel comfortable with saying what you really think and how you really feel.

TAPE RECORDER INSTRUCTIONS

If it is okay with you, I will be tape-recording our conversation. The purpose of this is so that I can get all the details but at the same time be able to carry on an attentive conversation with you. I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential. I will be compiling a report which will contain your comments without any reference to identity.

Before we get started, do you have any questions or concerns?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1) RQ 1: How do nonadministrative employees in an urban public high school in New York City perceive the practice of PBIS on student college and career readiness?
    a) IQ 1 – What is your understanding of college and career readiness in secondary public schools? (intersubjectivity)
    b) IQ 2 – How are student scholarships 2 to 4 years after high school graduation monitored? (intersubjectivity, mood)
    c) IQ 3 - How do you perceive PBIS on student academic success in your school? (intersubjectivity, spatiality, temporality)
2) RQ 2: What are nonadministrative employees' perceptions of PBIS in their urban public high school?

a) IQ 4 - How was PBIS implemented at your school? (spatiality)

b) IQ 5 - What drove your school to implement PBIS? (embodiment, intersubjectivity)

c) IQ 6 - How do you perceive PBIS as a discipline intervention approach at your school? (embodiment, intersubjectivity, mood, spatiality)

d) IQ 7 - Has PBIS made a difference in your school? Yes or No. Explain your answer. (embodiment, intersubjectivity, spatiality)

3) RQ 3: How do nonadministrative employees describe the practice of PBIS on school climate in an urban public high school in New York City?

a) IQ 8 - How would you describe the overall climate of your school? School climate refers to the level of safety and the relationship of students and staff. (embodiment, intersubjectivity, mood, spatiality)

b) IQ 9 - What do you believe would make a good learning environment for students and staff? (intersubjectivity, mood)

c) IQ 10 - Describe what circumstances can affect a school's climate, and have you experienced this circumstance at your school? (embodiment, mood, spatiality)

d) IQ 11 - How would you describe the relationship between PBIS and your school climate? Is this relationship a positive or negative effect by your standards? (embodiment, mood)

CLOSING STATEMENT (Researcher reads aloud)

Thank you for interviewing with me today. Your participation in the study will be confidential. You will be provided a copy of the interview transcript. Please review the transcript for accuracy and resonance. Notify immediately if you see a discrepancy in what you mentioned in the interview. Thank you for your time and have a great day.

Appendix E: Site Authorization Email

I am a doctoral student at Walden University completing a dissertation in Education. I am writing to ask written permission to use XXX High School in my research study. I would like to conduct a research to examine the perception of nonadministrative staff on the efficacy of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, in an urban public high school in New York City.

I have been advised by Ms. McCoy that all information gathered will remain strictly confidential and only shared with authorized parties, i.e., Walden University Institutional Review Board. Rozela McCoy also stipulates that participation is strictly voluntary; subjects may opt out of the study at any time, without consequences; that all names and personal information will be withheld from final reports and replaced with pseudonyms; as well, audio and video recordings will be destroyed following completion of study.

Please feel free to contact me at rmcco001@waldenu.edu if you have any questions or concerns.

If you agree and grant permission to Rozela McCoy to conduct this study at XXX High School, as described above, please reply to this email with the words, *"Based on the foregoing, I grant Rozela McCoy permission to conduct this study at XXX High School."*

Appendix F: Initial Codes

Feel prepared to be successful
Career focused classes
High enough standard
Be prepared
Necessary materials and tools
Flexible
Ready for college courses
Skills to perform work
Preparing for rigors of college
Pursing higher education
Prepare for the future
Path after high school
Prepared for real world
Told whether graduated
By school counselor
Come back visit
Public records
Administrators
Needs revision
Students doing right
Less suspended
Band-aid
In class on time
Ready for high school
Positive or negative
Restorative justice program
Better outcomes
Social emotional learning
Enforce positive behavior
Can develop
Positive outcomes
Rules or guidelines
Useful
Behavioral coaches
Resolve conflict
One-on-one sessions
Don't have clear understanding
Student fall behind
Success rate higher
Help students
Minimizing negative behavior
Reach many students
Team
Teachers
Students
Coaches
Successful in the future
Opened up to more avenues
College after secondary school
Function in society
College after graduation
Graduate from high school
Preparing for real world
Preparing for world of work
Acclimated for future
Enter workforce
Preparing for college
Focused
Preparing for college
No monitoring
Unclear
DOE
No follow-up
Data
Lack accountability
Good grades
Sometimes it works
Works for a little while
Negatively affect performance
Maintain old ways
Less than 30% ready
Positive reinforcement
Students wouldn't miss class
Restorative practice
Works
Deans need training
Students understand their behavior
One-on-one direct impact
Doesn't work for everybody
Positive
Working for young adults
Track student attendance
How to use it
Students involved in program
No student aide
Very necessary
Get through lesson
Form of mediation
Restorative justice team
Principal
All stakeholders
Social workers

Mentors
Extra curriculum
Given directives
City initiative
Chancellor
Pandemic
Social media
Forced upon the city
School culture
Teachers
Big push
Data from schools
Needs tweaking
Missing follow-up
Managed it well
Increase attendance
Doesn't work
Gives student voice
Student on track
Very good
Positive behavior works
Misbehavior by few students
Yes, 45/55
Yes, positive impact
Students feel loved
Yes, some changes
Yes, students not jumping to violence
Kids come with drive
Yes and no
Not aware how to apply PBIS
Yes, safe
Students feel safe
Good
Respected
Students and staff have warm relationship
Treat each other with respect
Friendly
Mistrust
No school wide-policy
Comfortable
Kids monitor own behavior
Staff and students feel safe
Students free to express themselves
Teachers care about students
Good relationships
Teachers help each other
Pretty safe
Students respectful to staff
College advisor
Training
Training and workshops
Network approaches
No answer
Mental health issues
Mayor
Lack of staff
Administrators
Structure in place
Reducing suspensions
Didn't want to be punitive
Missing consequences part
Behavior right back
Discipline intervention approach
Rules and guidelines in place
Working
Incentivizing the student
Positive approach
Praising students
No
Never changes
Room for improvement
School safe
Yes, kids feel welcomed
Consistent
Yes, kids want to be here
Yes, self-correct
Services provided for students
Hasn't reached most students
Yes, positive interaction
Positive interactions students & staff
Feel safe
Intimate
Climate nice
School very welcoming
Improving
Not everyone on same page
Negative
Nice
Safe environment
Climate good
Help from teachers
Safe school to work
Students respect teachers
Students help teachers
Students and staff get along
Safe for students and staff

More cohesion
Instruction and directive from administrator
Transparency
Same rules
Rigorous
School spirit
Freedom
Right to study
Valued and trusted
Trust
Teachers trust administrators
Plan
Positive and healthy climate
Know that they are safe
Free to talk
Proactive boss
Involved with students
Leadership
Transparent
Respect student
Staff training
Communication
Mental and emotional health
Fight outside of school
Shooting
Negative student behavior
Level of trust between student and staff
Principal and assistant principals
Disruptive students
Fighting/physical altercations
Bring in a weapon; yes
Gang members; no
Gang activity; yes
Not treated like professionals; yes
Lack of safety agents
At this time no; positive
Don't see impact; negative
Climate improving
Positive and productive
Friendly; positive
Come up with some type of structure
Relationship; work in progress
Positive
Not supporting needs of all students; negative

Adhere to policy
Principal spread message
Being on same page
Consistency in discipline
Holding students to standard
Students and staff free
Right to teach
Staff trusted
Students feel valued
Safe and welcoming environment
Friendly environment
Work together holistically
Trust and mutual respect
Able to express themselves
Feel safe
Principal & administrators vigilant
Safety
Understanding data
Train teachers
Treating students with respect
Students and staff seen and heard
Partnership between parents & school
Behavior
Huge role in school
Interactions between students/teachers
Negative administrator
Morale
Trust between teachers/administrators
No consequences
Violence/fights
Fighting hallways or lunchroom
Lack of trust; yes
Administrators
Number of agents
Absolutely
Don't see how positive
Helping school climate
Room for improvement
School climate change
More positive than negative
Positive; positive
Program here to stay; positive response
Work in progress; positive
Positive; effective

Appendix G: Secondary Codes/Categories

Prepared to be successful
Attend college prepared
Ready for success
Prepared for after high school graduation
Prepared for college
Pathway after high school graduation
Prepared for college
Not monitored
Unclear
Not effective
Effective
Mediation
Improve school culture
Social media
Lack of resources
NYCDOE
Needs tweaking
Does not work
Yes, safe environment
Yes, less school violence
Yes, safe environment
Positive, school climate
Improving
Effective administrative leadership
Trust
Safety
Negative student behavior; yes
School violence; yes
Poor relationship; yes
Positive; positive
In Progress; positive
Focused classes for success
Prepared for success
Prepared for college or workforce
Prepared for future
Pathway after high school graduation
Prepared for the real world
School administration
School guidance counselor
NYCDOE
Case by case
Ineffective
Mitigate discipline
City initiative
NYC leadership
School violence
Negative school culture
Positive
No, negative student behavior
Yes, positive school culture
Yes
Positive, safe environment
Positive, good environment
Negative, unsafe climate
Effective communication
Trust and respect
School violence; yes
Poor administrative leadership; yes
School violence; no
Negative; positive
Negative; negative

Appendix H: Initial Themes

Prepare for post-secondary success
School leadership
School guidance counselor
NYCDOE
Effective
Case by case
NYCDOE initiative
Social media
School violence
Positive
Yes, safe environment
Yes
Negative
Effective communication
Trust and respect
Negative student behavior; yes
Negative student behavior; no
Negative student behavior; yes
Negative; negative
Inprogress; positive

Prepare students for post-secondary success
Not monitored
Unclear
Not effective
Case by case
NYC initiative
School initiative
Lack of resources
Negative school culture
No, negative student behavior
Yes, positive school culture
Improving
Effective leadership
Trust
Safe environment
Poor leadership; yes
Poor school staff relationship; yes
Negative; positive
Positive; positive