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Increasing the Career Longevity of Teachers of Students With Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

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Abstract

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Leroy Smith

MA, University of Phoenix, 2006

BS, Slippery Rock University, 1992

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) have among the highest attrition rates of any teaching discipline in the United States. High attrition rates affect EBD teachers, school districts, and students with EBD. Through the theoretical lenses of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and Eisenberger's organizational support theory (OST), this study sought to determine if there was a difference in college preparation, job support, and job benefit/amenity factors identified by EBD teachers who intended to leave the discipline (n = 6) and those who intended to stay (n = 9). This quantitative, survey-based study yielded data from 15 EBD teachers. Results of independent-samples t-tests indicated there were no statistically significance differences in responses between the 2 groups. However, there were notable differences when the highest and lowest means scores of individual survey items were examined. The importance both groups placed on job supports when compared to college preparation and job benefit/amenities was evident. Additionally, the results indicated that EBD teachers planning on leaving the profession placed more importance on direct contact with school administrators when compared with those intending to stay. Results of this study should be taken with caution as they are drawn from a relatively small sample of EBD teachers. The results of the study may add to the field of research on EBD teacher attrition rates and possibly assist universities, educational leaders, and education policy makers in developing means to address this issue. Importantly, the results of the study could promote the professional success of EBD teachers as well as the academic, behavioral, and social growth of the students they teach.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my wife, son, mother, and stepfather. My immediate family has demonstrated support and patience throughout my endeavor. I always promise my son that I will have more time to play after this process is over. Of course, the conclusion of this journey will enable me to spend more quality time with my wife as well. In all, there will be less time locked in the "evil, tall tower of dissertation writing." My parents infused a sense of "stick-to-it-itiveness" into my circuitry at an early age and continue to support my efforts to this day. Without everyone's encouragement, this would have been an impossibility for me. My dissertation chair, Dr. Anne Hacker, has been particularly supportive during this process, and so has committee member Dr. Ella Benson, who always gave a word of encouragement at needed times. Dr. Wendy Oakes of the CCBD and the supporting staff were instrumental in making this once proposed study a reality. Thank you all, and know that your dedication to my efforts not only benefited my doctoral aspirations but also children with EBD and the teachers who support them.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction to the Study

Many scholars argue that the quality of a child's education is dependent upon the professional quality of those who teach them. However, teacher shortages have led to the hiring of many unqualified individuals in the United States (Bastian & Henry, 2014; Conley & You, 2017; Ng & Peter, 2010). Consequently, many children may be receiving an education of questionable quality (Hanushek, Rivkin, & Schiman, 2016). Students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBDs) have been particularly affected by the teacher shortage because EBD teacher positions are difficult for school districts to fill (Boe, deBettencourt, Dewey, Rosenberg, Sindelar, & Leko, 2013; Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2013). These shortages have potentially devastating consequences considering the specific educational, social, and behavioral needs of this student population (Kutash, Duchnowski, & Green, 2015; Lewis, 2016). Experts in special education find this shortage to be disconcerting given the potentially difficult adult outcomes for this specific population.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the EBD teacher shortage issue, including the reasons for and implications of this shortage. Chapter 1 also contains the problem statement; the purpose of the study; the research questions and hypotheses; and the study's independent and dependent variables. The methodology used to determine the relationships between these variables are briefly discussed. A summary of data collection is also provided. Also, the theoretical framework of the study is examined in brief and will be discussed in richer detail in Chapter2. The definitions, assumptions,

limitations, and delimitations of the study are also addressed in this chapter, which concludes with an explanation of the significance of the study.

Background of the Study

Historically, special education teachers of students with EBD have one of the highest attrition rates of any group of teachers, even within the overall discipline of special education. The high turnover of EBD teachers has been continually documented in studies by the American Association for Employment in Education (AAEE; 2000, 2004, 2010, 2015). Research has indicated that a variety of factors contribute to the attrition problem, including insufficient college training for working with EBD students (Berry, Petrin, Gravelle, & Farmer, 2011; Billingsley, Fall, & Williams, 2006) and a lack of administrative support at the school level (Albrecht, Johns, Mounsteven, & Olorunda, 2009; Prather-Jones, 2011). Additionally, Center and Steventon (2001) noted that EBD teachers themselves attribute high attrition rates to factors such as demanding parents and the verbally and physically aggressive behavior of students (Short & Bullock 2013), who can also be emotionally taxing to work with. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported that students with EBD are considerably more likely to receive special education services within the confines of a correctional facility than any other special education group (NCES, 2014).

As a result of these high attrition rates, school districts must regularly hire replacement EBD teachers, and these replacements may be inadequately certified to teach in this position (Berry et al., 2011; Sutherland, Denny, & Gunter, 2005). This is a problem considering that educational policies such as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Act (2002) requires that students have access to highly qualified teachers and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in conjunction with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) compels states to provide a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) to all students (Radford, 2017).

The high attrition rate among EBD teachers has economic as well as public policy implications. The Alliance for Excellent Education (2014) reported that teacher turnover costs the United States 2.2 billion dollars annually. Teacher turnover rates can also cause financial stress at the state and local level. For example, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future estimated the cost of replacing and processing a single new teacher at anywhere between $4,000 to $18,000 depending on the school district (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007). Barnes et al. (2007) estimated that New York City spends over $115,000,000 a year on replacing teachers in general.

Along with these economic challenges, this high turnover rate also has implications for teachers and students. Leaving a job and finding new employment can be a difficult experience for individuals in all walks of life, and EBD teachers who leave the profession quickly can find themselves in a financially stressful situation as they seek different work (Haid & Seiffge-Krenke, 2013). Leaving a job suddenly can be a difficult life event for many teachers, and it can be equally distressing for students who are left without a teacher. Students with EBD are an extremely vulnerable sector of the special education population, and they present unique challenges to school staff (Poulou, 2004; Ryan & Rozalski, 2013; State, Harrison, Kern, & Lewis, 2017). The high attrition rate of EBD teachers interferes with the consistency of programming and support for this group

of students (Albrecht et al., 2009; Crawford & Simonoff 2003). High attrition rates, thus, have negative consequences for multiple entities and individuals: federal, state, and local governments; schools; EBD teachers; and especially the students whose disability forecasts one of the most discouraging life outcomes of any special education category (Maggin, Wehby, Farmer, & Brooks, 2016; Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), 2007).

Much of the previous research on this topic has concerned the causal factors of EBD teacher attrition rates such as limited college preparation, lack of support at the school level, or high stress levels associated with the job (Albrecht et al., 2009; Berry et al., 2011; Billingsley et al., 2006; Center & Steventon, 2001; Prather-Jones, 2011; Short & Bullock, 2013). However, few researchers have examined what support EBD teachers themselves have indicated would influence their decision to remain in or leave the profession. In particular, relatively little is known about what EBD teachers identify as the college experiences or job supports that would bolster their success. Determining what EBD teachers consider as fair compensation and necessary benefits for their job seems to also have been underexamined in the literature. The main problem of this study is that no one has yet comprehensively identified the college preparation, school support, and compensation that could influence EBD teachers to stay in the discipline. It is possible that identifying these needs could help school districts reduce their EBD teacher attrition rates.

The data collected in this study could provide university curriculum developers, education leaders, and education policy officials with the information needed to make informed decisions regarding the preparations and supports necessary to promote EBD

teacher career longevity. Subsequently, states might reap the financial rewards of teacher consistency, EBD teachers could potentially avoid the stressors associated with finding meaningful employment elsewhere, and the students in these programs may benefit from consistent staffing.

Problem Statement

The research problem was that the relationships between college preparation, school support, and compensation/benefits and EBD teachers' plans to leave or remain in the profession remain relatively unclear in the literature. Overall, researchers indicated that robust college preparation programs (Berry et al., 2011; Billingsley et al., 2006) and administrative support are critical to the success of EBD teachers (Albrecht et al., 2009; Prather-Jones, 2011). However, I found limited research from the perspective of EBD teachers about the preparation that they need in college in order to be successful on the job. Additionally, while the significance of job stressors and the importance of support from colleagues and school leadership have been explored, other research on avenues of within-school support appear less frequently. It remains unknown what amenities or benefits could be put in place to promote the success among these teachers given the emotional, mental, and physical demands of their work. Past researchers demonstrated that EBD teachers have high attrition rates and that the vulnerable subset of the special education student population they teach is therefore denied much needed consistency (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014; Barnes et al., 2007). Also, states incur costs in recruiting, training, and processing replacement EBD teachers because of the high turnover (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014; Barnes et al., 2007). These attrition

rates among EBD teachers remain a significant problem in education and could remain so until teachers' needs in terms of preparation and support are identified, understood, and provided for.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to compare the differences in identified needs in terms of college preparation, job support, and job benefits among EBD teachers intending to leave the profession and those intending to remain. The results of this study will help to increase awareness of the EBD attrition issue and add to the field of research on teacher attrition rates. The study results could prove insightful to educational policy makers and leaders who currently find it difficult to maintain these teachers. Furthermore, scholars could benefit from a study that identifies which specific preservice experiences that EBD teachers indicate are needed at the college level. In conducting this research study, I endeavored to provide colleges, education policy makers, and school leaders with additional information regarding the preparation and retention of EBD teachers. Reducing the attrition of these teachers may benefit states, educational organizations, EBD teachers, and students with EBD as well as their families.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The overarching research question for this study was, what are the differences between EBD teachers who intend to leave the discipline and those who intend to stay regarding the college preparation, job support, and job benefit/amenity factors that promote career longevity? I divided this multifaceted research question into three manageable research questions. To enhance clarity, EBD teachers who plan on leaving

the position were titled *leavers* and those who plan on remaining in the position were titled *stayers* (DeMik, 2008; George & George, 1995).

Research Question 1: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified college preparation needs of leavers and stayers?

$H_1$1: There will be a statistically significant difference between the identified college preparation needs of leavers and stayers.

$H_0$1: There will not be a statistically significant difference between the identified college preparation needs of leavers and stayers.

Research Question 2: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers?

$H_1$2: There will be a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers.

$H_0$2: There will not be a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers.

Research Question 3: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers?

$H_1$3: There will be a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers.

$H_0$3: There will not be a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers.

Theoretical Basis for the Study

This study was conducted using the theoretical lenses of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory and Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa's (1986) organizational support theory (OST). Maslow's theory is based on the concept that humans must satisfy a progression of increasingly complex physiological and social needs before they can reach their maximum potential (Maslow, 1943). At the primary level, humans must attain basic needs such as food and shelter before they can advance to the next stage, in which safety and security needs such as physical and emotional well-being as well as financial adequacy can be achieved (Maslow, 1943). At that point, an individual is prepared to navigate through the next three levels, in which relationships are built, self-confidence is gained, and ultimately one's greatest potential is realized (Maslow, 1943).

OST is based on an exchange ideology principle in which employee commitment to the organization is dependent upon how effectively the organization demonstrates how much it values the employee (Eisenberger et al., 1986). OST is based on the concept that the employee's perception of organizational support (POS) will determine how committed the employee is to the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). According to OST, employees will work with greater effort towards organizational goals in return for material rewards (salary) and symbolic benefits (praise, recognition) that are commensurate with their efforts (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Previous researchers have attributed EBD teacher attrition rates to inadequate college preparation, lack of job supports, and the emotional and physical challenges that

the students present (Albrecht et al., 2009; Berry et al., 2011; Billingsley et al., 2006; Center & Steventon, 2001; Prather-Jones, 2011; Short & Bullock, 2013). Although EBD teachers normally have access to fundamental needs such as housing and food, they may not be able to obtain safety and security needs if they do not receive adequate preparation and support for the mental and physical challenges of the EBD setting. For this reason, it would be challenging for EBD teachers to achieve Maslow's highest level, the optimal position for professional success (Maslow, 1943).

EBD teachers might demonstrate less commitment to their profession if they are underappreciated or perceive that schools are not committed to their well-being. Eisenberger et al., (1986) contended that low levels of POS can result in high rates of absenteeism and employee attrition. Similarly, Sang and Dae (2017) found that feelings of job insecurity decreased organizational commitment and increased attrition rates.

Use of this twofold theoretical framework sought support the idea that organizations need to provide adequate job preparation, job supports, and benefits as well as demonstrate care for the well-being of employees in order gain subsequent long-term commitment. Both theories, as well as examples of their applications in other fields, will be reviewed more thoroughly in Chapter 2.

Nature of Study

This quantitative study was correlational nature as data was collected and statistically analyzed to determine what independent variables (college preparation, job supports, and job amenities/benefits) EBD teachers identified as being important to career longevity (Garwood, 2006; Tuckman, 1999). Additionally, a purposeful random

sampling strategy was used as this research aimed to determine the perceptions of a random sample of EBD teachers. The study was non-experimental in purpose as it did not include the manipulation of variables or the introduction of an intervention (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). A web-based survey was promoted on the website, newsletter, and Twitter account of the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD) as well as the Facebook pages of several organizations advocating for children with special needs. The survey gathered information on the perceptions of EBD teachers regarding the independent variables college preparation, job supports, and job benefits/amenities. Specifically, this study attempted to determine the relationships between the independent variables and EBD teacher plans to leave or remain in the profession. Independent-samples *t*-tests were conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the responses between the two groups. Statistical analyses indicated that there was no statistical significance between the responses of EBD teachers who plan on leaving the position and those who intend on staying. The statistical test results and analyses are reviewed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

Operational Definitions

This dissertation includes numerous terms related to the preparation, supports, successes, and challenges experienced by EBD teachers. Countries, states, and even individual school districts designate these teachers in numerous ways, including emotional disturbance (ED) teacher, severe or serious emotional disorder (SED) teacher, behavior emotional disabled (BED) teacher, emotional impairment (EI) teacher, or emotional behavior disorder (EBD) teacher (Kauffman, 2015). Despite the varied titles,

the duties and responsibilities of the position are essentially the same (Kauffman, 2015). For the sake of clarity, this study uses the term emotional behavior disorder (EBD). The definitions below should provide clarification to the reader on jargon and specialized concepts within the context of the study.

Attrition: Voluntarily leaving an EBD position for another teaching discipline or leaving the field of education altogether (Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2013).

Career longevity: The number of years teachers remain in the EBD discipline (Prather-Jones, 2011).

College preparation: The college level curriculum, courses, and pre-service experiences (student teaching) EBD teachers are afforded (Oliver & Reschly, 2010).

Emotional or behavior disorder (EBD): A general term for psychiatric disorders that include sustained manifestations of extreme behavior which defy social or cultural expectations (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2014). The exact term may vary by country, state, or school district—some locales my use labels such as Emotionally Disturbed/Disabled (ED), Behaviorally/Emotionally Disabled (BED), Severe or Serious Emotional Disorder (SED), Emotionally Impaired (EI), or Emotional Behavior Disorder (EBD)--the term Emotional Behavior Disorder (EBD) will be used throughout this study.

Individualized education plan (IEP): The academic, social, emotional, or behavioral program created for students with disabilities who are eligible for special education services. IEPs include goals, objectives, service time, and a description of the least restrictive environment (IDEA, 2004).

Job supports: A variety of processes and mechanisms put in place to support employee success. Examples would include encouragement and feedback from administrators (Cancio et al., 2013), professional development (Berry et al., 2011; Sutherland et al., 2005), mentoring programs (Albrecht et al., 2009; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013), and the provision of supports that allow EBD teachers to perform their duties more effectively.

Job benefits/amenities: A variety of incentives provided to increase job commitment. Examples could include tuition reimbursement (Thornton, Peltier, & Medina, 2007), moving expenses, counseling services (Shyman, 2011), higher salaries, mental health days (Cavin, 1998 Hewson, 2013), hazard pay, or free gym memberships.

Leavers: EBD teachers who plan on voluntarily leaving the EBD teaching discipline within three years (DeMik, 2008; George & George, 1995).

Retention: The ability of school systems to keep EBD teachers employed (Prather-Jones, 2011).

Special education: Specially designed instruction to increase the chances of success for students with disabilities (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004).

Stayers: EBD teachers who plan on remaining in the EBD teaching discipline for seven years or more (DeMik, 2008; George & George, 1995).

Assumptions

This study was conducted with several assumptions in mind. The primary assumption for this research was that the participants would respond to survey items honestly, both because participants would remain anonymous and because answering

disingenuously would run contrary to the study's stated goal of improving the career experiences of EBD teachers. Another assumption was that the participants in the study reflected the opinions of EBD teachers. This assumption was made because the study focused on EBD teachers, and the survey was directed towards individuals within this group. The survey instrument for this study was also piloted by a panel of current and former EBD teachers to further ensure its appropriateness. The final assumption was that the high rate of EBD teacher attrition would continue to be a concern at the time of this study. EBD teacher attrition rates have been very high both historically and in the present (AAEE, 2000, 2004, 2010, 2015), and there is no indication that this will change in the foreseeable future.

Limitations

There are several limitations associated with this study. Simon (2011) described limitations as aspects of the study which are beyond the control of the researcher and may influence the outcomes of the research. This study focused solely on EBD teachers, but the study results were not generalizable to all EBD teachers across the nation. The results presented here are based on a relatively small sample size of EBD teachers. Data from 15 participants were used in the statistical analyses for this current research which fell significantly short of the 124 participants recommended by G- Power. Some thoughts on why the study attracted such a small sample size are shared in the Sampling Challenges section of Chapter 4.

EBD teachers who belong to professional organizations or advocacy groups may demonstrate higher levels of dedication to the EBD position and a greater willingness to

participate in studies than those intending to leave the profession. EBD teachers who intend to leave the discipline may not belong to these organizations. The survey for this study was advertised through the internet and social media, so it could have been accessed by individuals who were not EBD teachers.

Another limitation to the study was time. EBD teachers, like other special educators, are tasked with writing IEPs and holding special education meetings (DeMik, 2008). However, EBD teachers are also tasked with writing Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) and intervening in student emotional/behavioral crises. It is not unusual for the planning periods of EBD teachers to be interrupted by their students' disruptive behavior. EBD teachers might thus feel that participating in this study is one more item on an already full plate. Although some EBD teachers would participate in the study, others may have elected to opt out simply because they were too busy. In order to address the limitation, I ensured that survey took a maximum of 20 minutes to complete.

Some survey items inquired about the perceptions of EBD teachers regarding the benefit of counseling or gym memberships. Several researchers consider mental and physical well-being to be critical to the success of EBD teachers (Albrecht et al., 2009; Cancio & Conderman, 2008; Scanlon & Barnes-Holmes, 2013), but participants might be reticent about responding to questions about their mental and physical health. To mitigate this, participants were assured of their anonymity (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012) and reminded that the study was being conducted to improve the experiences of EBD teachers. I also assured participants that neither the researcher nor their employers would

have access to participants' names or email addresses and would have no knowledge of their participation in the study.

The survey items were by no means an exhaustive list of possible college preparations, job supports, or job benefits. It is possible that some factors which would affect EBD teacher longevity were not represented on the survey. In addition, I developed an original survey instrument because there were no surveys available that contained the specific items that would answer the research questions. In order to address this limitation the survey was modeled after established surveys which parallel this study (Creswell, 2009). The final section of the survey was designated for participants to include their own comments on supports needed to increase career longevity. This additional section allowed participants to offer their own opinions.

Scope and Delimitations

There were also several delimitations associated with this study. Simon (2011) described delimitations as factors which are within the researcher's control, including the focus of the study, target variables, sample population, and choice of theoretical lenses. The aim of this study was to determine the factors needed to increase the career longevity rates of EBD teachers, particularly college preparation needs, job support needs, and job benefits. There is limited research completed on EBD teachers when compared to either general education or special education teachers. Even in studies focused on EBD teacher attrition rates, most of the research has targeted factors that influence attrition as opposed to increasing career longevity.

This study examined factors that could influence the security needs and job commitment of EBD teachers. To do this, I examined EBD teachers' needs through Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943) and organizational support theory (OST) (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Maslow's theory posited that individuals must satisfy safety and security needs in order fully develop. Eisenberger's theory asserted that organizations that demonstrate care for the well-being of their employees would profit from their employees' increased organizational commitment.

EBD teachers were the focus of this research and therefore any findings or results could potentially informative about the perspectives of other EBD teachers. Because EBD teachers belonging to the Council for Children with Behavior Disorders (CCBD) and EBD teachers affiliated with advocacy groups for children with disabilities were the origin of the study sample, the results may not be generalizable to all EBD teacher populations. However, this population did yield responses from EBD teachers from various states with different college backgrounds, hiring procedures, or teacher support systems in place, resulting in a more comprehensive picture of what factors might increase career longevity.

Significance of the Study

This research has several implications for social change. The results of the statistical analyses determined that there were no statistically significant differences between leavers and stayers regarding college preparation, job support, and job benefits/amenities. However, an analysis of individual survey item responses within each of the three scales demonstrated that EBD teachers intending to leave the profession had

unique views on what would be needed to promote their career longevity. These results are discussed in Chapter 4 and further analyzed in Chapter 5.

The study results have the potential to increase awareness of EBD teacher support needs among educational leaders, policy makers, and university programs. For example, the study could be useful to states as they work to ensure that students with EBD have access to highly qualified teachers (Sutherland, Denny, & Gunter, 2005). This connection to public policy is further supported by the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which compel states to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to all students. This study may have identified some of the factors needed to increase career longevity rates of EBD teachers. The study could also prove insightful to school administrators by identifying what particular factors are important to EBD teachers. With this information, educational leaders may be able to put the necessary job supports and job benefits in place in order to retain EBD teachers for longer periods. Similarly, because the study also indicates what types of college experiences and programming EBD teachers feel are important to their career longevity, universities could use the information generated by this research to develop more effective curricula to better prepare EBD teachers for the classroom.

The study also has the potential to improve the professional success EBD teachers experience. Students in EBD programs could benefit from consistent support from a single EBD teacher as opposed to a succession of new hires. This in turn could lead to increased academic, social, and behavioral success for these students.

Summary and Transition

Past research indicated that insufficient college training for the EBD classroom (Berry, Petrin, Gravelle, & Farmer, 2011; Billingsley et al., 2006), a lack of administrative support at the school level (Albrecht et al., 2009), and the behavior of verbally and physically aggressive students (Center & Steventon, 2001; Short & Bullock 2013) all contributed to the high attrition rates of EBD teachers. As a result, school districts must regularly hire replacement EBD teachers who are often not certified to teach in the position (Berry et al. 2011; Sutherland et al., 2005), which can be time consuming as well as expensive (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014; Barnes et al., 2007). The 2002 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires states to provide students with highly qualified teachers (Short & Bullock 2013; Sutherland et al., 2005), and the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA IDEA) promises all students with disabilities a free and appropriate public education. Neither of these initiatives can occur if EBD teacher attrition rates remain at a high level. Once they decide to leave the EBD position, these teachers must find new employment, introducing stressors associated with locating a new job. Most importantly, this vulnerable subset of the special education population is denied the educational programming consistency that is critical to their success (Poulou, 2004; Ryan & Rozalski, 2013).

While past research focused on the factors that influence EBD teacher attrition rates, this survey-based study aimed to identify the college preparation, job support, and job benefit/amenity factors that EBD teachers distinguished as necessary to increase career longevity. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943) posited that individuals

cannot achieve optimal success unless their basic needs and security/safety needs have been met. Eisenberger et al., (1986) theorized through organizational support theory (OST) that employees who have low perceptions of organizational support would demonstrate less organizational commitment. The goal of this study was to identify the college preparation and job support/benefit factors needed for EBD teachers to feel more confident, safe, and secure in their position.

Chapter 2 begins with a more in-depth look at Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943) and OST as theorized by Eisenberger et al., (1986) as well as their applicability in previous research. Subsequently, Chapter 2 discusses previous research about college preparation, job supports, and job benefits/amenities and their effects on EBD teacher attrition.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

EBD teachers have historically had some of the highest attrition rates of any teaching discipline (AAEE, 2000, 2004, 2010, 2015). Continuously replacing EBD teachers presents a financial challenge for states and school districts (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014; Barnes et al., 2007). EBD teachers who leave the profession face their own financial challenges as they look for new employment. Most importantly, students with EBD are denied the benefit of having a consistent teacher in place (Poulou, 2004; Ryan & Rozalski, 2013). The purpose of this study was to determine what college preparation, job support, and job benefit factors EBD teachers identified as being important to their career longevity.

In literature review section of this chapter, I discuss the theoretical framework for this research as well as past studies whose authors have examined the important roles that college preparation, job supports, and job benefits/amenities play in the professional success of EBD teachers. This review of literature begins with a more detailed account of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943) and Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) OST. I also provide a comprehensive examination of studies and articles based on the principles of each theory. The subsequent review of the literature contains scholarship about the college preparation, job support, and mental/physical health factors that influence the success of employees and their commitment to job assignments. In order to draw meaningful parallels, some literature under review is focused on vocational disciplines beyond EBD teachers.

Literature Search Strategy

I focused this literature review on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943) and OST as developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986), as well as the subjects of college preparation, job support, and job benefits as they relate to attrition among EBD teachers and in other vocational disciplines. I examined peer-reviewed articles, dissertations, articles, books, and Internet websites. The majority of the search was performed using Walden University Library electronic resources. I examined multiple databases, including Academic Search Complete, ProQuest Central, Sage Premier, Educational Resource Information Center, Sage Research Methods Online, and Education Research Complete. *Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory* and *job theories* were used to locate literature on Maslow's theory. I used the search terms *Organizational Support Theory* and *perceived organizational support* for OST. I used the phrases *EBD teacher attrition, teacher attrition rates, special educator attrition rates, EBD teacher longevity, EBD teacher preparation, special educator preparation, job supports, employment needs, teacher supports, special education teacher supports, special education professional development, job burnout, special education teacher emotional well-being,* and *Behaviorally Emotionally Disabled (BED)* singly and in combination to find literature about EBD teacher college preparation, job supports, incentives, and emotional and physical well-being. Databases from educational organizations were also examined to find statistical data on EBD teacher attrition rates and student outcomes using the terms *special education attrition rates, educational statistics,* and *EBD teacher attrition rates*.

Theoretical Foundation

In this quantitative study, I used the theoretical lenses of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory and Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) organizational support theory (OST). According to the hierarchy of needs theory, humans must satisfy a progression of needs to emotionally, socially, and professionally develop (Maslow, 1943). According to OST, employees who feel supported by their professional organizations will demonstrate greater job commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986). As part of the conceptual underpinning of this study, I posited that these two theories are connected. EBD teachers could have high attrition rates because some of their needs in terms of job preparation, job support, and job benefit requirements have not been met; EBD teachers demonstrate low rates of organizational commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986) because they are not given basic safety and security elements as noted in Maslow (1943).

Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Maslow's theory was predicated on the idea that people eventually achieve their utmost potential only after proceeding through a series of developmental levels—physiology, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization—in which fulfilling needs becomes more complex from one phase to the next (Maslow, 1943). Maslow posited that humans must first acquire the basic needs of survival before proceeding through the hierarchy; basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing must be satisfied before progressing to the next stage (Maslow, 1943).

The second level requires that basic safety and security needs are met. Physical and mental health must be assured before a person can be in a position to consider more

complex and abstract needs (Maslow, 1943). Maslow also theorized that financial security would need to be met at the second level to ensure that first-tier needs were secure. Maslow put forth that people could only advance to the third level of the hierarchy after they obtained the fundamental requirements for life and felt safe and secure.

In the third stage of the hierarchy, people develop a sense of belonging within family settings and social groups such as church or the workplace (Maslow, 1943). This level of development involves fulfilling more complex needs such as love, acceptance, and camaraderie, which protect individuals from loneliness or social anxiety and provide them with the confidence needed to progress to the next level of growth (Maslow, 1943). The social supports obtained at the third level grant a sense of respect and encouragement from others. Maslow (1943) asserted that failing to achieve these interpersonal objectives could result in low self-esteem or depression, preventing the individual from successfully reaching the final level of the hierarchy.

At the final stage of the hierarchy, people attain self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). It is only at this point where individuals can realize their full potential and perform at their optimal levels. Maslow (1943) stressed that reaching this ultimate stage of human development is only possible after the needs of the lower levels are met. People build a progressive foundation of increasingly complex physiological, psychological, social, and emotional needs fulfillment in order to finally become the best that they can be. Maslow's theory also suggests that without acquiring basic needs such

as food and clothing and safety needs such as physical and emotional well-being, no one can reach their ultimate potential.

Since fundamental physiological and safety needs must be satisfied before people can ultimately feel confident and reach their highest potential, individuals in a variety of roles such as parents, friends, or workers might experience difficulty succeeding in their positions unless physiological and safety needs were fulfilled. While most individuals can successfully acquire basic needs, many people could be prevented from achieving the highest levels of success because of difficulties satisfying the second-tier safety and security needs.

Researchers have demonstrated the importance of safety and security needs to the success of workers, students, and people in general. For example, Başlevent and Kirmanoğlu (2013) used Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory to explore the relationship between job attributes and individual needs. The study, which was based on data from the 2010 European Social Survey, indicated that job security was the most important attribute in 18 out of 19 countries. Job security protects people's ability to earn a steady income and provide food, clothing, and shelter for loved ones.

The concept of security extends beyond maintaining employment. Physical safety must also be taken into account. Udechukwu (2009) stressed the relevance of Maslow's theory as it relates to the basic safety and security needs of guards in correctional facilities. Correctional officers attributed high job attrition rates to a mentally stressful and physically demanding work environment. Eighty percent of the participants indicated that they would remain employed in the position if the appropriate supports and

benefits were in place even though the environment remains stressful. Maslow's theory (1943) indicated that individuals must not only have the means to access basic needs such as food, but must also satisfy security needs before they can experience true success in the workplace.

Pulasinghage (2010) used Maslow's theory as the backdrop while emphasizing the importance of basic needs and security to workers who were worked for temporary nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as opposed longer-term employment. NGOs are typically established in the wake of natural disasters or political crises only to be disassembled a few years after the event. A survey of 375 NGO workers in Sri Lanka indicated that the participants were willing to work for temporary NGOs as opposed to more permanent organizations because the NGOs provided security training, higher salaries, and more recognition and leave time. A sense of security, achieved through the provision of adequate training, recognition, and appropriate compensation influenced individuals to seek temporary rather than permanent employment.

Mental health and well-being is also a security need. While recognition from leadership and opportunities to achieve a state of self-actualization are advanced needs in the hierarchy (Maslow, 1943), employees' mental and emotional health is paramount to career longevity. A psychologically safe workplace and the availability of counseling services if necessary could help to determine an employee's feeling of security in a job.

Benson and Dundis (2003) applied Maslow's theory to the role of confidence among health care workers who must keep pace with continual technological advances in healthcare. If employees were unable to master the most current practices, they may

suffer from a diminished sense of security in their jobs, which may threaten their ability to provide for their families. Managers who provide adequate training aid in the development of social belonging and self-esteem through the training process (Benson & Dundis, 2003). Through meaningful training, employers can give employees a sense of security and enhanced confidence in the workplace, thereby increasing their commitment to the organization.

Increasing organizational commitment through training and encouragement can be especially important for new hires. Pritchard and Gidman (2012) examined the significance of providing security in the workplace for beginning nurses. Through the lens of Maslow's theory, the authors examined the stressors that interning nursing experienced, including financial constraints, balancing family and work, and studying for exams. These pressures could cause nursing students difficulty in learning their craft. The authors suggested that nursing mentors could employ steps support beginning nurses, which would reduce stress levels and increase confidence. Giving novices support and training can have a significant impact on the success of employees.

Solomon and Thomas (2013) asserted that providing staff with meaningful professional development also increased creativity, innovation, and a sense of belonging. Schorpp (2008) discovered similar findings in an educational needs assessment of baccalaureate nursing students. In this dissertation survey, participants identified ten of the most important educational factors related to their success in nursing school. Six of these ten factors were categorized as basic needs or safety and security needs. Maslow

(1943) stressed the importance of needs fulfillment in the lower tiers of before moving on to higher levels.

Laursen and Felski-Smith (2008) argued that the importance of support and confidence building could also be seen among school-age children with disabilities as well. The authors noted that students with disabilities have academic, social, and emotional needs that can negatively affect success at school. While not centered on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the authors indicated that addressing these needs through therapy, support, and intervention increases feelings of security and confidence, ultimately bolstering student success. Tichy (2017) asserted that students who attended the "Creative Charter School" system in Texas demonstrated greater levels of achievement and higher graduation rates compared to students who attended public schools. The author attributed these successes to the attention the school system paid to student needs and the supports in place for students who had experienced trauma.

Individual success and organizational commitment can be fortified through the organization's support. Encouragement, sponsorship, training and fair compensation can encourage organizational commitment (Pulasinghage, 2010), but intrinsic factors may also play a role. Browning (2014) asserted that empowerment, recognition, and leadership opportunities were more predictive of family practitioners' success and job satisfaction than salary. Maslow (1943) posited that individuals perform at their highest capability by advancing to the more complex levels of the hierarchy of needs that emphasize personal growth. Physicians are for the most part well-trained, well-

compensated, and secure in their employment. Because their basic needs and security needs have been fulfilled, they can turn to self-actualization and greater responsibilities.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory has been employed by many scholars across disciplines. The importance of basic needs (food, water) and safety needs (security, salary) has been demonstrated regarding families in Europe, prison guards, workers for temporary NGOs, health care workers, rookie nurses, nursing students, physicians, and even school-age students with disabilities. Most studies emphasize physical and mental security needs as well as appropriate training and fair compensation. The physical and psychological security needs of EBD teachers formed a central topic of this current study.

Organizational Support Theory

Organizational support theory (OST) is based on the idea that if an organization demonstrates appreciation and care for the well-being of employees, those employees would reciprocate the support through hard work and commitment to the organization's goals (Eisenberger, et al, 1986). The level at which the employees are committed to the organization is dependent upon how supported the employees feel by the organization. Perceived organizational support (POS) is a key element of OST. Eisenberger, et al, (1986) maintained that POS could be influenced in material means such as salary or cash rewards or symbolically thorough recognition, training, or opportunities for advancement. Employees' organizational commitment could be demonstrated in numerous ways such as supporting organizational objectives, arriving to work on time, or staying with the organization.

This relationship is reciprocal: if the employee works hard and demonstrates organizational commitment, then reward and recognition are expected. OST is grounded in the concept of a social exchange framework where organizations reward employees for hard work and employees repay organizations for their recognition through commitment (Eisenberger, et al, 1986). In the best case, this exchange ideology manifests itself through a socioemotional bond between the organization and employee. However, the level at which the employee demonstrates hard work and organizational dedication depends on the level of the employee's exchange ideology. Some individuals feel an obligation to perform at higher levels when rewarded while others maintain the status quo despite recognition. In their study, Eisenberger, et al., (1986) found that employees who indicated elevated scores on exchange ideology coupled with high POS demonstrated significantly higher attendance rates. In other words, the employees felt an obligation to support an organization that had supported them. However, Eisenberger, et al., (1986) cautioned that increased POS should be cultivated through recognition specific to individual employee efforts as opposed to policies or labor initiatives. Rewards and recognition based on organizational obligation could in fact diminish the POS felt by employees.

OST is a relatively current theory (1986); however, multiple studies have been conducted using OST as the theoretical backdrop. For example, Shoss, Eisenberger, Restubog, and Zagenczyk (2013) used OST as the theoretical lens in a study which focused on the organizational perceptions of employees who had been abused by supervisors. The researchers found abusive supervision was directly correlated to lower

levels of POS in employees. In turn, decreased POS reduced levels of work performance in employees and increased negative behaviors directed towards the organization. It was contended that employees perceived abuse from supervisors as abuse from the organization itself. The implication is that the relationship between employees and supervisors is a critical factor in levels of POS.

In fact, the behavior of supervisors can have a direct influence on the organizational commitment of employees. In a related study about OST, Eisenberger, Shoss, Karagonlar, Gonzalez-Morales, Wickham, and Buffardi (2014) identified a direct correlation between the levels in which supervisors felt supported by the organization (Supervisor Perception of Organizational Support) and their relationships with employees. The researchers posited that supervisors who felt supported by organizations were more likely to have positive leader-member exchange (LMX) with employees. In turn, the employees viewed quality LMX as organizational support and responded with higher degrees of organizational commitment. In their study, Malik, Wan, Ishfaq, Akram, and Rehman (2015) found that a positive LMX increases employee motivation, job satisfaction, and reduces stress and attrition. The implication is that when employees feel supported by supervisors they will in turn be more productive and demonstrate higher degrees of organizational commitment.

Indeed, the association drawn between supervisors and organizations by employees is something to consider, especially when the actions of supervisors can inspire or deflate the spirt of workers. Using OST as the theoretical backdrop, Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Becker, Karagonlar, Neves, Gonzalez-Moral, and Steiger-

Mueller (2010) argued that employees identify supervisors with organizations, a concept termed supervisor's organizational embodiment (SOE). The researchers found that supervisors who spoke highly of organizations were thought of as being closely associated with the organization by employees. The study yielded mixed results as direct correlations were made between the LMX and organizational commitment in instances of both low and high SOE. This finding was attributed to the fact that supervisors' managerial and directive duties may cause employees to associate them with the organization regardless of positive or negative LMX.

Regardless of the association between supervisors and organizations as perceived by employees, the key factor is the importance of the employee/supervisor relationship. Boateng (2014) used OST as the theoretical lens in a study about police officers in Ghana. 145 participants took part in this study, which determined that there was a significant positive correlation between police officers' perceptions of their ability to perform duties and their feelings on how well they were supported by the organization. Caesens, Stinglhamber, Demoulin, and De Wilde, (2017) found that employees in low POS environments reported greater feelings of dehumanization, higher levels of stress, and lower levels of job satisfaction. In an Italy based study of 276 special educators it was discovered that perceived support played a role in reducing burnout and increased feelings of personal accomplishment (Langher, Caputo, & Ricci, 2017). These studies resonate strongly with the basic tenets of OST in that not only can POS influence organizational commitment but can also affect the ability of employees to do their jobs.

Together, low organizational commitment and inadequate support could be a factor that causes employees to leave the organization. In a study driven by OST, Yew (2011) examined the organizational commitment and attrition rates of college professors as related to POS. It was discovered that career development opportunities were a positive determining factor in POS for the participants; however, POS showed no significant correlation with attrition rates. This interesting finding was attributed to the possibility that organizations which provide advancement opportunities for employees will be perceived as supporting and caring but POS may not play a role in intentions to remain with the organization. In fact, low organizational commitment was related to employee attrition.

Indeed, the connections between POS, organizational commitment, and supervisory relationships are complex and perhaps influenced by the job itself. Another complication to the dynamic is the fact that there are numerous factors that can influence POS and subsequent organizational commitment. Naujokaitiene, Tereseviciene, and Zydziunaite (2015) found that different types of organizational support have varying degrees of influence on employee dedication to technology training. In this study it was discovered that technology workers' involvement with technology-enhanced learning (TEL) was significantly correlated to support from management and colleagues but less related to institutional policy support. The statistical results also indicated that employee engagement in TEL would increase as organizational supports were increased.

Undeniably, POS is influenced by a variety of workplace factors; however, supervisors are often in a position to regulate those factors in a manner which will bolster

employee commitment. To illustrate, using OST as the theoretical underpinning, Nayir (2012) determined that organizational support is predicted by POS. Specifically, 887 Turkish teachers participated in this study which revealed that organizational commitment was most influenced by support from supervisors, especially in matters of workplace justice. The researcher argued that school principals must create an impartial climate within schools, recognize contributions, and empower employees in order to increase the levels of organizational commitment of teachers.

Organizational support theory has been studied in a variety of fields and vocational disciplines. The importance of the relationship between supervisors and employees as it relates to organizational commitment is apparent. POS has been directly correlated to the effectiveness of police officers and the training engagement of technology workers. Additionally, POS has been exhibited to increase as college professors are given opportunities to grow professionally and as school teachers are supported and given decision making responsibilities. In all, OST has been an important theoretical foundation for studies in numerous vocational disciplines. Further, increased POS could be a determining factor in the organizational commitment and subsequent increased career longevity rates of EBD teachers.

This study aimed to combine Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory to express the importance of safety and security needs fulfillment and OST to establish the tie between perceived organizational support as it related to EBD teacher attrition rates. The following section of the literature review focuses on the independent variables college preparation, job supports, and job benefits/amenities.

Literature Review Relating to Key Variables

The following section of the literature review focuses on the independent variables of this current study: job preparation, job supports, and job benefits/amenities. For the segment on job supports, the review of articles and studies centered on the importance of acquiring the necessary skill sets and pre-program experiences to be successful in one's job. I will then examine literature about job supports offered to employees once they are hired, including professional development, supervisory support, and evidence based practices. The final variable in the Key Variables heading is job benefits/amenities. This section includes studies examining wage and benefits packages. In all three sections, the large majority of the literature reviewed concerned EBD teachers, although I included other teaching disciplines as well as vocations beyond education when they seemed relevant to my argument. The literature review culminates with a comprehensive review on the issue of EBD teacher attrition rates and a summary.

Job Preparation

While past research indicated that job support influences perceptions of organizational support, employee education and preparation is an important topic to include. Receiving adequate training is critical to the success of employees and to enhance employees' commitment to organizations (Whipp & Geronime, 2015). Appropriate education and pre-employment experiences lay the foundation for professional efficacy (Sinclair, 2008) or the confidence in one's professional role is challenged when one lacks the skills needed to perform a job. Houchins et al., (2010) examined the attrition and job satisfaction rates of teachers in juvenile justice settings.

The results of the study indicated that the teachers of students who had committed more serious offenses were less satisfied with their jobs than those who taught lesser offending students. The authors felt that students who had committed more serious offenses were more demanding to work with and potentially dangerous. However, special education teachers reported higher job satisfaction rates than their general education counterparts.

As it stands, students with disabilities represent a disproportionate percentage of the juvenile justice population (Mears & Aron, 2003; Quinn, Rutherford, Leone, Osher, & Poirier, 2005; SPLC, 2007). Special education teachers have the educational background and experience to address the significant academic and behavioral needs that many juvenile justice students present. They may even be better prepared for this setting than general education teachers.

Job satisfaction can be influenced by environmental security and individual preparation. Those who receive suitable training for demanding positons are likely to report greater job satisfaction and demonstrate greater organizational commitment than those who do not (Eisenberger, et al., 1986; Pulasinghage, 2010; Zee, & Koomen, 2016). Berry et al. (2011) supported the idea that inadequate preparedness can negatively affect the success of special education teachers. In their study, 27% of the 203 participants expressed intentions to abandon the special education field because student disabilities ranged beyond the scope of their teaching certifications, particularly those with autism or EBD.

Teachers who enter the workforce ill-prepared could lack the skills needed for success and therefore leave the position quickly. The high attrition rates of special

education teachers can result in schools hiring candidates without the experience or educational background needed to be successful in the profession (Sutherland et al., 2005). These unprepared candidates find success difficult because they lack the required educational and professional tools. Locating and hiring highly qualified special education teachers remains a significant challenge for states (Berry et al., 2011). The overwhelming majority of research on special education teacher candidate assessment focuses on academic preparedness, diversity, and collaboration (McCall, McHatton, & Shealey, 2014). Few studies assess behavior-management skills among EBD teachers.

Additional research on the most effective means in which to assess and prepare teacher candidates of students with EBD is warranted. As an illustration, through a review of 790 articles on special education teacher candidate assessment, McCall et al., (2014) maintained that there is a lack of research on the assessment of behavior-related skills and accentuated the need for further examination on how teachers of children with EBD are prepared for the position. In most professions, individuals develop the fundamental skills needed to be successful in pre-service training, college, or the preparatory school level (Pritchard & Gidman, 2012; Schorpp, 2008). These experiences provide the individual with the fundamental skill-set needed to enter the labor force.

Like other professions, initial college-level training plays a vital role in preparing EBD teachers for the classroom; however, there is a considerable discrepancy between universities on how this pre-service instruction is imparted. Oliver and Reschly (2010) reviewed 26 syllabi from a variety of higher learning institutions within a single state to discover that there is a great deal of diversity between colleges regarding the emphasis

placed on behavior management training. In fact, only 27% of the participating universities had classes totally devoted to teaching classroom management. Additionally, 42% of the reviewed syllabi made no reference to the establishment and enforcement of classroom rules and 50% did not address fundamental behavior principles such as classroom routines, student engagement, structured environment, and school wide behavior expectations. The approaches to preparing special education teachers to work with students who present challenging and disruptive behaviors vary significantly, even within relatively small samples of universities. More important is the fact that the basic tenets of behavior management are conspicuously missing in a considerable number of university syllabi. Given the demonstrated inconsistency in the manner in which universities prepare special education teachers to address behavior issues, the challenges that teachers experience in the workplace are not surprising.

Indeed, universities should reconsider the behavior management aspect of special education preparatory programs to determine the most effective means in which to prepare teachers for future employment. Aloe, Amo, and Shanahan (2014) contended that teachers lacking confidence in classroom management skills are susceptible to burnout and called for more authentic classroom experiences at the student teaching level. In one study, teachers who had earned master's degrees in special education, were EBD certified, and participated in a rigorous student-teaching program demonstrated high levels of success in the EBD classroom (Anderson & Hendrickson, 2007). Additionally, 11 of the 12 participants indicated their commitment to the position for the foreseeable

future. In other words, teachers of students with EBD can experience success if provided intensive training at the university level.

Earning a certification in EBD, attaining a master's degree in special education, and participating in pre-service field experiences appear to benefit EBD teachers and promote career longevity. On the other hand, EBD teachers who participate in rigorous college preparatory programs may still demonstrate behavioral and instructional skills inconsistently (Anderson & Hendrickson, 2007). In other words, although some of the college level practices needed to promote classroom success for EBD teachers are apparent, there are essential preparatory skills and experiences that are not yet identified. Fink and Janssen (1993) attempted to identify what attributes EBD teachers felt were necessary to successfully instruct students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Rating results gathered from 22 participants indicated behavior management and social skills competencies as the most essential skills needed to teach students with EBD. These are critical skills and fundamental concepts when considering the challenges of the EBD classroom environment. EBD teachers lacking behavior management skills and social skills competencies find success in the classroom difficult and consequently leave the discipline quickly (Darling-Hammond, 2003). On the contrary, Adera and Bullock (2009) determined that the greatest challenges for EBD teachers was the amount of time spent on non-instructional tasks (IEP meetings) and the extra duties assigned by school leadership. A significant portion of the 156 participants in this study maintained that they spent additional time supporting the behaviors of students with EBD. Interestingly, 80% of the participants felt assured in their ability to provide modifications for students with

EBD and 71.1% indicated confidence in their ability to govern behaviors. In spite of this, when asked about future plans for teaching EBD only 29.5% of the participants indicated that they anticipated remaining in their current assignment. That is to say, despite feelings of confidence regarding behavior management and instructional competencies over half (11.5% were retiring) of the participants indicated that they would be leaving the EBD position.

These conflicting study results indicate that EBD teachers are not as prepared as they presume or that the non-instructional challenges of the job (meetings, paperwork) are significant enough to warrant quitting. However, it should be considered that IEP meetings and paperwork are not responsibilities unique to EBD teachers but are in fact normal duties for all disciplines of special education teachers. Considering that these tasks are common responsibilities to all special education teachers, the fact that EBD teachers have amongst the highest teacher attrition rates every year (American Association for Employment in Education (AAEE), 2000, 2004, 2010, 2015) indicates that there are other factors that challenge their success.

For example, and complicating the matter further, is the reality that many EBD teachers do not hold certifications specific to EBD, but are certified to teach special education in general terms or sometimes not at all. In the worst case, individuals not EBD certified, or not certified in any instructional discipline, are granted certification on a provisional license. Students with EBD present extremely unique challenges and necessitate the support of individuals who have received specialized training in this area (Area Special Education Cooperative (ASEC), n.d.). Sheldon Braaten, a lifetime

advocate of youth with EBD, compared the need for specialists in the EBD field to the necessity of specialists as opposed to generalists in the medical field (Zabel, Kaff, & Teagarden, 2016). The apparent implications are that states should reconsider the certification qualifications needed to teach in EBD settings and university special education teaching curriculums should offer programing specifically designed for EBD teachers. Without this specialized training, EBD teachers enter the workforce ill-prepared to address the significant challenges students with emotional and behavioral disorders present.

The routine of hiring under qualified individuals to teach EBD is a concerning practice. Billingsley et al., (2006) found that EBD teachers had significantly less experience than their special education counterparts according to information collected from the Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education (SPeNSE) and survey data received from 859 EBD teachers and 3687 special educators. Additionally, only 44.52% of the EBD teachers indicated that they were fully certified and about half felt confident in their preparation at the university level, citing that the programming did not prepare them for the realities of the EBD classroom. The indication is that practicing EBD teachers are often less qualified than general special education teachers. Many EBD teachers enter the profession by means of provisional or emergency certifications; meaning, they are situated to work in possibly the most stressful and demanding teaching field with little or sometimes no formal training.

Although the issue of districts hiring inexperienced personnel to teach in the EBD field is problematic, what is more troubling is the fact that so many EBD teachers feel

that they are inadequately prepared for the role through their college pre-service programs. For instance, in a study centered on the needs of novice EBD teachers, 25% of the participants indicated that they lacked mastery of best teaching practices and over half expressed the need for better preparation in the areas of differentiated instruction and literacy (Kindzierski et al., 2013). While training in literacy and other core academic subject areas are not necessarily behaviorally focused, college preparatory programs are in a position to assist graduates in making the connection between student learning and the regulation of behaviors. Bibliotherapy, as an example, can be a useful tool when helping students with social/emotional issues relate literature to their own feelings (Regan & Page, 2008). This same concept can be effective when teaching academic areas such as math (Mulcahy, Krezmien, & Maccini, 2014) or disciplines within fine arts such as drama (Edmiston & Sobjack, 2017). From a behavioral aspect, providing students with increased opportunities to respond (OTR) or giving specific praise for desired behaviors are fundamental concepts that should be taught in the developmental stage of EBD teachers (Marchant & Anderson, 2012). As it stands, potential EBD teachers are entering the workforce only partially prepared for the challenges of the position. In the aforementioned study conducted by Billingsley et al., (2006), new EBD teachers voiced that they needed more pre-service classes in special education pedagogy, developing IEPs, and crafting behavior management plans. Most concerning is that EBD teachers identified behavior management as a skill not acquired in their pre-service programming.

Indeed, future special educators need to feel confident in their pedagogy and ability to write IEPs; however, it is essential that colleges impart behavior management aptitudes to prospective EBD teachers. Blake and Monahan (2007) reported that EBD teachers attributed value to their college training but felt that many of the skills needed to be successful were only gained through experience in the EBD classroom. Competencies in behavior management and the teaching of specific strategies to address undesired behaviors were identified as being critical components to the preparation of EBD teachers as well as intensive and authentic learning experiences during student teaching. As an exemplar, future EBD teachers at Mount St Mary's University attend a professional development school (PDS) after completing required coursework (Blake & Monahan, 2007). The PDS acts as a more rigorous pre-service preparation than a typical student-teacher field experience. While attending PDS students are required to observe EBD classrooms early in the program and subsequently participate in a 100 day field experience in which behavior management skills are practiced in a variety of authentic classroom settings with students who manifest a diversity of behavioral profiles.

Although the experience gained through the PDS program could better prepare EBD teachers for the classroom, EBD teachers in the Blake and Monahan (2007) study felt that on the job training could better groom individuals for the position. Similarly, Short and Bullock (2013) found that EBD teachers rated two years of on-the-job experience as the most effective preparation for teaching students with EBD; student teaching experiences were rated third on the list.

Views on the most effective practices in which to prepare EBD teachers for the classroom vary between universities as well as researchers. To demonstrate, Lengyel and Vernon-Dotson (2010) advocated the use of case study methodologies in college special education preparatory programs to best provide teachers with authentic experiences regarding behavior management practices. Through this process, potential special educators are assigned factual case files on students with EBD. In turn, the student-teacher becomes familiar with the background of the case and uses this information to practice conducting functional behavior analyses (FBAs) and developing behavior intervention plans (BIPs). Determining the function of unwanted behaviors is instrumental in improving the conduct of students with EBD as well as those at-risk for EBD (Hansen, Wills, & Kamps, 2014; Lewis, Hatton, Jorgenson, & Maynard, 2017). During the second phase of the case study the student-teacher works within schools and is assigned a student with EBD. Subsequently, behavior data is collected on the student and the process culminates with the development of a BIP based on a FBA. Success is determined by how effective the BIP is in modifying the behavior of the student. This method of preparation affords future teachers the opportunity to make connections between theoretical educational tenets and the application of those principles within a realistic setting (Bentley-Williams, Grima-Farrell, Long, & Laws, 2017; Lengyel & Vernon-Dotson, 2010; Markelz, Riden, & Scheeler, 2017). Further, the participants are provided a genuine experience that gives them a more complete understanding of the actualities associated with working with students with EBD. While there appear to be benefits associated with case study methods in special education teacher preparatory

programs, there is no apparent evidence provided which illustrates how effective this practice is. In fact, determining the effectiveness of case studies in providing behavior management preparation for teachers is a subject that warrants additional research.

The provided course work and field experiences at the university level could be determining factors in the success of EBD teachers and their subsequent career longevity in the field. However, while the preparation of EBD teachers through intensive university programming showed promise of early success (Anderson & Hendrickson, 2007; Blake & Monahan, 2007), much of the research indicated that EBD teachers often feel uncertain about their preparation for the job (Berry et al., 2011; Billingsley et al., 2006). In fact, at this point, most previous research fails to indicate what EBD teachers feel are the specific college curriculum and field preparations needed for success. While the need for more instruction in behavior management has been mentioned (Fink & Janssen, 1993) the means in which this training should occur is left uncertain. More classes devoted specifically to behavior management or the social/psychological factors that affect students with EBD are possibilities that have not been voiced by EBD teachers. Notwithstanding, perhaps more realistic student teaching and other authentic pre-service experiences would be identified as critical to the preparation of EBD teachers for the classroom. Again, previous research indicated an increase in the levels of success of teachers who participate in these rigorous pre-service activities; however, these examples are very specific to individual universities or EBD teachers that are fairly new to the field. The noted trend of programming inconsistency across universities warrants a

closer look into what specific classes and field experiences are needed to adequately prepare potential EBD teachers for the classroom.

Regardless of their classroom preparation and field experience at the college level, the supports necessary to ensure job confidence may not be in place once the EBD teacher is positioned at the school level. In other words, even with the most competent and comprehensive university preparation, EBD teachers could have difficulty attaining success and self-actualization if the job supports needed to instill a sense of professional security are not provided (Maslow, 1943). In turn, EBD teachers with low levels of perceived organizational support (POS) could demonstrate diminished levels of organizational commitment which would increase the chances of them leaving the position (Eisenberger, et al., 1986). Further, determining which factor influences professional success, the level of college preparation or the provided job supports, is a matter that warrants examination. The next section delivers a look into the job supports that could be critical to the success and career longevity of EBD teachers.

Job Support

Interviews with experts in the EBD field identified a lack of adequate preparation and training opportunities as obstacles in the future of the EBD teaching discipline (Teagarden, Zabel, & Kaff, 2013). Individuals who receive adequate training for a job could experience varying degrees of success depending on the supports received once placed in the position. In other words, there could be other factors involved when considering the professional efficacy and organizational commitment of individuals who receive suitable pre-service programming (Eisenberger, et al., 1986). Case in point,

Greiner and Smith (2009) determined that there was no relationship between the level of college academic success experienced by beginning teachers and the number of years they remained in the position. In fact, out of the 503 participants, those that left the teaching field after only year demonstrated the highest reading proficiency scores.

Success at the college level would surely be an indicator of professional success; however, research has shown that there are other critical factors to consider. The high attrition rates of beginning teachers is most likely due to factors such as administrative and collegial support, class size, salary, and professional development (particularly in the area of behavior management) as opposed to college performance (Greiner & Smith, 2009). Nelson and Kauffman (2009) pointed out the importance of preparation at the college level and professional development in the workplace in an article that advocated the use of school-wide positive behavior support (SWPBS) to diminish the undesirable behaviors of students, in particular those with EBD. SWPBS is principled on establishing clear expectations regarding conduct and recognizing students for demonstrating appropriate behaviors. Evidence based approaches such as SWPBS can not only mitigate unwanted student behaviors, but can also promote the confidence and success of teachers when governing student conduct.

Many feel that employing evidence based practices is a cornerstone of professional success. Behavior and academic interventions based on research have been proven significantly effective in multiple studies (Farley, Torres, Wailehua, & Cook, 2012). Ryan and Rozalski (2013) observed that the implementation of evidence based practices with consistency is disrupted because of the high attrition rates of special

educators. In order for general and special education teachers to apply evidence based practices such as positive behavior support with fidelity, intensive training at the university level is required (Sweigart & Collins, 2017) as well as continuous professional development at the school level to include in-service training from behavioral specialists (Nelson & Kauffman, 2009). However, support staff, such as special educators, place more importance on administrative support in this area because their professional roles center on the academic, social, and behavioral support of struggling students (Debnam, Pas, & Bradshaw, 2013). Indeed, adequate preparation at the college level and meaningful professional development can promote the behavior management skills of teachers as well as the academic, behavioral, and social success of students with behavioral issues, especially those with EBD.

Research demonstrated that professional development in areas such as behavior management are critical to the professional efficacy of teachers supporting students with EBD and must be provided by administrators. As an illustration, in a Hong Kong based qualitative study Chong and Ng (2011) examined the perceptions of general education teachers and special educators regarding what students with EBD need to be successful. Both general and special educators identified similar behaviors as challenging and responded alike regarding approaches used in managing student behaviors. In particular, the use of behavioral modification techniques and the development of structured learning environments were described as acutely important to all participants. The practice of reprimanding students in private rather than in front of peers (called giving face in the Hong Kong culture) was also listed as an important behavior management strategy by

both sets of participants. Additionally, establishing a strong rapport by cultivating caring and genuine relationships was noted as a key nurturing factor in promoting student self-esteem. Professional development, especially in the areas of managing special needs students, diversity awareness, and understanding mental disorders are needed for the success of teachers (Chong & Ng, 2011). Lewis (2016) argued that because of their behaviors, students with EBD are placed in more restrictive environments and have less access to school curriculums or are placed in the general education classroom with teachers who are underprepared to meet their behavioral needs. Undeniably, training in the area of behavior management practices can assist teachers when working with students with EBD.

Education leadership must facilitate collaboration between staff members and external supporting agencies (mental health, behavior specialists) to ensure meaningful professional development occurs. Educational programming for students with EBD could be inconsistent without administrative support, professional development, and commitment from team members and mental health professionals (Ştefan, Rebega, & Cosma, 2015). However, it should be considered that school administrators could be unprepared, underqualified, or uncomfortable in certain aspects of special education programming, particularly with issues of behavior (Williams, Pazey, Shelby, & Yates, 2013). In other words, some principals lack the skills needed to select behavior related professional development opportunities that would encourage teamwork between staff members.

Meaningful collaboration between special educators and general education teachers is vital to the success of both teachers and students. Successful teamwork between educators can result in significant academic gains for students with EBD as well as an increase in the self-regulation of behaviors (Smith, Cumming, Merrill, Pitts, & Daunic, 2015; Watt, Therrien, & Kaldenberg, 2014). Mattison and Blader (2013) asserted that students with EBD could demonstrate more success if provided the necessary behavioral/motivational interventions and that it is paramount that researchers provide teachers with the tools to simultaneously address student academic and behavioral needs. As an example, self-regulated strategy development (SRSD) is a research based writing intervention (Sreckovic, Common, Knowles, & Lane, 2014) which can have positive instructional outcomes (Bak & Asaro-Saddler, 2013) as well as therapeutic benefits for students with EBD when connected to their social or emotional issues (Ennis, Harris, Lane, & Mason, 2014). Teachers therapeutically trained to develop instructional practices related to the unique emotional and cultural qualities of students with EBD could be better prepared to implement research based strategies (Chiu, Carrero, & Lusk, 2017; Wood, 2015). Therapy-based behavioral approaches have been shown to be effective in calming students in crisis and in assisting them while working through issues methodically (Solar, 2013). Cumming (2013) discussed the potential for mobile technology to provide evidence based academic and behavioral interventions to students with EBD; however, cautioned the expense of such devices and stressed the importance of teacher training in their use. This same type of mobile technology can be a convenient means of collecting behavioral data on students (Jasper, Hunter, Williamson, & Collins,

2015). Past research has offered numerous evidenced based practices which can promote the success of students with EBD and staff members who support them; however, administrators must realize the importance of imparting these practices through professional development.

Failure to note the significance of providing professional development in these research based methods could prove detrimental to the success of teachers working with students with EBD, the students themselves, and even affect the relationship between schools and families. In fact, in a England based qualitative study, students with social, emotional, and behavior difficulties (SEBD) identified positive relationships with teachers as the most important factor regarding their academic and emotional needs (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). However, these same participants attributed their academic short-comings to their behaviors as well as those of their peers. Students with EBD (and at-risk students) can attribute their behavioral difficulties to teasing or instigation from other students and may feel inconsistently supported by teachers, especially those who do not have the skills to appropriately intervene in those circumstances (Sullivan, Sutherland, Lotze, Helms, Wright, & Ulmer, 2015). The skills gained through professional development could enable teachers to better support students with EBD.

Professional development also has the potential to improve the relationship between the school and home. In a 2003 study, parents of children with EBD voiced concerns regarding judgmental staff members, broken promises of supports, and the practice of passing children from one facility to another (Crawford & Simonoff 2003).

Important to this research, the participants noted that staff members often lacked the training or experience to work with children with EBD and that the high turnover rate of EBD teachers was particularly troubling. The researchers noted that service providers should be cognizant of the way they communicate with parents and that more effective collaboration was needed between supporting agencies. Collaboration with parents is particularly important to the success of students with EBD as their life at home can influence behaviors at school which in turn can negatively affect family functioning (Stoutjesdijk, Scholte, & Swaab, 2016). In another study, special educators and parents rated students with EBD as significantly ill-prepared to transition from high-school to adulthood when compared to students with learning disabilities (Carter, Trainor, Ye, & Owen, 2009). Interestingly, a significant number of items on the Transition Plan Inventory (TPI) were marked as *Don't Know* by special educators. Transition planning is comprehensive and meant to ensure that students are prepared in all aspects of life (employment, continuing education, daily living, leisure, community participation etc.). The *Don't know* responses from special educators suggested that the students were not being prepared for post high school life comprehensively, or that teachers needed training in this area. In fact, Harrison, State, Wills, Custer, and Miller (2017) not only found that students and parents had a limited understanding of IEP goals and how they connected with the transition to adulthood but also that transition goals were written by special educators with varying degrees of diligence. Professional under-preparedness, high turnover rates, uncertainty on how to appropriately communicate with parents, and failure to provide a comprehensive educational experience are indicators that training is needed

to enhance the competency of EBD teachers and improve the outcomes of students with EBD.

Teachers of students at risk for, or with EBD, may experience frustration and a subsequent diminished organizational commitment because of their inability to alter the unpromising futures of their students. Osher, Coggshall, Colombi, Woodruff, Francois, and Osher (2012) maintained that at-risk students from impoverished backgrounds who demonstrate delinquency and antisocial behaviors too often leave school only to be incarcerated in what is called the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP). The researchers argued that Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies are critical factors in decreasing problem behaviors and that teachers often lack these skills (Osher et al., 2012; Poulou, 2005). Consequently, teachers are susceptible to burnout which has negative implications for the student as well as the teacher (Albrecht et al., 2009). In order to eliminate the STPP, quality professional development is needed in areas such as the attitudes needed work with at-risk youth, effective classroom management strategies, the reinforcement of desired behaviors, and the implementation of research based academic and behavioral interventions (Osher et al., 2012). The STPP is a concerning issue that warrants the attention of schools, households, and communities.

Paralleling the importance of general and special educator collaboration, alliances between educators, parents, and community representatives could be equally important to the futures of at-risk children. Dalun, Hsien-Yaun, Katisyannis, Barrett, and Song (2011) suggested that schools develop partnerships with community organizations and government agencies in order to decrease the rate at which children enter the JJ system,

particularly those who were African American and have a family history of delinquency. As an example, initiatives such as wraparound services aim to connect the school and community life of at-risk students by developing a comprehensive support mechanism consisting of community members, probation officers, case workers, general education teachers, and EBD experts (Farmer, Sutherland, Talbott, Brooks, Norwalk, & Huneke, 2016; Fries, Carney, Blackman-Urteaga, & Savas, 2012). These partnerships could be considered more critical to the success of students with EBD as EBD teachers become more experienced and aware of the domestic challenges or legal issues that can complicate the lives of their students (Short & Bullock, 2013). Shippen, Patterson, Green, and Smitherman (2012) posited that professional development on effective behavior intervention approaches was needed not only by teachers but also community members such as police officers, judges, and attorneys in order to deter at-risk students from entering the STPP. It was contended that correctional officials, teachers in alternative settings, and special education teachers enter the field inadequately furnished with evidenced based trainings in the areas of pretrial diversion programs (PTDs), understanding cultural differences, behavior management and intervention, and best practices in instructional delivery (Shippen et al., 2012). Indeed, the success and welfare of students with EBD could hinge upon the comprehensive preparedness of the professionals who support them.

Schools must support an increasingly culturally diverse student body. Considering this, it is imperative that EBD teachers are prepared to implement evidence based behavior intervention practices which address misconduct while regarding the

diversity and language differences of pupils (Gage & MacSuga-Gage, 2014; Kindzierski et al., 2013). Moreno and Gaytán, (2013) asserted that educators often lack an understanding of the cultural backgrounds of students which results in an increase in disciplinary actions and EBD referrals. For that matter, teachers of students with EBD must consider gender as well when determining the most effective academic and social/behavioral programming (Srsic & Rice, 2012) although Van Bergen, Graham, Sweller, and Dodd, (2014) recounted that boys are diagnosed as EBD at significantly higher rates than girls. Overall, EBD teachers must be prepared to attend to academic and behavioral needs simultaneously in order to enhance the occasions of success for all students with EBD and decrease the rates at which they become entangled in correctional systems (Farley et al., 2012; Mulcahy, Maccini, Wright, & Miller, 2014). On the contrary, Van der Worp-Van der Kamp, Pijl, Post, Bijstra, and Van den Bosch, (2016) found that systematic instruction of students with EBD increased academic outcomes but did not significantly improve behaviors. Obviously the most effective path to supporting students with EBD warrants further research. Without training and accurate intervention strategies, EBD teachers, who already work in a high-stress environment, are placed in a position where they cannot guide students to more positive outcomes.

The opportunities for at-risk students to drop out of school or even be incarcerated are only exacerbated when teachers are not provided continuous and effective professional development in areas that focus on promoting optimistic results for this category of students. As it stands, about half of students with EBD leave high school without receiving a diploma and up to 85% of students in JJ settings have disabilities

which would warrant an IEP (National Council on Disability, 2011; National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), 2013; NDTAC, 2014). The National Center on Inclusive Education (NCIE, n.d.) and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC, 2007) reported that over 75% of students with EBD will be involved in activities that warrant intervention by law enforcement. In 2014, the NCES related that students with EBD are five times more likely to receive IEP services in a correctional facility than any other disability area. The life of a child with EBD can be chaotic and ever fluctuating including living with a procession of different relatives, stays in group homes or residential facilities, and receiving their education in alternative schools of varying effectiveness (Atkins & Bartuska, 2010; Berridge, Beecham, Brodie, Coles, Daniels, Knapp, & MacNeil 2003; Kuo, 2017; Malmqvist, 2016; Michael & Frederickson, 2013). Chen, Culhane, Metraux, Park, Venable, and Burnett, (2016) reported that students with serious emotional disturbance were more likely to receive support in juvenile justice, child welfare, or mental health facilities when compared to students without disabilities or even different disabilities. In fact, Van Bergen et al., (2014) contended that students may be sent to special facilities because public schools would rather devote time and energy into students without challenging behaviors. Research has demonstrated that the mental health of students with or at-risk for EBD warrants deeper investigation and can have a significant impact on the future of students (Kutash et al., 2015). For instance, the opportunity for students with EBD to attend and complete college was recounted as 70% less than their non-disabled peers (Lee, Rojewski, Gregg, & Jeong, 2014). It is not surprising that students with EBD can feel that their quality of life (QoL) life is

significantly less than that of their general education counterparts (Sacks & Kern, 2007). Seo, Wehmeyer, Palmer, and Little (2015) determined that students with EBD felt less independent than students with learning disabilities, most likely as a result of rules placed on them by schools and home. Overall, the outcomes for students with EBD are often discouraging (Maggin et al., 2016). Truly, professional development for EBD teachers could be the critical element which determines this subset of special education students' ability to be successfully educated in the public school system.

While alternative school placement and others outside the public school system are not the optimal outcome for students with EBD, evidenced based approaches can still effective. For instance, students with EBD demonstrated less aggressive behaviors after participating in a five week WhyTry social skills training which included high interest activities such as team building, music, roleplaying, and ropes courses; however, the students showed negligible improvement in attendance or grades (Wilhite, & Bullock, 2012). In similar research, the introduction of SWPBS in an alternative school resulted in a decrease in disruptive behaviors and an increase in positive staff/pupil interaction (Farkas, Simonsen, Migdole, Donovan, Clemens, & Cicchese, 2012). In this case the staff was provided ongoing monthly consultation from an SWPBS expert. In a Netherlands based study, Stoutjesdijk, Scholte, & Swaab, (2012) found that students with EBD in alternative settings were more cognitively disabled, presented more severe behaviors, and came from dysfunctional home lives at a significantly greater rate than students with EBD who received services in regular schools. The researchers asserted that educators armed with this information could target interventions on those

specific areas which cause students with EBD to be placed in alternative settings. Overall the research and aforementioned statistics demonstrated that the future of students with EBD is often very concerning. Considering these bleak outcomes, it is imperative that teachers are provided training in order to better intervene on the behalf of students with EBD before they are placed in alternative settings, drop out, or enter the correctional system.

One school of thought is that students should proactively be provided social and emotional supports to avoid negative outcomes. Forness, Kim, and Walker, (2012) maintained that school staff members need to provide effective interventions to students who demonstrate EBD like qualities before they are determined eligible to receive special education services. Poulou (2004) advocated for the intervention of at-risk students before they were identified as EBD through the inclusion of social and emotional development in school curricula. In this Greece based study, 427 elementary school teachers ranked the ability of at-risk students to understand, express, and to assess the intensity of emotions as the primary skills needed to be emotionally and socially successful.

The ability to gage their emotions can be critical to the social interactions of students with EBD. EBD teachers are tasked with providing students the tools necessary to navigate social settings appropriately, including social media (Morgan, Higgins, Miller, Pierce, Boone, & Tandy, 2016), a skill which many of these students lack (Lynn, Carroll, Houghton, & Cobham, 2013; Sullivan et al., 2015). However, Jensen (2017) cautioned that student deficits in SEL may be exacerbated by the amount of time

interacting with technology as opposed to people. In a Greece based study Doikou-Avlidou and Dadatsi (2013) found that students who presented serious behavioral and emotional needs responded favorably to whole-class SEL programming which focused on strength recognition, empathy, cooperation, and expressing feelings. Whitlow and Watts (2014) similarly advocated language rich teaching environments in order to afford students with EBD the communication skills needed to express themselves and to improve social skills. However, Poulou (2004) also recognized the need for college preparation programs to instruct potential teachers on the skills needed to educate and support at-risk students, namely social and emotional learning (SEL). It should be noted that in a review of SEL intervention studies conducted between 2000-2009, Wheeler, Mayton, Ton, and Reese, (2014) found that about half of the studies were inconsistent in the manner in which interventions were implemented and documented. Hutchins, Burke, Hatton, and Bowman-Perrot (2017) discovered similar results noting that studies on social skills interventions maintained inconsistent levels of reliability and implementation fidelity.

Although Poulou's (2004) study indicated the importance of college preparation it placed less emphasis on professional development and the support of behavioral specialists to assist teachers in becoming proficient at imparting these skills to students. Nevertheless, intensive training on assessing and supporting the emotional health of students is critical at the school level for educators of all disciplines (Scott & Cooper, 2013). Without this preparation, teachers, particularly EBD teachers, could lack the intervention skills needed to support at-risk students or those with emotional and

behavioral disorders. Moreover, the absence of these skills either learned at the college level or through professional development could further exacerbate teachers' intentions of leaving the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Eisenberger, et al., 1986). Organizational commitment could be dependent upon how supported EBD teachers feel.

While staff professional development can be ultimately beneficial for at-risk students, an undeniable concern is what occurs when teachers are not provided this training. Research demonstrated that support from principals, colleagues, and district offices, specifically relating to professional development opportunities, are pivotal factors in determining the job commitment of special education teachers (Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, & Harniss, 2001). In this study, 887 special educators identified meaningful job training, administrative assistance during contentious situations, excessive paperwork, and student disciplinary issues as factors that influenced the decision to leave or remain in the position. Hunt, Powell, Little, and Mike (2013) explored the idea of an e-mentoring program where professional support from quality mentors could be accessed via the Electronic Mentoring for Student Success (eMSS) online system. The authors posited that providing mentors and induction programs for novice special education teachers could prove instrumental in decreasing attrition rates; however, both supports should be well-defined, separate entities (Spooner-Lane, 2017). Overall the eMSS system had no impact on the teachers' perceived preparedness for the special education classroom. Special education teachers spend most of their time working with students but also additional hours planning and attending IEP meetings. A less time consuming form of job support could be more effective and meaningful for novice special educators.

Rock, Schoenfeld, Zigmond, Gable, Gregg, Ploessl, & Salter (2013) provided that web-based coaching showed promise as a training mechanism to support the behavior management needs of teachers; however, assurances that the coaches are delivering an effective message must be made in order to promote the confidence of the trainees.

Considering the demands of the job, it is imperative that special educators are prepared and confident in their ability to teach. Viel-Ruma, Houchins, Jolivette, & Benson (2010) explored the correlation between the self-efficacy and job satisfaction of special educators. It was hypothesized that self-efficacy, or the confidence in one's professional ability, would be directly related to how satisfied individuals felt about their jobs and thus be a determining factor in attrition rates. There was no significant difference between teachers of different grade levels, certification types, or instructional setting when considering job satisfaction or professional confidence; however, a multiple regression analysis indicated that teacher self-efficacy was a forecaster of job satisfaction. Maslow (1943) asserted that individuals gain confidence in their abilities and relationships once they have satisfied security needs. Security in one's professional ability is gained through training and can increase perceptions of support and subsequent organizational commitment (Eisenberger, et al., 1986). Strong induction programs for beginning teachers and meaningful professional development will increase the confidence levels of special educators, raise levels of job satisfaction, and promote longevity in the field (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Viel-Ruma et al., 2010). Indeed, there are many factors which could affect the career longevity of EBD teachers.

Vanderhye (2015) explained that administrators should provide professional development specific to the professional needs of the individual and then provide feedback when the skills learned in the training are implemented in the classroom. In one case study, a principal cautioned that professional development is often based on education initiatives and neglects to address the instructional needs of individual teachers (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013). Likewise, Childress (2014) stressed the need for administrators to provide teachers with skill-targeted training, subsequent coaching, and meaningful feedback. While Smith and Eisterhold (2010) agreed that administrators must evaluate teacher skills and provide constructive analyses, they also underlined the importance of professional development being a continuous practice. In other words, employee success and subsequent job satisfaction could be directly related to ongoing support from administrators.

School administrators must not only provide continuous professional development and support to staff members, but also consider how these examples of organizational support are imparted. The organizational commitment of employees could be in jeopardy if they do not feel supported by educational leaders (Eisenberger, et al., 1986). As an example, Maggin, Wehby, Moore-Partin, Robertson, and Oliver (2009) maintained that paraeducators often lack the schooling, experience, or specific training needed to effectively manage the verbally and physically aggressive behaviors of students with EBD. An integrated approach at providing para-educators training was suggested including clearly defining responsibilities, guidance on specific instructional practices and management strategies, and most important, providing consistent and meaningful

evaluative feedback during regularly scheduled collaboration times. In a later study, Maggin, Fallon, Sanetti, and Ruberto (2012) found that paraeducators were able to successfully use behavior intervention strategies when the practices were taught, modeled, observed, and subsequent feedback was given. It was also observed that students with EBD demonstrated fewer aggressive behaviors and increased on-task behaviors after the paraeducators were trained. Brock and Carter (2015) found that paraeducators could provide students support with higher degrees of fidelity when special educators provided training through video modeling, coaching, and feedback. Professional development can be more meaningful and effective when it is interactive, skills are modeled, and coaching is provided when these newly imparted skills are implemented by the trainee ("Five Principles," 2013). Neglecting to provide continuous training and opportunities for feedback could result in inconsistent implementation of learned skills.

Similar to paraeducators, effective training and support could mean the difference between EBD teachers leaving or remaining in the profession. Recent research demonstrated that administrative support such as professional guidance, feedback, opportunities for growth, appreciation, and trust were critical factors in determining the success and job commitment of EBD teachers (Cancio et al., 2013; Eisenberger, et al., 1986). However, study results also indicated that feelings about the responsibilities of the EBD position were not significantly related to administrative support. In other words, there are still factors within the EBD position that can influence EBD teacher attrition rates despite support from administrators.

Support can take many different forms. Elements outside of instructional practices and behavior management skills may indicate success among EBD teachers (Scott, Jolivette, Ennis, & Hirn, 2012). Buttner, Pijl, Bijstra, and Van den Bosch, (2016) determined that there was a direct correlation between teachers' personality traits of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience when compared to the quality of teaching provided to students with EBD. In face to face interviews, veteran EBD teachers reported that job support and being a good fit for the position were factors critical to success (Prather-Jones, 2011). Specifically, the participants in this study identified innate characteristics such as flexibility, adaptability, commitment to students, the ability to not to take student behaviors personally, and the need for intrinsic motivation (because of the lack of recognition from students, parents, colleagues, and administrators) as critical to success. These are personality traits that could be taught in pre-service programing for potential EBD teachers (Kindzierski et al., 2013) or even taken into consideration when assisting college students when selecting a teaching discipline. In addition, this same type of personality training could be afforded to teachers in the form of professional development activities.

Despite the importance placed on personality traits, support at the school level remains critical for EBD teachers. Prather-Jones (2011) advanced that high attrition rates will continue without support from colleagues and administrators. To illustrate, participants in a 2008 qualitative study exploring the attrition rates of special educators named time consuming paperwork (IEPs, BIPs) and difficulties in finding common ground when working with general education teachers as factors that influence the

decision to leave the field (DeMik, 2008). Williams and Dikes (2015) found that special education paperwork and high caseloads attributed to burnout. Sutherland et al., (2005) compared the perceived professional development needs of certified EBD teachers to those on emergency (provisional) certification status in an effort to understand the factors that contribute to the high attrition rates of EBD teachers. The study results indicated that of the participants (90 certified EBD, 19 emergency certified EBD) certified EBD teachers perceived themselves as more competent in areas such as collaborating with colleagues, working with families, and teaching social skills and significantly more equipped in the areas of planning instruction and classroom management. The authors encouraged more rigorous pre-service preparation (college) and in-service training (professional development) for EBD teachers. On the other hand, it was maintained that while intensive university training would better prepare EBD teachers for the classroom, true success would only occur with robust induction programming, formalized mentoring programs, effective materials and curriculum, supportive leadership that recognizes and expects quality instruction, and quality professional development in evidenced based practices. Teachers who rely on professional habits as opposed to research based behavioral management and instructional practices could face difficulties attaining success in the classroom.

While research has demonstrated the need for administrators to provide performance feedback and meaningful professional development, the opportunity to increase professional efficacy is lost if fundamental, behavioral focused and research based strategies are not implemented by staff with fidelity. Conley, Marchant, and

Caldera (2014) compared the common evidenced based behaviors associated with EBD to misconduct identified by teachers as being challenging to manage. The researchers contended that academic difficulties, attention issues, aggression, internalizing problems (Stormont, Herman, & Reinke, 2015), peer relationships, disrespect, and hyperactivity were indicated as behaviors associated with EBD that warrant the provision of evidenced based behavior intervention training to teachers. For example, undesired student behaviors were decreased by 70% by conducting effective functional behavior analyses; however; the success of the intervention would be determined by how well equipped the teacher is to conduct FBAs (Gage, Lewis, & Stichter, 2012). Consultation with specialists can be instrumental in developing teacher understanding of the FBA process and ease apprehensions associated with the inclusion of students with EBD in the general education classroom (Massé, Couture, Levesque, & Bégin, 2013). Moreno, Wong-Lo, and Bullock, (2017) prompted that schools often neglect to keep cultural differences in mind during the FBA process. On the other hand, some research showed that educators have difficulties identifying the most appropriate evidence based interventions despite the usefulness of the information yielded by an FBA (Losinski, Maag, Katsiyannis, & Ennis, 2014). As an illustration, Borgmeier, Loman, Hara, & Rodriguez, (2015) maintained that educators often fail to implement effective behavioral interventions even after appropriately conducting a FBA. In their study, the researchers provided 291 educators with a 60 minute function based intervention (FBI) training on how to identify appropriate behavior interventions based on results of FBAs. Post training results

showed that all of the participants improved dramatically in their ability to make connections between FBAs and effective interventions.

It is very important to understand how to identify and implement research based instructional and behavior management strategies. Hansen, Wills, Kamps, and Greenwood (2014) reported significant increases in time spent on-task and decreases in disruptive behaviors when students with EBD, using self-management strategies, were provided incentives which corresponded to behavior functions identified by a FBA. Additionally, the researchers asserted that this intervention could be established with little outside assistance. Rafferty (2012) discovered similar results where students with EBD demonstrated increased reading fluency when behavioral self-management was prompted by a vibrating electronic device worn on the belt of the pupils. While Kelly and Shogren (2014) also reported behavior improvement of students with EBD after being taught self-management skills, the researchers cautioned that the intervention is highly individualized and requires multiple training sessions for students.

Implementing effective, evidence based strategies to address behavioral and academic needs is an important step in improving the outcomes for students with EBD as well as their teachers (Garwood, & Vernon-Feagans, 2017; Kauffman & Badar, 2013). However, administrators and education policy makers must ensure that the professional development afforded EBD teachers is truly evidence based and not founded on the experiences or perceptions of underqualified trainers. For instance, in practice based professional development (PBPD) teachers are provided face-to-face training in which research based skills are modeled by experts in a specific field (McKeown, FitzPatrick, &

Sandmel, 2014). In turn, the teachers are afforded the opportunity attempt these skills under the guidance of experts. In this case, the training was role specific to the teachers, research based, modeled and practiced with immediate feedback, and most importantly imparted by experts in the field.

It could be argued that there is a breakdown between the evidence based strategies identified by researchers and the application of these practices in classrooms. In a review of 47 websites that provided evidenced based interventions for students with special needs Test, Kemp-Inman, Diegelmann, Hit, and Bethune (2015) found that in 43% of the cases the information was considered untrustworthy. Maggin, Robertson, Oliver, Hollo, and Partin (2010) suggested a transactional framework to guide policy, research, and the evidenced based classroom practices of EBD teachers which would involve the collaboration and sharing of experiences between educational researchers, EBD teachers in the field, and officials who craft education policy. The authors contended that a shared effort between these three groups would help repair disconnect between research based best practices, what is decided at the district or state level, and what occurs in EBD classrooms.

The transactional model is based on interaction between groups or individuals and is not only applicable to improving the best practices of EBD teachers, but the relationship between these teachers and their students. To illustrate, Sutherland and Oswald (2005) also promoted a transactional model; however, in this instance the focus was on verbal communication between teachers and students with EBD. The principle contends that students, in this case students with EBD, impact the classroom environment

through a variety of means such as participating in class or demonstrating inappropriate behaviors. In turn, the instructor interacts with the student by providing information, encouragement, or in worst cases negative feedback. Subsequently, the student responds to the teacher's interaction thus completing the transaction. The researchers advanced that when teachers provide negative or consequential feedback to students there is less time spent on instructional tasks. Marchant and Anderson (2012) compared the interactions between students and teachers to a bank where comments of praise were deposits and reprimands were withdrawals made from the student- teacher relationship (Farkas et al., 2012). In fact, some teacher responses can escalate situations in which the student is acting out, thus further minimizing the time spent on lessons (Sutherland & Oswald, 2005). It is not unusual for students with EBD to also have difficulties processing language, a factor that can also complicate the communication between the teacher and student (Hollo, Wehby, & Oliver, 2014). Stiles (2013) found that social, emotional and behavioral difficulties (SEBD) teachers were largely unaware of the language processing issues their students were experiencing and the detrimental impact this difficulty can have on peer and teacher relations. Over time, this negative pattern of interaction between teachers and students can result in significant academic difficulties for the pupil. Additionally, it could diminish the level of success felt by teachers and at times be very stressful. The need for researched based classroom transactional models for addressing behaviors was described by Sutherland and Oswald (2005) as a critical intervention for both pre-service teachers in college and those currently working for schools. Teachers who are afforded this training will be better equipped to appropriately

manage student behaviors, therefore increasing instructional opportunities for students and decreasing the frustration caused by relying on non-research based approaches to classroom management.

Indeed, the provision of research based strategies can be critical to the growth of students and the professional efficacy of teachers; however, administrators are responsible for ensuring their application. Observation and feedback from administrators and colleagues is needed to ensure that research based classroom management practices are used consistently (Anderson & Hendrickson, 2007; Conroy & Sutherland, 2012). Results from a 2015 study indicated that administrative feedback is an evidenced based practice that can improve the job performance of teachers (Fallon, Collier-Meek, Maggin, Sanetti, & Johnson, 2015). In fact, many teachers may feel that critical feedback from principals is essential to their professional growth (Zatynski, 2012). On the other hand, Douglas Cheney, a contemporary leading voice in the EBD arena stated "I think probably peers are going to be a major part of that because once you put the administrator in there, it stops being feedback and begins being evaluation" during an interview on EBD issues (Teagarden et al., 2013, p. 13). Notwithstanding, feedback from behavioral specialists can be critical in determining the fidelity in which EBD teachers use research based practices to improve student outcomes (Walker, Clancy, Shu-Fei, & Cheney, 2013). Losinski, Maag, Katsiyannis, and Ryan (2015) found that teachers may rely upon preferred means of behavior intervention rather than those which are more effective. In fact, using practices that are not evidenced based could be detrimental to the education of students with EBD (Cumming, 2013). Using the Multi-Option Observation System for

Experimental Studies (MOOSES) computerized observation program, Reinke, Herman, and Stormont (2013) found that only one out of 33 educators used praise more often than reprimands to manage classroom behavior. Additionally, positive correlations were discovered between the use of praise and teacher self-efficacy as well as teacher reports of emotional exhaustion and the amount of harsh reprimands given to students.

Evidence based practices such as school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports (SW-PBIS) to encourage appropriate behaviors in students can be effective. Nonetheless, research indicated that even schools which aspire to implement school wide behavior management programs do so with questionable levels of fidelity (Reinke et al., 2013) and require teacher buy-in (Ennis, Schwab, & Jolivette, 2012). Woodbridge, Sumi, Yu, Rouspil, Javitz, Seeley, & Walker (2014) not only discovered that the successful implementation of a school-based behavior intervention plan required commitment from teachers but that staff members and administrators felt continual training from district level coaches was critical to its effectiveness and the fidelity of its application. In a study of 117 schools, Coffey and Horner (2012) found that administrative support, communication, and data based decision making were the three greatest predictors of SW-PBIS sustainability. The implementation of SW-PBIS in an alternative school which supported students with EBD resulted in a significant decrease in serious behaviors and suspensions; however, the initiative was based on data and the program was frequently reviewed to ensure that staff members were communicating common behavioral expectations to students (Walker & Hoyt, 2015). This means of whole population behavior intervention was discovered to be effective at the general education and self-

contained classroom levels as well (Weeden, Wills, Kottwitz, & Kamps, 2016; Wills, Kamps, Fleming, & Hansen, 2016). Hatton (2013) found that schools with high rates of suspension communicated increased confusion on behavior policies and addressed student behaviors through reprimands and punishments at higher levels when compared to schools with low suspension rates which used incentives and school wide intervention practices to curb undesired behaviors.

Initiatives such as SW-PBIS do have the potential to improve student behaviors. Students with EBD will most likely require programming that is specific to their behavioral needs (Landrum & Sweigart, 2014; Reinke, Stormont, Herman, Wang, Newcomer, & King, 2014). Collaboration with behavior management specialists, PBIS coaches, or consultants could increase the level of effectiveness in which school-wide behavior management systems are employed. Most importantly, having a system in place where teacher behaviors can be monitored and administrators can give feedback is important to increasing the success of teachers and students (Reinke et al., 2013). On the contrary, continuous SW-PBIS training was indicated as more effective in promoting effective school-wide behavior plans than administrator involvement (Andreou, McIntosh, Ross, & Kahn, 2014). Scott, Park, Swain-Bradway, and Landers (2007) explained that teachers need assistance from behavioral specialists to assist them with their own intervention behaviors when managing the behaviors of students with EBD. Behavioral specialists have the expertise required to effectively impart a myriad of research based instructional and behavior management practices to teachers working with challenging students.

Behavioral specialists may suggest many examples of effective behavior management practices. For instance, providing students with specific praise for appropriate behaviors and positive feedback are practices which actively preempt undesired behaviors and encourage students to act in accordance with classroom rules (Briere, Simonsen, Sugai, & Myers, 2015; Myers, Freeman, Simonsen, & Sugai, 2017; Mulcahy et al., 2014; Stevens & Lingo, 2013). As an example, students with EBD demonstrated a significant increase in on-task behaviors and a decrease in disruptive behaviors after teachers were provided a brief (30 minute) professional development on behavior specific praise (BSP) (Allday, Hinkson-Lee, Hudson, Neilsen-Gatti, Kleinke, & Russel, 2012). Similarly, students with behavioral challenges experienced decreases in disruptive behaviors and increases in on-task behaviors after teachers were trained in The Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management (IY TCM) program (Reinke et al., 2014). In IY TCM, teachers are coached, monitored, and provided feedback by behavioral specialists. Interestingly, after receiving the IY TCM training, teachers gave significantly fewer reprimands to students. However, in a review of US and UK based articles centered on the academic engagement of students with EBD, Al-Hendawi (2012) found that past research focused more on acting-out behaviors as it relates to on-task behaviors and often neglected to emphasize the classroom participation of students with EBD who may present more internalizing characteristics (depression). Consequently, some researchers have cautioned that students who demonstrate more internalizing characteristics may be overlooked by educators (Ştefan et al, 2015; Stormont et al., 2015). Landrum and Sweigart (2014) advocated the use of BSP, behavioral momentum

(the practice of making simple requests of students before making a more substantial request), and offering choices as three strategies to use with students with EBD because they are research based and require little training for the teacher. Cortez and Malian (2013) reported significant success through corrective teaching in which students with EBD were provided replacement behaviors for undesired behaviors and then given positive feedback when those replacement behaviors were used. Research conducted by Lingo, Jolivette, and Barton-Arwood, (2009) established that verbal praise coupled with visual feedback (a mark on a behavior chart) was significantly more effective in curbing the disruptive behaviors of students with EBD than verbal praise alone. However, Magsuga-Gage, Simonsen, and Briere (2012) contended that specific praise for appropriate conduct should be related to classroom rules and expectations. Again, recognition for an identified positive behavior can assist EBD teachers in improving the behaviors of students.

Some research focused on effectively training, empowering, and communicating with students with EBD. Losinski, Wiseman, White, and Balluch (2015) reviewed several studies in which video modeling (Haydon, Musti-Rao, McCune, Clouse, McCoy, Kalra, & Hawkins, 2017) of appropriate behaviors reduced challenging behaviors; however, the researchers questioned the validity of some of the studies. Students with EBD can demonstrate improvement in behavior and experience academic growth when given responsibilities such as peer tutoring (Farley et al., 2012; Mulcahy et al., 2014; Mulcahy et al., 2014). However, the EBD teacher must provide them with training and immediate feedback (Wang, Bettini, & Cheney, 2013). Sprouls, Mathur, and Upreti,

(2015) discovered through classroom observations that teachers verbally interacted with students with high levels of inappropriate behaviors more often than those with low levels; however, a significant amount of the interaction was negative. In an England based study on teacher behaviors and students with EBD, Swinson, Woof, and Melling (2003) observed that instructors gave 10 times more positive feedback for work effort than social behaviors and 45 times more negative feedback for social behaviors than class work. Overall, teachers gave students 114 positive comments and 195 negative comments. Interestingly, the researchers noted that students with EBD were particularly well behaved during well planned lessons and showed signs of deteriorating behaviors when lessons were less engaging. In other words, students with EBD can be more successful when teachers craft organized lessons which take disabilities into consideration and provide specific positive feedback (Hirn & Park, 2012). For instance, students with EBD that have a co-occurring diagnosis of ADHD are reported to have significantly greater behavior needs that those with EBD alone, a factor which should be considered when developing instructional programming for these pupils (Wei, Yu, & Shaver, 2014). Professional development in researched based classroom management practices including training in academic and behavioral programing for students with comorbid diagnoses should be studied further; however, teachers must be given regular feedback and guidance from administrators to ensure the level at which these strategies are employed.

Previous research has emphasized the need for teachers to be trained and held accountable for providing positive feedback to students with EBD. Another research

based school of thought is that unwanted behaviors can be decreased by increasing the class participation rates of students with EBD. For instance, when students with EBD are provided frequent opportunities to respond (OTR) to academic tasks there is a decrease in inappropriate behaviors and an increase of on-task behaviors. Sutherland and Wehby (2001) explained that increased OTR allows students to spend more time focusing on academic skills, resulting in greater overall learning outcomes. As an example, the use of response cards where students indicate their answers on individual dry-erase boards (or any predetermined mode) is a research based strategy that can encourage students with EBD (or other disabilities) to participate in class when normally they would be reluctant to do so (Schwab, Tucci, & Jolivette, 2013). Indeed, the use of research based strategies to foster student participation and decrease undesired behaviors can be beneficial for both student and teacher success; however, research shows that teachers of students with EBD use effective instructional strategies inconsistently (Anderson & Hendrickson, 2007). Sutherland and Wehby (2001) recommended that teachers monitor their use of OTR by having colleagues provide feedback after classroom observations or videotaping lessons to develop a better perspective of their teaching practices. Using this type of objective feedback will help teachers understand more clearly that their conduct can have a significant impact on how successful even the best research based practices can be. The behaviors of teachers can influence the behaviors of students, and vice versa (Schonert-Reicht, 2017), in what is called an integrated experience (Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CPI), 2013). Effective teachers should cultivate the pupil/instructor relationship in order to optimize opportunities of success for both parties (Scott et al.,

2012). Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, Stichter, Morgan (2008) maintained that research based behavior interventions for both teachers and pupils were needed in order to promote the success of students with EBD. In particular, increased levels of OTR provided by teachers and the use of praise as opposed to reprimands were discussed as effective means to bolster teacher and student success. Additionally, administrative guidance and support in the implementation of effective behavior management techniques as well as evaluative feedback on those practices were cited as being critical to improving classroom management practices.

Again, evidenced based practices, professional development, and constructive criticism from administrators are noted as supports needed to promote the success of students with EBD and those who teach them. Take the case of Jeffrey, McCurdy, Ewing, and Polis (2009) who examined the application of research based behavior management practices as well as the importance of continuous training and evaluative feedback. In this study, the researchers condensed the most effective behavior management practices into a manual which was used to train nine EBD teachers at the start of the school year. Subsequently, the participants' behavior management practices were observed several times over the school year with written feedback and suggestions given in each instance. By the third observation and feedback exchange, most of the participants demonstrated a significant increase in the usage of research based behavioral management strategies. More importantly, as the usage of these strategies increased, the students' behaviors improved. The researchers implied that teachers working with students with EBD should be trained on how to effectively use research based behavior

management strategies. Additionally, the study indicated that EBD teachers need continuous professional development and routine and meaningful feedback in order to maintain classroom management skills.

Research has demonstrated that meaningful feedback from administrators is important to teachers' professional success. One way that administrators can collect data on teachers' behavior management skills of is by using an electronic data capturing and analyzing program such as MOOSES (Hansen et al., 2014). Shores and Wehby (1999) supported the idea of data collection through MOOSES as an effective means by which to viewing reciprocal interactions between teachers and students as well as students and their peers. The authors maintained that students with EBD participate in relatively few positive social interactions with teachers, largely as a result of inappropriate behaviors. As a consequence, students with EBD are provided fewer opportunities to participate in academic activities (Sutherland & Wehby, 2001). Administrative use of data collecting techniques could assist EBD teachers in increasing positive social interactions with students.

Electronic data collection could help administrators to provide feedback on classroom management. Online technology can also be used to plan for professional development for EBD teachers so that they can maintain these skills. The classroom environment can be influenced by numerous variables (absent students, assemblies, broken air conditioner, etc.), therefore classroom observations must be conducted under a variety of conditions (Lewis, Scott, Wehby, & Wills, 2014). Ultimately, teachers working with students who present disruptive behaviors need training and meaningful

feedback on their ability to maintain a positive classroom environment through the use of specific praise and behavior management practices (Conroy & Sutherland, 2012). .

Even with evaluative tools and continuous feedback, administrators still need an organized approach for teachers with behavior management needs. Research based methods like multi-tiered support (MTS) could assist administrators in supporting teachers' behavior management skills. Simonsen, MacSuga-Gage, Briere, Freeman, Myers, Scott, and Sugai (2014) described the MTS process as providing teachers with classroom management training and then giving additional support to teachers who continue to struggle in this area. At that point, teachers who find behavior management challenging would be guided through interventions with the assistance and monitoring of administrators.

Professional development in classroom management and regular consultation with behavioral experts is important to the success of MTS (Simonsen et al., 2014). Mathur, Estes, and Johns (2012) suggested that EBD teachers could also access alternative professional supports such as webinars and conferences, but regular administrative assessment of classroom management skills were still critical to decreasing inappropriate student behaviors and increasing teacher success in behavior management (Jeffrey et al., 2009; Shores and Wehby, 1999; Simonsen et al., 2014; Sutherland et al., 2008; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001).

Job Benefits/Amenities

Past research has shown that even with appropriate training and administrative support, EBD teachers may still have genuine concerns about their physical and mental

well-being. Maslow (1943) stated that humans need safety and security in order to progress through the rest of the stages of human development. Eisenberger, et al., (1986) argued that levels of organizational commitment can depend on how deeply employees feel the organization cares for their well-being. Although effective college preparation and appropriate job supports can increase confidence among EBD teachers (Benson & Dundis, 2003; Pritchard & Gidman, 2012; Pulasinghage, 2010; Udechukwu, 2009), the physical and mental stressors of the workplace would surely act as barriers to the attainment of safety needs. Without the satisfaction of safety needs EBD teachers may find it challenging to obtain feelings of security and confidence (Eisenberger, et al., 1986; Maslow, 1943).

Mental and physical health factors can cause EBD teachers to quit the profession entirely. After a review of 339 articles regarding the influence of workplace stress on the decision of EBD teachers to leave the profession, Wrobel (1993) found that EBD teachers are frequently under-credentialed and have less experience than other teachers. The author stressed the importance of training for EBD teachers that focuses on mental and physical health and develops awareness about the symptoms of burnout.

Zysberg, Orenshtein, Gimmon, and Robinson, (2017) showed a positive correlation between stress levels and burnout rates in teachers. Scanlon and Barnes-Holmes (2013) showed that teachers had significantly more negative attitudes toward students with EBD than non-disabled students. After stress management training, teachers' attitudes toward EBD students improved, and improvement was more marked after receiving behavior management training (Scanlon & Barnes-Holmes, 2013).

Shyman (2011) determined that role conflict, emotional demands, and a lack of supervisor support were the greatest predictors of emotional exhaustion in the workplace for paraeducators. Giving paraeducators opportunities to discuss feelings of frustration could reduce emotional exhaustion and increase career longevity. Ansley, Houchins, and Varjas (2016) maintained that special educators may report increased levels of physiological symptoms associated with job stress such as headaches, stomach pain, and high blood pressure.

Albrecht et al., (2009) emphasized the physical and mental well-being of those who work with EBD students. The researchers conducted a mixed-method study examining the working conditions that influenced EBD teachers to remain in the profession or leave. The survey results from the 776 participants indicated that those who intended to leave the position within two years cited lack of administrative support, burn-out, dissatisfaction with the job, and inconsistent paraeducator support as factors that influenced their decisions. 70.7% of EBD teachers who indicated their intentions to leave were relatively new to the job. Over half of the participants responded that they were required to use physical restraint on students in crisis situations, while an equal number reported that they had been physically injured by students. Cancio, Albrecht, and Johns, (2013) suggested that principals should be aware of the stress levels of EBD teachers.

Students served under IDEA (special education students) are approximately 12% of the total student population, but they represent 75% of the student population who must be physically restrained (U.S department of Education for Civil Rights (CRDC),

2014). Williams and Ernst (2016) concluded that special educators were physically attacked by students more often than all other teaching disciplines. It is likely that EBD teachers would be the first to intervene in a situation with a physically aggressive student, a circumstance that can be traumatic for all parties involved.

Supporting EBD teachers is critical to their well-being as well as their professional success. Experts in the field highly recommend that EBD teachers develop professional relationships (Zabel, Teagarden, Taff, 2014). Comprehensive induction programs including support from mentors, colleagues, and administrators help novice EBD teachers to grow and succeed in the field. Albrecht et al. (2009) maintained that EBD teachers could manage stress levels independently through diet, exercise, and getting enough rest. EBD teachers who have the ability to cope with stressful events and emotions, the ability to accept limitations in self and others, and physical fitness reported lower levels of stress (Center & Steventon, 2001). In this study, Center and Steventon (2001) maintained that other disciplines of special educators share many of the same stressors as EBD teachers, but EBD teachers reported higher levels of disrespect from other teachers, lack of parent involvement, inconsistently skilled paraeducators, legal issues, student violent behaviors, and a lack of collaboration between outside supporting agencies.

Regular use of stress screening instruments could help administrators to identify and EBD teacher burnout and create professional development that addresses this issue. Solomon and Thomas (2013) emphasized the need for principals to address the emotional requirements of EBD teachers by validating feelings of stress and hopelessness. In an

interview about the wellness of teachers, Adam Saenz, author of *The Power of a Teacher*, emphasized that schools often fail to support the physical and mental health of teachers as well as their financial and professional fitness (Hewson, 2013). On the other hand, Cavin (1998) argued that EBD teachers need to govern their own mental health by being flexible, spending time with family, working on hobbies, interacting with general education students, taking mental health days, and leaving school problems at school at the end of the day. Novice EBD teachers reported that flexibility, humor, and monitoring one's mental and physical fitness were prerequisites for the position (Kindzierski et al., 2013). Similarly, Ho (2017) found that higher levels of humor correlated to lower levels of emotional exhaustion and greater feelings of accomplishment. EBD teachers who disregard the importance of their physical and mental well-being could be vulnerable to burnout and dissatisfaction with the job.

Workplace burnout can have serious implications for employees. Strained personal relationships, difficulty sleeping, emotional fatigue, increased use of alcohol and other substances, and physiological discomfort are physical and mental symptoms associated with the EBD position (Cancio & Conderman, 2008). Suh (2016) recounted the characteristics of teacher burnout include: depersonalization, depression, absenteeism, or even divorce. Administrators should be aware of signs of burnout in staff members (Fiorilli, Albanese, Gabola, & Pepe, 2017). Interestingly, some of these symptoms are reminiscent of those associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Cancio and Conderman (2008) suggested that EBD teachers could manage work-related stress through yoga, massage therapy, social

interaction, and cultivating hobbies. The authors also suggested preserving positive relationships with administrators and participating in EBD teacher support groups as ways to alleviate stress.

Summary and Conclusions

EBD teacher attrition is a complex phenomenon. Efforts to retain EBD teachers in their positions may influence preparatory programs and college curricula, recruitment and hiring practices (Berry et al., 2011), EBD teachers themselves, and students with EBD (Crawford & Simonoff, 2003; Wynne, Ausikaitis, & Satchwell, 2013). Because of the number of stakeholders, this study has the potential to generate positive social change on a variety of levels.

The results of this study could also ease the burden of constantly hiring new EBD teachers that many school districts currently struggle with. Decreasing EBD teacher turnover could free up funds currently used for hiring and recruitment. EBD teachers themselves could be more secure in their employment (Bordea & Pellegrini, 2014; Haid & Seiffge-Krenke, 2013) and less prone to the effects of the job's mental and physical stresses (Cancio & Conderman, 2008; Suh, 2016).

Most importantly, this study could help to provide more educational consistency for students with EBD. These students can present a variety of mental and psychiatric disorders (Hallahan et al., 2014; Place, Wilson, Martin, & Hulsmeier, 2000) and anti-social behaviors (Kindzierski, O'dell, Marable, & Raimondi, 2013; Sacks & Kern, 2007). The outlook for students with EBD is often grim (Houchins, Shippen, McKeand, Viel-

Ruma, Jolivette, & Guarino, 2010) and the EBD teacher can often be one of the most consistent factors their lives (Poulou, 2004).

This review of the literature showed that EBD teachers are not consistently given the college preparation, job support, or emotional and bodily protection needed in order to be successful. Many teachers may not be meeting their basic safety and security needs (Maslow, 1943) and therefore cannot fully develop as professionals or increase their commitment to schools (Eisenberger, et al., 1986). If these needs continue to go unmet, EBD teachers' attrition rates may remain high.

Past research has used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies identify factors attributed to the high attrition rates of EBD teachers. However, previous research often focused on why EBD teachers leave the profession and offered suggestions on what is needed to increase career longevity in this field from the vantage point of researchers. This study aimed to address a gap in research on EBD teacher attrition rates by identifying what college preparation, job supports, and job benefits/amenities factors EBD teachers believe are important to increasing career longevity in this field. Chapter 3 of this project describes the methodology that was employed to determine the factors needed to increase the career longevity rates of EBD teachers.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Research conducted by professional organizations indicates that EBD teachers demonstrate some of the highest attrition rates of any teaching discipline (AAEE, 2000, 2004, 2010, 2015). Studies have shown that inadequate preservice experiences (Berry, Petrin, Gravelle, & Farmer, 2011; Billingsley et al., 2006), insufficient workplace support and training (Albrecht et al., 2009), and stress factors associated with the position (Center & Steventon, 2001; Short & Bullock, 2013) influence teachers' decisions to leave their positions. Consequently, states and human resources departments must continually replace EBD teachers, a time consuming and costly task (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014; Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007). The process of replacing these teachers too often results in underqualified staff being placed in one of the most challenging teaching positions (Berry et al. 2011; Sutherland et al., 2005). Additionally, EBD teachers who leave must obtain alternative employment, which can be stressful.

The most important consequence of high EBD teacher attrition is that students with EBD are denied the educational programming consistency that comes with having the same teacher in place. This situation is a concern to educational experts because of the potential negative educational and behavioral outcomes for this group of students (Poulou, 2004; Ryan & Rozalski, 2013). From a public policy perspective, this makes it difficult to fulfill the mandates of initiatives such as NCLB (2002) and IDEA (2004), which guarantee that students with special needs will have the same access to a quality education as their nondisabled counterparts.

The literature review revealed that previous researchers typically focused on why EBD teachers elect to leave the teaching profession but seldom asked what resources these teachers need in order to stay in the profession. The effectiveness of college preparatory programing, levels of job support, and the stressors of the EBD position are major themes associated with EBD teacher attrition (Albrecht et al., 2009; Berry et al., 2011; Billingsley et al., 2006; Center & Steventon, 2001; Prather-Jones, 2011; Short & Bullock, 2013). However, previous researchers seldom identified what EBD teachers feel is needed in order for them to remain in the position for longer periods of time. The purpose of the current study was to identify what college preparation, job supports, and job benefit/amenities EBD teachers perceived as necessary to increase their career longevity. Specifically, I sought to determine whether there was a difference in the identified support needs of EBD teachers who planned to leave their positions and those who intended to stay in them. The remainder of Chapter 3 is devoted to presenting the research design and methodology as well as providing an overview of the sample population, instrumentation, and data analysis procedures. I also discuss threats to validity and ethical considerations for this study.

Research Design and Rationale

This quantitative study was correlational in nature. Data were collected and analyzed to determine what independent variables (college preparation, job supports, and job amenities/benefits) EBD teachers identified as being important to career longevity. The study used a purposeful random sampling strategy to determine the perceptions of a random sample of EBD teachers without the manipulation of variables or the introduction

of an intervention. This was accomplished via a survey to ascertain the attitudes of the sample EBD teacher population. Fink (2003) maintained that a survey design may be used to identify trends or attitudes within a sample population with which researchers can make generalizations.

The study's main research question focused on identifying differences in the college preparation, job support, and job benefits/amenities factors between EBD teachers planning on remaining in the profession and those intending to leave. This broad research question was broken into three smaller research questions. The alignment of individual survey items with the research questions can be found in Appendix J. The following research questions guided the study:

Research Question 1: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified college preparation needs of leavers and stayers?

$H_1$1: There will be a statistically significant difference between the identified college preparation needs of leavers and stayers.

$H_0$1: There will not be a statistically significant difference between the identified college preparation needs of leavers and stayers.

Research Question 2: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers?

$H_1$2: There will be a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers.

H_0 2: There will not be a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers.

Research Question 3: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers?

$H_1$3: There will be a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers.

$H_0$3: There will not be a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers.

A survey design was the preferred method for answering these research questions for several reasons. Cost was one factor. An experimental study was not a financially viable option, but surveys are significantly less expensive to create and disseminate (Karamehic-Muratovic, 2013). Additionally, there were time and logistical factors to consider. I could not implement an intervention or manipulate variables since I was not in a position to introduce or influence EBD college preparatory programs or job supports within schools. Conducting an experimental study would have been a labor intensive endeavor; and using survey methodology provided a quick turnaround in responses (Wejnert & Heckathorn, 2008). Several researchers (Adera & Bullock, 2009; Berry et al., 2011; Billingsley et al., 2006; Gersten et al., 2001) have demonstrated that a survey methodology is an appropriate means by which to advance knowledge in education.

Methodology

This section centers on the methodology used in this study. The sample population; sampling procedures; and procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection will be discussed in this section. Additionally the development of the survey instrument and the pilot study process are discussed in this section.

Population

The sample population for this study consisted of EBD teachers. The Council for Children with Behavior Disorders (CCBD), which has a membership of over 2,200, was the main source of the participants. Additional participants were solicited from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Community All-Member Forum (over 22,800 members), as well as members of Facebook advocacy groups for children with special needs including Special Education Teachers (18,832 members), National Association of Special Education Teachers (6,550 members), Alliance for Behavior and Communication (56 members), Ontario Special Education Teachers (2,899 members), DBT Peer Connections: Dialectical Behavior Therapy Support Group (6,081 members), Educators of Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (69 members), and Special Educators (6,019 members). The potential sample population consisted of approximately 65,500 people. However, it is not likely that the sample population was actually 65,000 individuals, since many members of these groups may have other positions such as college professors, special education generalists, school administrators, former EBD teachers, general education teachers, school psychologists and counselors, or EBD enthusiasts.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

I invited all EBD teachers who are members of the CCBD , CEC Community, and the Facebook advocacy groups Special Education Teachers, National Association of Special Education Teachers, National Association of Special Education Teachers, Alliance for Behavior and Communication, Ontario Special Education Teachers, DBT

Peer Connections: Dialectical Behavior Therapy Support Group, Educators of Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, and Special Educators to take part in this survey study. This sampling strategy had the potential to elicit responses from participants who were not EBD teachers: educators, mental health therapists, school psychologists, school administrators, college professors, special needs advocates, or parents. Since the survey was made available online via the organization's websites, newsletters, and social media, anyone with access to the internet could have participated in the study.

A purposeful random sampling strategy was used. EBD teachers were the target population, and each potential participant had an equal opportunity to participate; however, this was partially dependent upon the willingness of the CCBD leadership to disseminate the study survey to members. This aspect of the sampling methodology was discussed with the CCBD leadership, and they tentatively agreed to participate in the study after receiving Walden IRB approval (Appendix F). This aspect of the recruitment methodology relinquished some control of the sampling process, but it further secured participants' anonymity. Participants solicited via Facebook open forum groups also had an equal opportunity to participate in the study and were also given the same guarantee of anonymity.

The sampling strategy could have yielded an indefinite number of EBD teacher respondents because it was dependent upon the participants' willingness to participate in the study. Cancio et al. (2013) were able to successfully conduct a study including EBD teachers who belonged to the CCBD as the sample population. In the case of this current

study, there was a high level of correspondence between the sample population and the sampling frame because all EBD teachers who are members of the CCBD had the potential to be included in the study (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008) along with EBD teachers who were members of Facebook advocacy groups for children with special needs. There were no exclusion criteria because I wanted to get responses from as many EBD teachers as possible within the sampling frame. However, all members of the sample population were not necessarily current EBD teachers. General special educators, school psychologists, and education leaders, among others, are members of the CCBD and the Facebook advocacy groups. The survey invitation and the informed consent both clearly stated that only current practicing EBD teachers should respond, and the first survey item asked if the respondent was currently employed as an EBD teacher. Responses from individuals who were not currently employed as an EBD teacher were discarded.

EBD teachers who are provisionally or emergency certified were also excluded because they do not have the traditional education and training that fully-certified teachers have (Billingsley et al., 2006). The responses from provisionally certified EBD teachers could have proven instrumental in identifying factors that would increase career longevity rates, especially for inexperienced teachers, but data from emergency or provisionally certified EBD teachers were not included in the statistical analysis for this current project.

Participants belonging to professional organizations or advocacy groups might have more experience and greater job commitment than those who do not. When Cancio

et al. (2013) conducted their study on the administrative supports needed by EBD teachers they obtained their sample population through the CCBD. They found that approximately 75% of their participants indicated plans to remain in the EBD position until retirement. The authors attributed this high figure to the possibility that teachers who belong to professional organizations would demonstrate a higher level of commitment to the discipline. Using CCBD members and Facebook special education advocacy groups as the sample populations for this study could have similarly led to inaccurate findings. This study sought to determine what supports are needed by EBD teachers who are struggling in the field and those who are comfortable with the position.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The CCBD was contacted via email in a multi-step process similar to that suggested by Salant and Dillman (1994). The email contained my introduction, an explanation of the study, and a request to disseminate the electronic survey link to CCBD members (Appendixes F and G). The email also assured anonymity for potential participants, since no names or personally identifying information was needed (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). This practice served to protect identities of participants. The CCBD's willingness to forward the electronic survey link to its members was crucial to the success of this study. The CCBD leadership indicated through previous correspondence that upon IRB approval they would post the survey link on their website (Appendix K), include it in their newsletter (Appendix L), and disseminate it via Facebook (Appendix M) and Twitter (Appendix N). This process

allowed the CCBD to have more control over the survey's spread, although the organization's leadership did not know which EBD teachers participated.

Upon IRB approval I sent the informed consent form via email to the CCBD council. That form contained a link to the survey (Appendix F) via Survey Monkey (Survey Monkey, 2014). The CCBD was thus able to disseminate a link to the informed consent letter and survey along with a description of the study for interested participants.

A web-based survey approach was implemented for several reasons. An online survey had no mail to open or send, perhaps increasing the response rate. Using a web-based survey also avoided the delays and costs of using traditional mail and minimized data entry errors (Nesbary, 2000; Sue & Ritter, 2007). Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) maintained that a survey can improve the internal consistency of a study because generalizations regarding the responses are based on a series of items rather than only a few data points, further diminishing the chance that other factors are influencing the study.

The EBD teachers were given eight weeks to complete the survey. Upon completion, participants electronically submitted the survey, and their role in the study was officially completed with no need for further correspondence. While the participants were not required to sign a letter of consent, their agreement to participate in the study was indicated by their submission of the survey.

The last email sent in this process was a thank-you note to the CCBD for its agreement to participate in the study and their help in its execution. A copy of the executive summary of the study findings will be sent to the CCBD at the conclusion of

my dissertation. They will be allowed to disseminate the results to the CCBD membership if they choose to do so.

Relatively few responses were recorded after the survey had been advertised by the CCBD for four weeks. In an effort to increase the response rate, I publicized the survey to several Facebook groups that advocate for students with special needs: Special Education Teachers, National Association of Special Education Teachers, National Association of Special Education Teachers, Alliance for Behavior and Communication, Ontario Special Education Teachers, DBT Peer Connections, Dialectical Behavior Therapy Support Group, Educators of Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, and Special Educators. This expansion of the sample population only occurred after IRB approval. For each Facebook group, the study was announced in the community forum where a description of the study, informed consent, a guarantee of anonymity, and a link to the survey were provided. These EBD teachers were only given four weeks to complete the survey because the study had already begun. Upon completion, participants electronically submitted the survey by clicking the submit button, and the participants' role in the study was officially completed with no need for future correspondence. While the participants were not required to sign a letter of consent, their agreement to participate in the study was indicated by their submission of the survey.

The survey required participants to rate the importance of items related to college preparation, job support, and job benefits/amenities (independent variables). Additionally, the survey contained items asking participants to provide demographic information. Participants were asked about their employment in EBD education, how

many years they had been an EBD teacher, what type of EBD certification they possessed, and how many years they planned on remaining in the EBD position (dependent variable). Demographic information such as age, gender, or ethnicity was not pertinent to this current research and therefore was not included in the survey.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

In the following section of Chapter 3, I describe the instrumentation and operationalization of constructs used in this study. I also describe the rationale and methods for developing the survey. This section also contains a description of the study's validity and reliability, the pilot survey, and the data analysis plan.

Validity and reliability. The survey instrument for this study was an original creation. An extensive review of past and current literature revealed that no survey existed which would have provided answers to the research questions. The survey was based on previous surveys and specific variables identified in the literature review, but any untested instrument could lack validity and reliability. I took several steps in order to improve the validity and reliability of the survey. The survey was designed in the same fashion as others used in similar studies, and in some cases I used components of those surveys (Creswell, 2009). The phrasing of some items came from the Teacher Turnover Survey, originally created by Miller (2014) for a dissertation on teacher turnover rates. My survey had phrasing that asked participants to indicate what supports would promote longevity in the EBD position as opposed to Miller's (2014) method of determining which factors would cause teachers to leave the profession. The Teacher Turnover Survey (Miller, 2014) was validated through a Delphi technique, in which it was

reviewed by teaching experts (Portney & Watkins, 2000). Additionally, Cronbach's alpha (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008) was employed to further support the validity, reliability, and internal consistency of the instrument.

While the phrasing of survey items for this current study was reverse-modeled after the Teacher Turnover Survey (Miller, 2014), it had a similar format to the Novice Teacher Support Structure Evaluation Survey (NTSSES). The NTSSES was created by Warsame (2011) for a dissertation studying the effectiveness of support systems for new teachers. The survey organizes the various factors of new teacher supports into separate components. This resembles the survey instrument for the current study, which separated the three different independent variables into individual categories. The NTSSES has different sections for administrative support, mentor support, and professional development. This survey was subdivided into components for college support, job supports, and job benefits/amenities. Warsame's (2011) survey used a five-point Likert scale with the choices of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree. The survey for this research also contained a five-point Likert scale using these same answer choices.

Creswell (2009) maintained that the use or modification of any existing survey instrument requires researchers to gain permission from the developer. I gained permission from both Miller (Teacher Turnover Survey, 2014) and Warsame (NTSSES, 2011) to use components of their surveys and to adapt them to the specific factors of this study. The permissions from Miller and Warsame can be found in Appendixes A and B.

Lastly, my own qualifications lend credibility to my ability to design an effective survey instrument. I was an EBD teacher for seven years, and I worked in special education for a total of 18 years. I have been the special education coordinator for the Japan District Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) schools for the last seven years. This expertise allows me to create a survey that would answer this project's research questions.

Pilot survey. A pilot study was conducted to further improve the validity and reliability of the self-created survey instrument (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Hallahan & Rosenthal, 1996). Initially, the survey was to be administered to five to ten EBD teachers located within the Walden research participant group (Appendix G). However, after posting the pilot study announcement through the Walden research participant group, I was not contacted by any interested participants. Accordingly, a Request for Change in Procedures form was sent to the IRB proposing a new procedure to contact pilot study participants. The request for change in procedures was approved by the IRB, which allowed me to contact current and former EBD teachers from public and private institutions. I contacted a variety of public school systems, private schools, alternative schools, and private organizations which support troubled youth in the effort to generate a pilot study panel of experts via email (Appendix D). I was able to enlist the participation of a panel of experts with knowledge and experience in this area. I included a description and purpose of the study as well as the informed consent and instructions for participation in the email.

This method of obtaining pilot study participants increased the likelihood of finding a representative sample of EBD teachers from a variety of states with varying educational backgrounds. This may ultimately result in a more comprehensively developed survey instrument. Sampling a small group of EBD teachers from a specific state or school district could have resulted in a narrow scope due to common training or similar experiences.

Interested participants were asked to email me directly. I sent the pilot survey to the participants in the form of a Word document. The email also included an invitation, an explanation of the survey, a guarantee of confidentiality, and a letter of informed consent. However, the fact that the pilot study participants contacted me directly via email did not ensure their anonymity. Names and email addresses were kept confidential, and anonymity was guaranteed in the consent letter.

The pilot survey was in the form of a Word document, which allowed the participants to make written comments before returning it. Pilot study participants were asked to complete the survey items and to offer feedback on how the survey could be improved. The pilot study participants returned the completed surveys to me via either email or the U.S Postal Service. Envelopes that contained the participant's addresses were destroyed. The informed consent form stated that participants would demonstrate their willingness to participate in the pilot study by completing and returning the survey. The pilot study was conducted in order to receive survey feedback from a panel of those with EBD experience in order to promote an improvement in the survey wording and

organization. The pilot study was not conducted to make statistical comparisons between leavers and stayers.

The pilot survey contained items about demographic information, college preparation, job support, and job amenities/benefits as well as a section for participant feedback. I had planned on using this feedback to improve the organization and wording of the survey. I also conducted an item analysis of the pilot survey responses to further verify validity and reliability and to modify any items that yielded inconsistent statistical results. The results of the pilot study are discussed in Chapter 4.

Survey instrument. The survey created for this study consisted of five sections. It can be found in Appendix C. The alignment of individual survey items with the research questions can be found in Appendix H. The first survey section contains demographic items, including current status as an EBD teacher, years as an EBD teacher, type of EBD certification possessed, and how long they planned on remaining in the EBD position. For the purposes of this study, participants who wished to remain in the position for seven years or more or until retirement were labeled *stayers* while those who responded that they would remain in the position for three years or less were labeled *leavers* (DeMik, 2008; George & George, 1995).

Sections two, three, and four of the survey (Appendix C) contain items directly related to the independent variables college preparation, job support, and job benefits/amenities. The participants indicated how strongly they thought a survey item would increase their EBD career longevity by providing responses on a five-point Likert

scale (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). In this case, the Likert scale response choices were strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Survey section two starts with a focus on college preparation. Examples of some of the items found within this section include classes devoted to behavior management; longer student teaching experiences with students with EBD; and classes devoted to teaching social and emotional skills (SEL). The participants indicated whether they strongly agree, agree, are undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree that the support would increase their career longevity as an EBD teacher.

Section three of the survey centers on job supports. Examples of the some of the items found within this section include regular feedback from administrators on behavior management; training in non-violent physical restraint methods; and professional development from behavior specialists. Participants indicated whether they strongly agree, agree, are undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree that the support would increase their career longevity as an EBD teacher.

Section four of the survey addressed job amenities and benefits. Examples of some of the items found within this section include free stress management counseling for EBD teachers, free gym memberships to maintain physical fitness, and higher salaries considering the challenges of the position. Like survey sections two and three, the participants indicated whether they strongly agree, agree, are undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree that the support would increase their career longevity as an EBD teacher.

Section five of the survey provided participants with the opportunity to give additional information about their perceptions regarding the supports needed to increase their career longevity as EBD teachers. The items found in sections two, three, and four are not an exhaustive list of the possible supports EBD teachers could feel are important to career longevity. An opportunity for the participants to express their own thoughts might determine what supports would promote the career longevity of EBD teachers. Survey section five did not have a Likert scale; instead, it had a space for open-ended responses.

The research questions for this study sought to determine if EBD teachers who planned on leaving the profession responded differently than those who intended to stay on questions about factors of college preparation, job supports, and job benefits/amenities. Considering that the survey specifically asked the participants what the college preparation, job supports, and job benefits/amenities were needed to promote their career longevity as an EBD teacher, the survey instrument sufficiently addressed the research questions.

Data analysis plan. The respondents submitted the EBD Teacher Support Survey electronically by clicking on the "Done" button upon completion. This data collection used the method outlined by Kazan (2010). The response data were automatically housed in the established Survey Monkey profile. Subsequently, the data was downloaded from Survey Monkey, transferred to an Excel spread sheet, and then imported to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). I used SPSS (IBM, 2014) to conduct statistical analyses on the data in order to determine relationships between the dependent and

independent variables. The following research questions and corresponding hypotheses guided this study:

Research Question 1 – Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified college preparation needs of leavers and stayers?

$H_0$1: There will not be a statistically significant difference between the identified college preparation needs of leavers and stayers.

Research Question 2: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers?

$H_1$2: There will be a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers.

$H_0$2: There will not be a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers.

Research Question 3: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers?

$H_1$3: There will be a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers.

$H_0$3: There will not be a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers.

Before any statistical analyses were conducted, the data were coded and cleaned to ensure that they accurately addressed the research questions (Green and Salkind, 2014). The wording of individual survey items in the SPSS "names" column were abbreviated to ensure that they fit appropriately in the data output. These survey items

included demographic queries as well as the actual survey questions about college preparation, job supports, and job benefit/amenities. Additionally, the responses for section five of the survey, in which participants could provide their own perception of EBD teacher needs, was removed from the data set. These responses were copy pasted into a Microsoft Word document and sorted between leavers and stayers. Finally, I created an additional variable column in which each participant was designated a unique case number.

The next phase of data preparation involved defining variables. Answer possibilities within each factor on the survey were assigned a numerical value for identification during statistical analyses (Green and Salkind, 2014). Each value in the demographics section of the survey was given a numerical designation. Most importantly, the responses to "How many years do you plan on staying in the EBD field?" were defined numerically. There were five possible responses to this survey item: "I plan on leaving the EBD field as soon as possible," "1-3 years," "4-6 years," "7-10 years," and "Until retirement". The responses "leaving the EBD field as soon as possible" or "staying for 1-3 years" were defined as 1, indicating leavers. The responses "staying for 7-10 years" or "until retirement" were defined as 2, indicating stayers. The response "4-6 years" was not given a numerical definition and was not included in the statistical analyses as it was viewed as the defining line between leavers and stayers.

Finally, individual survey items for each independent variable (college preparation, job support, job benefits/amenities) were combined in order to make an overall means scale for each group. Using the transform and compute functions in SPSS,

a new variable titled “college” was created for college preparation survey items (5-16). The same process was completed for job support items (17-30) and job benefit/amenities items (31-41), titled “support” and “amenities” respectively. The SPSS data set then contained variables that could be analyzed to determine the difference in means and significance for individual survey items within the three scales. It could also determine the differences in means and significance between the scales themselves. The results of these statistical analyses can be seen in Chapter 4.

After the survey variables were coded and defined, I used several data cleaning procedures in order to avoid misrepresentations in the statistical findings. The first phase of data cleaning was to remove incomplete surveys. There were relatively few incomplete surveys submitted. The removal of incomplete responses had no impact on the study as those cases were not meant to be included in the statistical analyses to begin with.

The second phase of the data cleaning process was to remove responses from participants who were not currently employed as EBD teachers. The focus of this study was on EBD teacher views. Including responses from non-EBD teacher participants could have contaminated the sample population.

The next step of the data cleaning process was to remove responses from emergency or provisionally certified EBD teachers were removed. This study aimed to discover which factors that EBD teachers indicated would increase career longevity. EBD teachers with emergency or provisional licenses lack the required college classes and student teaching required to be a fully certified EBD teacher. They would therefore

not be able to respond to survey items regarding college preparation because they do not have the traditional college preparation and preservice experiences of certified EBD teachers.

Emergency and provisionally certified EBD teachers were included in the study in the first place for two reasons. I requested that the CCBD disseminate the survey to all of its members, and to ask that the survey only be sent to certified EBD teachers might have required additional research for the CCBD, which may have resulted in their reluctance participate in the study. Although emergency or provisionally certified EBD teachers do not have the same college preparatory experiences as certified EBD teachers, they do have on the job experience, which may give insight into job supports and benefits needed to increase career longevity for novice EBD teachers, an issue which warrants scholarly research in itself.

Next, responses were removed from those who plan on remaining in the EBD profession for 4-6 years. Responses that indicated plans to remain in the EBD position for 4-6 years were designated as the qualifying distinguisher between leavers (leaving as soon as possible and 1-3 years) and stayers (remaining in the position for 7-10 years or until retirement). They were therefore excluded from the statistical analyses.

Normally, the removal of outliers from the data set would be the final stage of data cleaning. Outliers are responses that are statistically different from other responses and could possibly skew the results of statistical analyses (Field, 2013). A boxplot was created using the descriptive statistics and explore functions in SPSS in order to find any outliers between the college, support, and amenities scales. The boxplot indicated that

the scale "college" contained a single statistically significant outlier, while the support and amenities scales demonstrated outliers of no statistical significance. I ultimately decided to keep the outlier in the data set for several reasons. After the cleaning process, there were few data that could be used for statistical analyses. G-Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner & Lang, 2009) indicated that a sample size of 128 participants (64 leavers, 64 stayers) would be necessary in order to conduct the statistical analyses between two groups and three variables. The rate of participation for this study was significantly lower. Considering the limited data, I felt it necessary to include the outlier in the data set. The outlier was only significant in one of the three scales. In order to determine the ultimate impact of the outlier on the statistical analyses, I conducted independent-samples *t*-tests including and excluding outliers for individual survey items within the three scales (college, preparation, amenities) and for the scales themselves. The tests including the outlier resulted in lower means scores in individual items and scales. The tests excluding the outlier resulted in higher means scores in individual items and scales. The exclusion of the outlier did not result in statistically significant test results between individual items or scales in either case. Considering the limited sample, the fact that a single outlier was only noted in one out of three scales, and the inclusion of the outlier did not cause a statistically significant result in individual or scale items it was determined to leave the outlier in the data set when conducting final statistical analyses. The results of the statistical analyses in Chapter 5 will include data from the outlier.

After incomplete survey responses, responses from non-EBD teachers, and responses from EBD teachers with emergency or provisionally certified EBD teachers

had been removed, the remainder of the data were analyzed using SPSS (IBM, 2014) to compare the survey responses of leavers and stayers regarding factors needed to promote career longevity. I was particularly interested in the factors identified by leavers as important to career longevity.

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to determine if the mean scores of survey responses of leavers and stayers were significantly different when compared to the independent variables of college preparation, job support, and job benefits/amenities. Because the purpose of this study was not predictive, no regression analyses were completed. For the interest of this research, the operational definitions for the independent variables and other pertinent research terms are reiterated here:

Career longevity: The number of years teachers remain in the EBD discipline (Prather-Jones, 2011).

College preparation: The college level curriculum, courses, and pre-service experiences (student teaching) EBD teachers are afforded (Oliver & Reschly, 2010).

Job supports: A variety of processes and mechanisms put in place to support the success of the employee. Examples would include, but are not limited to, encouragement and feedback from administrators (Cancio et al., 2013), professional development (Berry et al., 2011; Sutherland et al., 2005), mentoring programs (Albrecht et al., 2009; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013) and/or the provision of supports that allow EBD teachers to perform their duties more effectively and successfully.

Job benefits/amenities: A variety of incentives provided to increase job commitment. Examples could include, but are not limited to, tuition reimbursement

(Thornton, Peltier, & Medina, 2007), moving expenses, counseling services (Shyman, 2011), higher salaries, mental health days (Cavin, 1998 Hewson, 2013), hazard pay, or free gym memberships.

Leavers: EBD teachers who plan on voluntarily leaving the EBD teaching discipline within three years (DeMik, 2008; George & George, 1995).

Stayers: EBD teachers who plan on remaining in the EBD teaching discipline for seven years or more (DeMik, 2008; George & George, 1995).

Green and Salkind (2014) contended that the independent-samples *t*-test can be used to determine if responses on test variables vary significantly between two groups. Wilhite and Bullock (2012) utilized an independent-samples *t*-test to determine the effectiveness of a behavioral intervention between two groups of students with EBD. Demirkaya and Bakkaloglu (2015) employed an independent-samples *t*-test in determining the difference between teacher relationships with students with disabilities and non-disabled pupils. In a 2011 study, Caglar used an independent-samples *t*-test to determine that there were statistically significant differences between male and female teachers in job confidence and burnout levels. Numerous studies have exercised independent-samples *t*-tests in the effort to compare the statistical differences between two groups and independent variables (Field, 2013).

Several assumptions must be met in order for the results of an independent-samples *t*-test statistical analysis to be trustworthy. Green and Salkind (2014) maintained, "The test variable are normally distributed in each of the two populations (as defined by the grouping variable)" (p. 157). Due to the low sample size, an outlier was

included in the statistical analyses. This violated the normality assumption; however, Green and Salkind (2014) commented that reasonably accurate *p* values could still be produced despite this violation. In this study, independent-samples *t*-tests were conducted both with and without the outlier. The inclusion of the outlier did not yield statistically significant differences between individual items or scales when compared to tests excluding the outlier.

The second assumption for the independent-samples *t*-test is that the "variances of the normally distributed test variable for the populations are equal" (Green and Salkind 2014, p. 157). This assumption was not met as Levene's test for equality of variances indicated statistically significant scores ($p \leq .05$) for all three scales (college $p = .003$, support $p = .003$, and amenities $p = .007$). Because of these results, independent-samples *t*-test results were taken from the row on the data output for which equal variances are not assumed (Field, 2013).

According to Green and Salkind (2014), the third assumption for an independent-samples *t*-test is that the cases represent a random sample from both populations (in this study, leavers and stayers) and that the scores on variables are independent between the two samples. A violation of this assumption would be indicated by inaccurate *p* values during the statistical analysis (Green & Salkind, 2014). In this case, the sample population of both leavers and stayers were randomly selected and had equal opportunity to participate in the study, so the assumption was met.

Once the assumptions had been addressed, I used SPSS to conduct an independent-samples *t*-test to determine if mean scores on survey items and scales were

significantly different between leavers and stayers. *P* values were used to indicate statistically significant differences. Survey items with statistically significant *p* values were examined further to determine the differences in means scores between leavers and stayers. The independent-samples *t*-test results indicated which independent survey items and scale factors leavers indicated as being more important to career longevity. These and are reported in Chapter 4.

Threats to Validity

In the following section of Chapter 3, I describe threats to validity for this study's research methodology. In particular, I address issues of internal, external, and construct validity in this section. I also describe the steps taken to maintain the integrity of the research design.

Internal Validity

There are relatively few threats to the internal validity of this study because it is not experimental in nature and the survey process was completed in a period of eight weeks. Factors such as history, and regression had little impact on the internal validity of the study because the survey process was completed in a brief window (Lavrakas, 2008). There were no control groups, interventions, pre-tests, or post-tests in this study; therefore, threats to internal validity such as unequal treatment between groups, testing familiarity, or communication between groups were negligible (Leighton, 2010). The internal validity threat to population selection was kept at a minimum because participants were selected at random. This ensured that they were not specifically chosen because they would have responded to survey items in a particular manner.

Mortality, or participants dropping out from the study, could have been a factor that affected the internal validity of the study (Lavrakas, 2008). Because EBD teachers spend the majority of their time instructing students, conducting IEP meetings, and attending to students during moments of crisis, study participants may have felt too overwhelmed with their job duties to complete the survey. Anticipating this possibility, I solicited a larger sample population than needed to account for the number of recruits who might not participate (Karamehic-Muratovic, 2013). While G-Power determined that 128 participants (64 leavers and 64 stayers) were needed for the study, I aimed to solicit participation from a significantly larger population.

External Validity

There were few threats to external validity for the study. Creswell (2009) stated that researchers cannot generalize findings to individuals with different characteristics from the participants. This study was focused on a very specific sub-discipline of teachers, and it did not attempt to make generalizations about other groups of teachers. Lavrakas (2008) maintained that the setting and history of the study could act as external threats because they are specific to a particular group of participants and therefore cannot be generalized to individuals in different settings or moments in time. I had little control over these factors as this was a survey study that took place over an eight-week period. Additionally, I did not plan to generalize my findings to the entire EBD teacher population; I only reported the findings of the current study. While I cannot make generalizations regarding EBD teachers in different settings or the past or future, I made

every effort to find corresponding results from similar studies conducted in different settings.

Construct Validity

I took several measures to ensure that the study properly measured what it was intended to measure (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). In this case, the study sought to identify factors needed for professional success through the lens of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943) and Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) organizational support theory (OST). Many have used Maslow's theory as the backdrop when attempting to determine the needs fulfillment of individuals. Likewise, OST has been used as the theoretical underpinning for numerous studies. The existence of previous research based on these theories bolsters the construct validity of this study from a theoretical point of view.

The construct validity of the survey instrument was supported by comparing the results of the current study to similar studies conducted in the past. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) claimed that a hallmark of instrumentation construct validity is when the statistical results of similar independent studies correlate even if different testing instruments were used. These corresponding results can be found in Chapter 5. A professional statistical consultant also reviewed my statistical analysis for accuracy. The confidentiality letter for the statistical consultant can be found in Appendix J.

Ethical Procedures

Several ethical considerations must be addressed to ensure that participants are recruited in a responsible and transparent manner and are not harmed in any way during

the research process. The EBD teachers selected to participate in the study were chosen randomly. I sent the IRB approval to the CCBD along with an introductory letter that explained the purpose of the study. The letter included a link to the informed consent form. A link to the survey was embedded in the informed consent form. The CCBD had already tentatively agreed to participate in the study and sent their research study requirements (Appendix F). This process ensured that all collected data was anonymous and confidential; I had no access to names or email addresses and the CCBD had no knowledge of which EBD teachers participated.

The same protections applied to participants from the Facebook advocacy groups. A link was posted in the Facebook forum of each group that directed them to a modified informed consent form that was not specific to CCBD, which detailed their rights as participants and explained that their participation would be anonymous. As with the CCBD participants, I had no access to their personally identifying information.

Because this study was not based on the introduction of variables, a treatment, or an experimental design, the participants had no obligation to take part and could have elected not to do so in complete anonymity. The informed consent document included with the survey stated that participants could have ceased to participate in the study at any time without consequence. Overall, this study did not create any opportunities for participants to be mistreated.

Participants submitted the data via Survey Monkey. This process gathers no contact information for the participants and only records their anonymous survey

responses. The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were protected during the data collection process.

The data collected from Survey Monkey were transferred to an SPSS data file. There were no names or other identifying information such as race or gender in the data. I was not even able to discern the participants' school districts. The data were only used by me, and none of it was disseminated to other parties except for the professional statistician who verified my statistical analyses. The statistician had access to numerical data but no personally identifying information for any participants. The statistician signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix J). The SPSS data file as well as any connected data files stored on my computer will be deleted after five years.

Summary

This quantitative, correlational study sought to determine what college preparation, job support, and job benefit factors were important to EBD teachers when considering career longevity. A sample of EBD teachers belonging to the CCBD professional organization and Facebook advocacy groups for children with special needs were asked to participate in an anonymous, electronic survey. The survey included a series of Likert scale items about college preparation, job supports, and job benefits. The data were analyzed using SPSS in order to determine correlations between the dependent variable (number of years EBD teachers intend on remaining in the position) and the independent variables (college preparation, job supports, job benefits). An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted in order to determine which college preparation, job

support, or job benefit factors EBD teachers considered important to staying in the profession. The statistical analyses results are reported in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

EBD special education teachers have demonstrated unusually high attrition rates when compared to teachers of other disciplines (AAEE, 2000, 2004, 2010, 2015). This trend may be the result of problems such as insufficient college preparation (Berry et al., 2011; Billingsley et al., 2006), inadequate job support (Albrecht et al., 2009; Prather-Jones, 2011), and the emotional and physical toll that the EBD position can take on teachers (Short & Bullock 2013). As a result of this high turnover, school districts must undergo the time consuming and costly processes of hiring replacement EBD teachers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014) and departing teachers must find new employment (Haid & Seiffge-Krenke, 2013). Meanwhile, students with EBD are denied consistency, which is essential to their educational programming (Poulou, 2004; Ryan & Rozalski, 2013).

Considerable research has been devoted to determining the causes of EBD teacher attrition rates, but my review of literature found relatively few quantitative studies that examine what factors would encourage EBD teachers to remain in the position. Researchers have made recommendations on how to increase the career longevity rates of EBD teachers but seldom are the specific needs indicated by EBD teachers themselves. Further research in this area from the viewpoint of EBD teachers is warranted.

The purpose of this study was to determine the college preparation, job support, and job benefit/amenity needs that EBD teachers perceive as necessary to continue in their positions. This study focused on the college preparation, job support, and job

benefit/amenity needs of “leavers,” or EBD teachers who plan on leaving the profession compared to “stayers,” those who intend to remain in the position (DeMik, 2008; George & George, 1995). Comparing the overall support needs indicated by leavers to stayers could offer insight as to what supports are needed to increase the career longevity of those who plan on leaving the profession. This study was based on the following research questions corresponding hypotheses.

Research Question 1: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified college preparation needs of leavers and stayers?

$H_1$1: There will be a statistically significant difference between the identified college preparation needs of leavers and stayers.

$H_0$1: There will not be a statistically significant difference between the identified college preparation needs of leavers and stayers.

Research Question 2: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers?

$H_1$2: There will be a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers.

$H_0$2: There will not be a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers.

Research Question 3: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers?

$H_1$3: There will be a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers.

$H_0$3: There will not be a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers.

Chapter 4 continues with a brief discussion of the pilot study, the data collection activities performed for the main study, the results of the main study including statistical analyses, and a summary of the chapter.

Pilot Study

Nine participants completed the pilot study. The panel consisted of individuals who were current or former EBD teachers. The pilot study participants offered no suggestions for improvements in item phrasing or in the organization of the survey. One pilot study participant wrote that the survey was expected for a study focused on determining the support needs of EBD teachers. Therefore, no modifications were made to the survey instrument after the pilot study activities were concluded.

I manually input the pilot study survey results into SPSS to conduct statistical analyses in order to improve the internal validity of the survey instrument during the main study. One participant in the pilot study gave two answers for a single survey item. This did not have a noticeable effect on the results. In total, the statistical analysis resulted in a Cronbach's alpha level of .829, which is an acceptable level of internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). Cronbach (1951) recommended that when surveys are to be broken down into scales, researchers should measure the internal consistency of each individual scale. Because my survey contained separate scales for college preparation, job support, and job benefits/amenities, I conducted an internal consistency statistical analysis for each section.

The pilot study yielded an overall value for Cronbach's alpha of α = .829. However, the same statistical analyses for survey scaled items on college preparation yielded results at α = .732, job support at α = .502, and job benefits/amenities at α = .687. While the analyses on survey items centered on college preparation and job benefits/amenities yielded results at or near acceptable internal consistency levels (Nunnally, 1978), results from items within the job support scale indicated a Cronbach's alpha of α =.502. See Table 1 for a list of Cronbach alpha results for the pilot study.

Table 1

Pilot Study Cronbach Alpha Levels (N = 9)

Survey section	Cronbach's alpha level
Total Survey	.829
College Preparation Scale	.732
Job Support Scale	.502
Job Benefit/Amenity Scale	.687

Nunnaly (1978) maintained that values as low as α=.5 might be accepted in the beginning stages of research. Considering that this was a pilot study, the results could be considered a "beginning stage" of research. Kline (1999) also determined that results below .7 could be expected in some cases. However, the subject of internal consistency and validity is an ongoing discussion between researchers from various disciplines (Lance, Butts, & Michels, n.d).

Only nine people participated in the pilot study. The main purpose of conducting the pilot study was to elicit suggestions for improvement and that the statistical analyses served as preliminary indicators of the survey's reliability. Charter (1999) argued that a much greater sample size was needed in order to yield an accurate coefficient alpha. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) and Kline (1986) echoed this same sentiment, suggesting a sample size of 300 to obtain precise Cronbach's alpha results. However, the minimal sample size for determining internal consistency in survey instruments is an ongoing question among researchers (Yurdugül, 2008). Regardless, the pilot study was intended only to add to the survey's reliability; the main study would include responses from a sample greater than nine participants. Further, conducting a pilot study allowed survey items that lowered the internal consistency to be removed, thus increasing the coefficient alpha for the job support scale. The survey instrument was not changed between the pilot study and main study. A professional statistician conducted the same pilot study statistical analyses and yielded results in alignment with my own (see Appendix J).

Data Collection

The EBD Teacher Support Survey (Appendix C) was accessible to the CCBD membership over an eight week period via the CCBD website (Appendix K), newsletter (Appendix L), and CCBD Facebook (Appendix M) and Twitter (Appendix N) social media accounts. I also disseminated the survey during a four week window in Facebook forums for several special education advocacy groups: CEC Community All-Member Forum, Special Education Teachers, National Association of Special Education Teachers, Alliance for Behavior and Communication, Ontario Special Education Teachers, DBT

Peer Connections: Dialectical Behavior Therapy Support Group, Educators of Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, and Special Educators. Participants were asked to rate the importance of variables regarding EBD teacher college preparation, job support, and job benefits/amenities on a 5–point Likert scale. Data collection was discontinued at the conclusion of the eight week period, and I transferred the data from Survey Monkey into SPSS.

Sampling Challenges

A G-Power analysis (Faul et al., 2009) determined that 128 participants were necessary for an independent-samples *t*-test with three independent variables, two groups, and a single dependent variable. Although the survey for this study was publicized for eight weeks as outlined above, it received far fewer than 128 responses. Therefore, the results of this study may not be generalizable to all EBD teachers.

It is unclear exactly why the study received so few responses after being advertised online for two months. The study announcement stated that the survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Perhaps recipients felt that 20 minutes would be too much of a time investment. Interested individuals may have felt that the announcement letter was too long. The link to the survey had been embedded in the first line of the announcement, but it was requested by IRB that the link be moved to the bottom of the announcement. The extra effort required to read the entire study announcement before getting to the link may have discouraged some from participating. Some potential participants may have been unwilling answer the survey because of my affiliation with Walden University and their possible reservations about online

universities (Manning-Ouellette, & Black, 2017). The low participation rate may also have been a result of survey fatigue (Hochheimer, Sabo, Krist, Day, Cyrus, & Woolf, 2016; Vikas, 2017). The low sample size for this study warrants further research regardless if it was the result of a single or combination of factors.

Data Collection

Thirty-nine respondents participated in the study. Responses from incomplete surveys were not included statistical analyses, nor were responses received from participants who were not currently practicing EBD teachers. This study aimed to determine the factors that practicing EBD teachers felt were necessary to increase career longevity. Additionally, responses from provisionally certified or emergency certified EBD participants were not included because their responses to items regarding college preparation would not be based on actual university EBD curriculum experience. Lastly, participants who indicated that they would remain in the EBD position for 4-6 years were not included in the statistical analyses because this group was considered the defining line between leavers and stayers.

After the data cleaning process there were 15 total participant survey responses included in the statistical analyses, six participants who were designated as leavers and nine participants who were defined as stayers ((DeMik, 2008; George & George, 1995).

Table 2

Survey response rates of leavers and stayers (n = 15)

Group	Percentage	Number of respondents
Total	100	*n* = 15
Leavers	40	*n* = 6
Stayers	60	*n* = 9

Demographic data

The first section of the EBD Teacher Support Survey asked participants general questions about their current teaching assignments, type of EBD teaching certification, number of years teaching in the EBD field, and number of years they planned on remaining in the EBD field. Table 3 illustrates the EBD teacher employment status for the sample of 15 participants.

Table 3

EBD teacher employment Status (n = 15)

Employment status	*Percentage*	*N*
Currently employed as an EBD teacher		
Yes	100	15
No	0	0

Participants were also asked to indicate what type of EBD teaching certificate they possessed. Of the 15 participants, 10 (66.7%) responded that they held a general

special education certificate which included EBD and 5 (33.3%) indicated that they held a teaching certification specific to EBD (see Table 4).

Table 4

EBD Teaching Certification Type (n = 15)

Type of EBD teaching certification	*Percentage*	*N*
A general special education certification which includes EBD	66.7	10
A certification specific to EBD	33.3	5

The third question in the EBD Teacher Support Survey asked how many years participants had been teaching in the EBD field. None of the respondents had been teaching in the EBD field for less than one year (0%). Three (20%) reported 1-3 years, 3 (20%) reported 4-6 years, 3 (20%) 7-10 years, and 6 (40%) indicated more than 10 years (see Table 5).

Table 5

Number of years teaching EBD (n = 15)

Years Teaching in the EBD Field	*Percentage*	*n*
Less than 1 year	0	0
1-3 years	20	3
4-6 years	20	3
7-10 years	20	3
More than 10 years	40	6

The last and most significant demographic item on the EBD Teacher Support Survey requested that participants indicate the number of years they planned on remaining in the EBD field. Of the 15 respondents, 2 (13.3%) indicated that they were planning on leaving the EBD field as soon as possible, 4 (26.7%) reported that they were leaving the EBD field in 1-3 years, 3 (20%) signified that they planned on remaining in the EBD discipline for 7-10 years, and 6 indicated that they would remain as EBD teachers until retirement. The number of years participants planned on remaining in the EBD field is displayed in Table 6.

Table 6

Years planning on remaining in the EBD field (n = 15)

Years Planning on Staying in the EBD Field	*Percentage*	*n*
Leaving as soon as possible	13.3	2
1-3 years	26.7	4
7-10 years	20	3
Until retirement	40	6

**4-6 years was removed from Years Planning on Staying in the Field during the data cleaning process.*

Using these demographic factors, I explored trends regarding plans of leaving the EBD position. The types of EBD teaching certification participants held were compared to the numbers of years they planned on remaining in the position. When asked about the type of EBD teaching certification held, 50% of leavers indicated that they held a general special education degree that included an EBD certification and the other half indicated that they held a degree specific to EBD. On the other hand, 77.8% of stayers indicated that they held a general special education degree with a certification in EBD while 22.2% noted that they held an EBD-specific degree. Overall, 10 of the 15 participants held a general special education degree with EBD as a certification. These findings may be the result of more universities offering general special education degrees as opposed to discipline-specific degrees (Zabel et al., 2016). Some researchers have argued that this practice may result in EBD teachers entering the work force ill-prepared because their college studies do not take a deeper exploration into EBD elements (McCall et al., 2014).

A comparison of the college certifications held by leavers and stayers can be found on Table 7.

Table 7

Type of teaching certifications held by leavers and stayers

College Certifications Held by Leavers and Stayers		
Certification Type	General Special Education Certification	Specific EBD Certification
Leavers	50%	50%
Stayers	77.8%	22.2%

A secondary demographic comparison between leavers and stayers shows that 16.7% of leavers indicated that they had been teaching in the EBD discipline for 1-3 years while 33.3% had 4-6 years of EBD experience and 50% had spent more than 10 years in the field. On the other hand, 22.2% of stayers responded that they had been teaching EBD for 1-3 years and 11.1% for 4-6 years. 33.3% of stayers indicated that they had been teaching for 7-10 years and an additional 33.3% had more than 10 years of EBD experience. Overall, most participants had been teaching EBD for a considerable amount of time. The higher response rates from those with more experience may be an indicator of their commitment to the EBD discipline (Cancio et al., 2013). A comparison of the years of teaching EBD between leavers and stayers can be found on Table 8.

Table 8

Years teaching in the EBD position comparison of leavers and stayers

Years of EBD Teaching Experience				
Years	1-3 Years	4-6 Years	7-10 Years	More than 10 Years
Leavers	16.7%	33.3%	0%	50%
Stayers	22%	11.1%	33.3%	33.3%

A reliability analysis was conducted using the scale and reliability analysis functions in SPSS. All individual items in each scale (college preparation, job supports, job benefits/amenities) were analyzed together in order to determine their internal validity. Items for each scale were selected individually and analyzed with all other items from within that particular scale to determine the three internal reliability results for the three scales. Cronbach (1951) suggested that surveys which are broken down into scales should measure the internal consistency of each individual scale.

All three scales maintained an acceptable Cronbach's alpha result. The college preparation scale returned an alpha level result of $\alpha = .947$, while the job support scale maintained a level of ($\alpha = .940$). The job benefits/amenities scale produced an alpha level of $\alpha = .923$. Alpha levels between .7 and 1.0 are generally regarded as acceptable in the area of research (Nunnally, 1978). The results of the reliability analyses are reported in Table 9.

Table 9

Cronbach's Alpha levels of Scaled Survey items

Scaled Survey Items	Alpha Reliability	Items
College Preparation	α = .947	5-16
Job Support	α = .940	17-30
Job Benefit/Amenities	α = .923	31-41

**Based on acceptable levels of .7-1.0 (Nunnally, 1978).*

Additional testing was conducted after the reliability analyses in order to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the responses given by leavers and stayers on individual and scale survey items. The results of these statistical analyses are in the following section.

Results

The statistical analyses reported below are based on the responses of EBD teachers in this relatively small sample size. While G-Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner & Lang, 2009) indicated that a sample size of 128 participants (64 leavers, 64 stayers) was needed in order to conduct a two-tailed independent-samples *t*-test, the recruitment process for this study only produced 15 participants (6 leavers, 9 stayers). The findings might therefore not be generalizable to all EBD teachers. Because of the low response rate, readers may consider viewing this research as a preliminary study which warrants future inquiries with larger EBD teacher populations.

Statistical tests

The statistical analyses included a total of 15 participants, 6 leavers and (n = 9) stayers. Four independent-samples *t*-tests were conducted to determine if there was a statistical significant difference in the mean responses between leavers and stayers on scaled survey and individual survey items. The first independent-samples *t*-test compared the means differences between leavers and stayers on the scaled scores of college preparation, job support, job benefit/amenities. I used the subsequent three independent-samples *t*-tests to take a closer look into the means scores of leavers and stayers within the independent variables of college preparation, job support, and job benefit/amenities. The means and significance scores are reported below, and the scaled scores are comprehensively described. The results for individual scales survey items are discussed in more general terms.

Scaled scores

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in means scores between EBD teachers who plan on leaving the position and those who intend to stay (dependent variable) when considering college preparation, job support, and job benefits/amenities (independent variables). Overall, leavers (M = 3.26, SD = 1.48) had a lower means score on the college preparation scale when compared to stayers (M = 4.20, SD = .317). The test was not significant. This non-significant result led to the acceptance of the null hypothesis $H_0$1, and the alternative hypothesis $H_1$1 was rejected.

Leavers (M = 3.62, SD = 1.30) also had a lower means score on the job support scale when compared to stayers (M = 4.44, SD = .350). The test results were not statistically significant. Since there the result was not statistically significant, the null hypothesis H_0 2 was accepted and the alternative hypothesis $H_1$2 was rejected.

On the job benefit/amenities scale, leavers (M = 3.45, SD = 1.38) reported a lower means score than stayers (M = 4.20, SD = .413). The test outcomes were not statistically significant. The lack of a statistically significant result led to the acceptance of the null hypothesis H_0 3 and the rejection of the alternative hypothesis $H_1$3.

Overall, leavers indicated lower means scores on all three scales. However, statistical analyses indicated that there were no statistically significant difference between leavers and stayers when considering college preparation needs (p = .184), job support needs (p = .183), or job benefit/amenity needs (p = .252). Results of this test must be taken with caution due to the unequal variances and the small sample size. There was no effect size reported because there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups. See Table 10 for the means differences and statistical significance between leavers and stayers on scale scores.

Table 10

Overall Minimum, Maximum, and Mean Scores for the EBD Teacher Support Survey

Survey scale	Minimum	Maximum	Leavers *M*	Stayers *M*	Sig.
College Preparation	1	5	3.26	4.20	.184
Job Support	1	5	3.62	4.44	.183
Job Benefits/Amenities	1	5	3.45	4.20	.252

*Statistically Significant differences in Means is noted as p > .5

This study examined the following research questions:

Research Question 1: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified college preparation needs of leavers and stayers?

Research Question 2: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers?

Research Question 3: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers?

Results of the independent-samples *t*-tests indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the college preparation needs of leavers and stayers. Testing also showed that no statistically significant difference between the job support needs of leavers when compared to stayers. Finally, test results demonstrated no statistically significant difference between leavers and stayers when considering job benefits/amenities. However, there were notable survey response trends for leavers and stayers on individual items.

College Preparation

When looking specifically into items addressing college preparation, leavers and stayers had some differences. However, there were no notable statistically significant results between the two groups. Leavers placed less importance than stayers on college classes emphasizing behavior management (M = 3.67) (M = 4.44) at a significance of p = .172. Leavers placed greater value (M = 3.67) than stayers (M = 3.11) on longer student teaching experiences with a significance of p = .435. Leavers indicated that college classes focusing on functional behavioral analysis and behavior intervention plans were less important (M = 3.83) than stayers (M = 4.44) with no statistical significance between the two groups (p = .403). Leavers indicated that crisis prevention and intervention training was less important (M = 3.33) than stayers (M = 4.67) at a statistical significance of p = .142. Leavers also said that college classes about psychological disorders were less critical (M = 3.50) than stayers (M = 4.33) but not at a statistically significant level (p = .354). College classes that emphasize the academic component of EBD instruction were less important to leavers (M = 3.00) than stayers (M = 4.11) at a statistical significance of p = .171. Leavers indicated that college classes which focus on social/emotional learning were less important (M = 3.33) than stayers (M = 4.56) with a statistical significance of (p = .172).

There was a notable difference in means scores regarding the value of college teaching certifications specifically designed for EBD between leavers (M = 2.50) and stayers (M = 4.00), but it was not statistically significant (p = .063). The survey item involving college classes involving IEP development had similar results, with leavers

indicating less importance (M = 3.00) than stayers (M = 4.44) with a statistical significance of p = .089. Leavers indicated lower importance on case study experiences (M = 3.17) than stayers (M = 4.22) with a statistical significance difference of p = .061. Leavers also demonstrated that college classes emphasizing mental and physical health were not as critical (M = 2.83) when compared to stayers (M = 3.89) at a statistical significance of p =.110. Finally, leavers placed less importance (M = 3.17) than stayers (M = 4.22) on college classes about special education law at a statistical significance of p = .279). The means differences and statistical significance between leavers and stayers are reported in Table 11.

Table 11

Minimum, Maximum, and Mean Scores for the College Preparation Scale

Survey Item	Minimum	Maximum	Leavers *M*	Stayers *M*	Sig.
College classes which emphasize behavior management	1	5	3.67	4.44	.172
Longer student teaching experiences with students with EBD	1	5	3.67	3.11	.435
College classes which emphasize functional behavior analysis (FBA) behavior intervention plans (BIP)	1	5	3.83	4.44	.403
Verbal and physical safe crisis intervention training	1	5	3.33	4.67	.142
College classes which emphasize psychological/mental disorders	1	5	3.50	4.33	.354
College classes which emphasize the academic component of teaching students with EBD	1	5	3.00	4.11	.171
College classes which emphasize social and emotional learning (SEL)	1	5	3.33	4.56	.172

Table 11 (Continued)

Survey item	Minimum	Maximum	Leavers *M*	Stayers *M*	Sig.
Teaching Certifications offered specifically for teaching EBD	1	5	2.50	4.00	.063
College classes which emphasize IEP development	1	5	3.00	4.44	.089
Case study experiences on students with EBD	1	5	3.17	4.22	.061
College classes which emphasize one's personal mental and physical health	1	5	2.83	3.89	.110
College Classes which center on special education policy and law.	1	5	3.17	4.22	.279

*Statistically Significant differences in Means is noted as p > .05

Job Support

There were no statistically significant differences between leavers and stayers on the job support scale, although there were some differences on specific items. Leavers placed lower importance ($M = 3.67$) than stayers ($M = 4.78$) on mentors for new EBD teachers at a significance of $p = .184$. Both groups had similar feelings regarding the need for more paraeducator support with leavers at $M = 3.83$ and stayers at $M = 3.89$ with a significance of $p = .933$. On the item addressing collaboration with mental health specialists, leavers indicated that it was less important ($M = 3.17$) than stayers ($M = 4.56$) with no statistical significance between the two groups ($p = .107$). Those who indicated plans to leave the EBD field indicated that support from colleagues was less important (*M*

= 3.50) than those who plan on staying in the discipline (M = 4.44) at a statistical significance of p = .082. Leavers also demonstrated that professional development on psychological/mental disorders was less critical (M = 3.83) than stayers (M = 4.78) but not at a statistically significant level (p = .089). Planning periods free of students were less important to leavers (M = 3.67) than stayers (M = 4.89) at a statistical significance of p = .208. Leavers indicated that training in verbal and physical safe crisis intervention techniques was less important (M = 3.17) than stayers (M = 4.67) with a statistical significance of (p = .133). Professional development in the area of functional behavioral analysis and behavior improvement plans appeared less critical to leavers (M = 3.67) than stayers (M = 4.44) but not at a statistically significant level (p = .334). The survey item about the use of walkie-talkies for communication with paraeducators and administrators demonstrated similar indications between leavers (M = 4.33) and stayers (M = 4.44) with a statistical significance of p = .810. Leavers placed less importance on opportunities to collaborate with behavior specialists (M = 3.33) than stayers (M = 4.67). Leavers also revealed that professional development for paraeducators was less critical (M = 3.50) when compared to stayers (M = 4.56) with a statistical significance of p = .252. However, leavers placed more importance on feedback from administration on behavioral management practices (M = 3.83) than stayers (M = 3.44) at a statistical significance of p = .258. Leavers (M = 4.00) and stayers (M = 4.22) responded similarly regarding the importance of induction programs for new EBD teachers with a significance between the two groups of p = .737. Finally, leavers expressed less interest in professional development on school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports (SWPBIS) (M

= 3.17) than stayers (M = 4.44) at a statistical significance of p = .200. The means differences and statistical significance between leavers and stayers is reported in Table 12.

Table 12

Minimum, Maximum, and Mean Scores for the Job Support Scale

Survey item	Minimum	Maximum	Leavers *M*	Stayers *M*	Sig.
Mentors (with EBD experience) for new EBD teachers	1	5	3.67	4.78	.184
More paraeducator support	1	5	3.83	3.89	.933
Opportunities to collaborate with mental health specialists	1	5	3.17	4.56	.107
Support from colleagues	1	5	3.50	4.44	.082
Professional development on psychological/mental disorders	1	5	3.83	4.78	.089
Planning periods free of students	1	5	3.67	4.89	.208
Training in verbal and physical safe crisis intervention techniques	1	5	3.17	4.67	.133
Walkie- talkies (for communication with paraeducators and administration)	1	5	4.33	4.44	.810

Table 12 (Continued)

Survey item	Minimum	Maximum	Leavers *M*	Stayers *M*	Sig.
Opportunities to collaborate with behavior specialists	1	5	3.33	4.67	.142
Behavior management training for paraeducators	1	5	3.50	4.56	.252
Feedback from administration on behavioral management practices	1	5	3.83	3.44	.258
Induction programs for new EBD teachers	1	5	4.00	4.22	.737
Professional development on school wide positive behavior interventions and supports (SWPBIS)	1	5	3.17	4.44	.200

*Statistically Significant differences in Means is noted as p > .5

Job Benefits/Amenities

The statistical analysis of survey items about job benefits/amenities showed that there were differences in means scores between leavers and stayers, but there were no statistically significant differences among the groups. Leavers placed less importance on stipends or bonuses for agreeing to teach EBD (*M* = 3.50) than stayers (*M* = 4.44) at a significance of *p* = .305. Similarly, leavers indicated that tuition reimbursement for taking classes related to EBD was less essential (*M* = 3.50) than stayers (*M* = 4.46) with a statistical significance of *p* = .252. There was a notable means difference in the importance that leavers placed on face-to-face support from other EBD teachers (*M* = 3.00) when compared to stayers (*M* = 4.33). On a similar item, leavers reported less

importance on online support from other EBD teachers (M = 3.17) than stayers (M = 4.11) with a significance of p = .277. Leavers' mean scores were lower for free counselling services to ensure EBD teacher mental/emotional well-being (M = 3.67) than stayers (M = 4.11), and there was no statistical significance between the two groups (p = .435). Those who indicated plans on leaving the EBD field responded that opportunities to discuss feelings of frustration with the administration were more important (M = 3.83) than those who plan on staying in the discipline (M = 3.67), with a statistical significance of p = .772. Leavers also demonstrated that mental health days were less critical (M = 3.67) than stayers (M = 4.44), but this difference was not statistically significant (p = .334). Higher starting salaries were important to both leavers (M = 4.17) and stayers (M = 4.56) at a statistical significance of p = .531. Both leavers (M = 2.83) and stayers (M = 3.11) reported notably lower means scores at a significance of p = .690 when responding to the survey item about mandatory counseling to ensure EBD teacher mental/emotional well-being. Leavers also placed less importance on free gym memberships to promote physical well-being (M = 3.50) comparted to stayers (M = 4.33) with a statistical significance of p = .366. Finally, leavers responded that stress management training for EBD teachers (M = 3.17) was less critical than stayers (M = 4.44) at a statistical significance of p = .152. The means differences and statistical significance between leavers and stayers are shown in Table 13.

Table 13

Minimum, Maximum, and Mean Scores for the Job Benefit/Amenity Scale

Survey item	Minimum	Maximum	Leavers *M*	Stayers *M*	Sig.
Stipends or bonuses for agreeing to teach EBD	1	5	3.50	4.44	.305
Tuition reimbursement for taking more classes related to EBD	1	5	3.50	4.65	.252
Professional support from a face to face EBD teacher support group	1	5	3.00	4.33	.074
Professional support from an online EBD teacher support system	1	5	3.17	4.11	.277
Free counselling services to ensure EBD teacher mental/emotional well-being	1	5	3.67	4.11	.435
Opportunities to discuss feelings of frustration or hopelessness with the administration	1	5	3.83	3.67	.772
Mental health days given by administration	1	5	3.67	4.44	.334
Higher starting salaries due to the physical and mental demands of the job	1	5	4.17	4.56	.531
Mandatory counseling services to ensure EBD teacher mental/emotional well-being	1	5	2.83	3.11	.690

Table 13 (Continued)

Survey item	Minimum	Maximum	Leavers *M*	Stayers *M*	Sig.
Free Gym memberships to promote the physical health of EBD teachers	1	5	3.50	4.33	.366
Stress management training for EBD teachers	1	5	3.17	4.44	.152

*Statistically Significant differences in Means is noted as p > .5

Several items stood out when reviewing the means testing results. This study focused on the differences on supports indicated by leavers and stayers needed to increase career longevity in the EBD field. The survey items leavers indicated as most important to their job success was important to this. These results were critically important because they could show colleges and school systems which specific supports might decrease the attrition rates of teachers who intend on leaving the EBD field.

Leavers indicated several items on the survey as particularly important to their career longevity. They reported the highest means scores on survey items that addressed walkie-talkies for communicating with paraeducators and administration (*M* = 4.33), higher starting salaries for EBD teachers (*M* = 4.17), and induction programs for new EBD teachers (*M* = 4.00). College classes about functional behavior analysis and behavior support plans, more paraeducator support, professional development on psychological and mental disorders, opportunities to discuss feelings with administration, and feedback from administration on behavior management practices also had high means scores.(*M* = 3.83). Leavers indicated the lowest means scores on items which

focused on teaching certifications specifically for EBD (*M* = 2.50), mandatory counseling for EBD teachers (*M* = 2.83), and college classes about the academic instruction of students with EBD, college classes on IEP development, and face-to-face support from other EBD teachers with scores of (*M* = 3.00). The highest and lowest means scores reported by leavers are shown in Table 14.

Table 14

Highest and lowest means scores reported by leavers

Survey item	Leavers *M*	Survey scale
High scored survey items		
Walkie- talkies (for communication with paraeducators and administration)	4.33	Job Support
Higher starting salaries due to the physical and mental demands of the job	4.17	Job benefits/amenities
Induction programs for new EBD teachers	4.00	Job Support
Feedback from administration on behavioral management practices	3.83	Job Support
Professional development on psychological/mental disorders	3.83	Job Support
More paraeducator support	3.83	Job Support
College classes which emphasize functional behavior analysis (FBA) behavior intervention plans (BIP)	3.83	College preparation
Opportunities to discuss feelings of frustration or hopelessness with the administration	3.83	Job benefits/amenities
Low scored survey items		
Teaching Certifications offered specifically for teaching EBD	2.50	College preparation
Mandatory counseling services to ensure EBD teacher mental/emotional well-being	2.83	Job benefits/amenities
College classes which emphasize the academic component of teaching students with EBD	3.00	College preparation
College classes which emphasize IEP development	3.00	College preparation
Professional support from a face to face EBD teacher support group	3.00	Job benefits/amenities

There were several interesting high and low means scores of EBD teachers who plan on remaining in the position as well. The highest mean score among stayers was in

response to the survey item about planning periods free of students (*M* = 4.89). Stayers also considered EBD mentors for new teachers (*M* = 4.78) to be important for career longevity. Crisis prevention and intervention training at both the college and job level as well as supports from behavioral specialists also had high means scores (*M* = 4.67).

Stayers indicated lower means scores on several items. The lowest means scores for stayers were on the survey items regarding longer student teacher experiences and mandatory counseling for EBD teachers, both at (*M* = 3.11). Stayers also reported lower means scores on items involving feedback from administration (*M* = 3.44) and opportunities to discuss feelings of frustration (*M* = 3.67). More paraeducator support and classes devoted to one's mental health both rounded out the lower means scores of stayers (*M* = 3.89). The highest and lowest means scores reported by stayers are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

Highest and lowest means scores reported by stayers

Survey item	Stayers *M*	Survey scale
High scored survey items		
Planning periods free of students	4.89	Job Support
Mentors (with EBD experience) for new EBD teachers	4.78	Job Support
Training in verbal and physical safe crisis intervention techniques (job)	4.67	Job Support
Opportunities to collaborate with behavior specialists	4.67	Job Support
Verbal and physical safe crisis intervention training (college)	4.67	College preparation
Low scored survey items		
Longer student teaching experiences with students with EBD	3.11	College preparation
Mandatory counseling services to ensure EBD teacher mental/emotional well-being	3.11	Job benefits/amenities
Feedback from administration on behavioral management practices	3.44	Job Support
Opportunities to discuss feelings of frustration or hopelessness with the administration	3.67	Job benefits/amenities
More paraeducator support	3.89	Job Support
College classes which emphasize one's personal mental and physical health	3.89	College preparation

Part five of the EBD Teacher Support Survey gave participants the opportunity to offer other suggestions regarding the college preparation, job support, and job benefit/amenity needs. The following prompt encouraged participants to include other

supports that might not have been included in the survey itself: "Please feel free to offer any suggestions you have regarding other college preparation, job support, and job benefit/amenity factors that could increase your career longevity as an EBD teacher." Space was provided at the end of the survey where participants could voice their opinions regarding EBD teacher longevity. These anecdotal comments will be used in Chapter 5 as supplementary information to accompany the discussion of the results.

Summary

This study examined differences in the perceptions of EBD teachers who plan on leaving the position when compared to those who plan on remaining (dependent variable) regarding the independent variables of college preparation, job support, and job benefits/amenities. A survey about the relative importance of college preparation, job support, and job benefits/amenities was electronically disseminated to several advocacy groups for children with special needs. The total sample consisted of 15 participants, six who indicated plans to leave the EBD profession and nine who indicated plans on staying in the profession. An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted in order to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the responses between the two groups. Test results determined that there was not a statistically significant difference between leavers and stayers when considering college preparation, job supports, and job benefits/amenities. Chapter 5 contains a deeper examination of the test results that identifies noteworthy outcomes of the statistical analyses and connections to previous studies as well as the theoretical framework.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The high attrition rates of special educators who instruct students with EBDs affects school systems (AAEE, 2000, 2004, 2010, 2015) and the students within those programs (Poulou, 2004; Ryan & Rozalski, 2013) adversely. In my review of the literature, I identified numerous factors that influence the decision of EBD teachers to leave the position quickly including ineffective college preparation (Berry, Petrin, Gravelle, & Farmer, 2011; Billingsley, Fall, & Williams, 2006), a lack of job support once hired (Albrecht, Johns, Mounsteven, & Olorunda, 2009; Prather-Jones, 2011), and the physical and mental demands of the job (Short & Bullock 2013). The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine what support systems EBD teachers viewed as necessary to increase their career longevity in the field. In particular, I compared EBD teachers who intended to leave the field (leavers) and those who intended to remain in the discipline (stayers) based on survey responses regarding college preparation needs, job support needs, and job benefits/amenities.

This quantitative study contained three research questions. I compared the means scores and assessed whether there were any statistically significant differences between leavers and stayers on both individual survey items and survey scales.

Research Question 1: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified college preparation needs of leavers and stayers?

$H_1$1: There will be a statistically significant difference between the identified college preparation needs of leavers and stayers.

$H_0$1: There will not be a statistically significant difference between the identified college preparation needs of leavers and stayers.

Research Question 2: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers?

$H_1$2: There will be a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers.

$H_0$2: There will not be a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers.

Research Question 3: Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers?

$H_1$3: There will be a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers.

$H_0$3: There will not be a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers.

The remainder of Chapter 5 includes a summary, examination, and interpretation of the results presented in Chapter 4. Additionally, the limitations of the study will be discussed, along with recommendations for colleges, school systems, and future researchers based on the findings of this current study. Chapter 5 will also include a discussion of the implications for social change. It will culminate with a concluding statement that will encapsulate the spirit of this research.

Interpretation of the Findings

The interpretation of findings is based on the responses from a sample of EBD teachers who were members of the CCBD or Facebook groups which advocate for the needs of students with disabilities. In all there were 15 respondents to the survey. Of the 15 participants, six indicated that they would be leaving the EBD profession within 3 years and were designated as "leavers" while nine stated that they would be remaining in the EBD discipline for 7 or more years and were designated as "stayers." I designated the intention to continue for 4-6 years as the dividing line between leavers and stayers, so participants who responded that they would remain in the position for 4-6 years were not included in the statistical analysis.

Forty percent of the participants indicated that they would be leaving the EBD position within 3 years and 60% said that they would remain in the position for 7 or more years. Considering that this was a small sample size (n = 15), the fact that nearly half of the participants communicated plans of leaving the profession within 3 years is concerning. Adera and Bullock (2009) reported similar findings; approximately 55% of the EBD teachers participating in their study indicated intentions of leaving the profession. Conversely, in a similar study by Albrecht et al. (2009), only 21.4% of the participants indicated intentions of leaving the EBD field. Clearly, the statistical results from past studies were dependent on the specific sample population and could yield different outcomes depending on the focus of the research.

When examining survey scale results, I did not find a statistically significant difference in responses between leavers and stayers when considering whether college

preparation (p = .184), job supports (p = .183), or job benefits/amenities (p = .252) would increase their career longevity rates; however, there were notable differences in means scores. On a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree), the mean score for leavers on the college preparation scale was (M = 3.26) when compared to stayers (M = 4.20). The job support scale demonstrated similar results: the mean score of leavers was (M = 3.62) and the mean score of stayers was (M = 4.44). The mean score of score of leavers on the job benefits/amenities scale was (M = 3.45) when contrasted with the score of stayers at (M = 4.19).

These data have several implications. Primarily, it is evident that the means scores in all three survey scales for leavers were lower than those of stayers. I had initially thought that leavers would demonstrate higher scale means scores than stayers because the survey format allowed leavers to express what job preparations or supports were missing in their professional lives. I also thought that the study would be an opportunity for leavers to strongly indicate the preparation and support elements needed in order to remain in the EBD position for longer periods of time. The expectation was that leavers would yield elevated scores on survey items that measured critical supports that were absent in their past college careers and current job experiences. However, leavers presented lower means scores than stayers on college preparation, job supports, and job benefits/amenities scales.

Cancio, Albrecht, and Johns (2013) recounted similar findings in their study. EBD teachers who intended on remaining in the discipline reported higher means scores than those intending to leave on factors such as administrative support and job

satisfaction (Cancio et al., 2013). The researchers attributed these findings to leavers having fewer opportunities for professional development or support from their administrators as well as their views about their school work environment (Cancio et al., 2013). In this current study, one possibility that might explain the lower means scores from leavers is that they simply did not experience an effective college preparation program or have access to a robust support system while employed as an EBD teacher. That is, EBD teachers who plan on leaving the position might have placed less value on job supports and benefits/amenities simply because they had not experienced them and would therefore not be able to gauge the significance of these supports as they relate to career longevity. On the other hand, stayers could have rated these factors higher because they have been afforded these supports and recognize them as critical factors to their professional success and future plans.

Leavers

Of the three scales, leavers reported the highest mean score on job support (M = 3.62), followed by job benefits/amenities (M = 3.45). Their lowest mean score was on college preparation (M = 3.26). This would imply that leavers place more importance on the factors that would immediately support them at work on a day-to-day basis as opposed to more general rewards. These results also indicate that job supports hold higher value for EBD teachers who plan on leaving the profession than the college programming which prepared them for the position in the first place. Further, it appears that for leavers, incentives or compensation are less essential than tangible job supports

but more critical than the preparatory classes and student teaching experiences at the college level.

Leavers' scale results could have several meanings. Primarily, the highest mean score on the job support scale (M = 3.62) may imply that leavers felt that the survey items represented provisions which would assist them in the in the current difficulties they experience as EBD teachers. While job benefits (M = 3.45) may be appealing, leavers may have felt that factors which would affect their day to day classroom experiences were more important than rewards or supports which may have long-term benefits but do not change everyday classroom realities.

The day to day realities of the classroom might prompt higher means scores from leavers when comparing job supports (M = 3.62) to college preparation (M = 3.26). While the magnitude of college preparation was not ignored by participants who planned to leave the EBD discipline within three years, leavers may have placed more significance on job supports that could help them in their present day challenges. Problems with university curricula in the past may not have seemed as significant to leavers as immediate supports within schools.

Highest and lowest leavers' scores. Leavers reported the highest means scores on having walkie-talkies for communicating with paraeducators and administration (M = 4.33), higher starting salaries (M = 4.17), and induction programs for new EBD teachers (M = 4.00). College classes about functional behavior analysis and behavior support plans, more paraeducator support, professional development about psychological and mental disorders, opportunities to discuss feelings with administration, and feedback

from administration on behavior management practices all had scores of (M = 3.83). Five of the eight highest leavers' means scores were on items found within the job support section of the survey. This would suggest that leavers placed more importance on supports provided on the job than on college preparation or job benefits/amenities.

Interestingly, leavers had elevated scores on several factors regarding communication with leadership as the most important factors that would influence their career longevity in the EBD field. These results indicate that leavers could feel support from administrators as critical to their success. Cancio et al., (2013) found that means scores regarding the importance of administrative supports were higher for short-term EBD teachers than long-term EBD teachers. Albrecht et al. (2009) determined that EBD teachers intending to leave the position indicated that they received significantly lower administrative support when compared to those intending to stay. Overall, EBD teachers who plan on leaving the position seem to place some importance on administrative support when considering career longevity.

Leavers placed lesser value on a few other survey items. The lowest mean score was recorded on the survey item about teaching certifications specific to EBD (M = 2.50), which suggests that leavers do not feel that a degree distinctive to EBD is critical to their career longevity. Mandatory counseling for EBD teacher mental and emotional health (M = 2.83) also received low scores from leavers, indicating that required mental health support was not as attractive as free optional counselling services (M = 3.67). Mandatory counseling, while potentially helpful, may seem intrusive compared to mental health services that are made available but not required. Leavers indicated lower means scores

on college classes focusing on IEP development or the academic aspects of EBD (*M* = 3.00) and support from face-to-face EBD teacher support groups (*M* = 3.00). Three of the five lowest means scores reported by leavers on the entire survey were in the college preparation scale. The overall indication seems to be that leavers place less emphasis on college preparation and more importance of the supports that could assist them on the job. Some past research has indicated that true preparation for the EBD discipline occurs in the classroom (Blake & Monahan, 2007; Billingsley et al., 2006; Short & Bullock, 2013).

Stayers

EBD teachers who planned on remaining in the position for seven years or until retirement (stayers) indicated the highest mean score on the job support scale (*M* = 4.44). This result could imply that stayers placed more importance on the supports they receive at work than their college experience or rewards and incentives. It also indicates that stayers view the importance of college preparation and job benefits/amenities similarly in terms of career longevity. While stayers placed some value on college experience and incentives, the importance of job support was apparent. Stayers may regard their college preparatory classes and student teaching experiences or even bonuses and stipends as rewarding but less helpful in their day to day work life.

Highest and lowest scores for stayers. Stayers reported the highest means scores on survey items about planning periods free of students (*M* = 4.89), mentors with EBD experience for new EBD teachers (*M* = 4.78), crisis intervention training both at the college level and job level (*M* = 4.67), and opportunities to collaborate with behavioral

specialists (*M* = 4.67). Four of the five highest means scores were on items found within the job support section of the survey. This would suggest that stayers, like leavers, placed more importance on supports provided on the job than college preparation or job benefits/amenities. The specific job support survey items that received the highest means scores from stayers were elements that would allow them to be immediately successful at work. For example, stayers placed the highest value on having planning periods free of students. EBD teachers, like other special educators, spend a significant portion of their day collecting data, writing IEPs, or completing a variety of other paperwork. Unlike other special educators, EBD teachers often must support students who cannot attend general education classes or are sent to the EBD classroom for behavioral reasons. As a result, the EBD teacher is often called away from special education paperwork or planning for the following school day to support students in crisis.

Stayers placed significance on crisis prevention and intervention training at both the college and job levels. This type of training prepares staff members to deescalate situations and to respond with physical intervention if necessary (Crisis Prevention and Intervention, 2013). The fact that so much importance was placed on this factor suggests that responding to crisis situations is a critical element of the EBD profession. Stayers also reported higher means scores on the survey items about mentors with EBD experience for new EBD teachers (*M* = 4.78) and collaboration with behavior specialists (*M* = 4.67). Considering the physical and mental demands of the EBD position, stayers may have felt that a solid support system for novice EBD teachers was essential for professional success. Collaboration with behavioral specialists seems to be a support that

could be critical to the success of EBD teachers since behavior regulation is a key aspect of the job.

Stayers reported their lowest means scores on survey items about longer student teaching experiences (*M* = 3.11) and mandatory counseling to ensure EBD teacher emotional well-being (*M* = 3.11). These results could indicate that stayers did not feel that longer student teaching experiences would better prepare them for the job. In fact, Blake and Monahan (2007) noted that some EBD teachers felt that that the skills needed to be successful in the position were gained through job experience. The results could also indicate that stayers did not feel that counseling for their emotional well-being should be mandatory (*M* = 3.11) but perhaps should simply be available and free (*M* = 4.11). Stayers also gave lower means responses on items concerning feedback from administrators on behavior management practices (*M* = 3.44) and opportunities to discuss their feelings with administration (*M* = 3.67). This would suggest that stayers placed less emphasis on the importance of direct interaction or communication with administrators. Stayers may have perceived the supports provided by administrators, such as professional development with behavior specialists (*M* = 4.67) or protected planning time (*M* = 4.89) as more important than direct guidance offered by administrators. Lastly, stayers reported lower means scores on survey items regarding more paraeducator support (*M* = 3.89) and college classes centering on one's mental health (*M* = 3.89). Overall, stayers reported the lowest mean responses on specific survey items evenly between the college preparation, job support, and job benefits/amenities scales.

Leavers Versus Stayers

Job Support. When compared to leavers, stayers indicated elevated means scores on all three survey scales (college preparation, job supports, job benefits/amenities). However, the highest and lowest responses on individual survey items were useful in identifying what particular factors are needed to increase EBD teacher career longevity. For example, both leavers and stayers demonstrated the highest mean results on the job support scale, indicating that supports provided in the workplace were more important to career longevity for both groups than college preparation or job benefits/amenities. Even within the job support scale there were notable differences in the responses delivered between leavers and stayers.

Within the job support scale, leavers placed high importance on direct communication with administrators whereas these same items represented the lowest means scores for stayers. Cancio et al., (2013) found that EBD teachers planning on staying in the field reported that support from administration was in place more often than EBD teachers who planned on leaving the EBD position. However, EBD teachers planning on leaving the profession placed greater importance on direct administrative contact than those who intended to stay. In this current study, leavers reported the highest mean score on the survey item regarding walkie-talkies. It is possible that EBD teachers who intend on leaving the profession see direct support from administrators as critical to their success, whereas those who intend to remain in the profession place more importance on the support mechanisms that administrators can deliver, such as professional development and training from specialists. Stayers indicated that

opportunities to share feelings with administrators and feedback from administrators were among their lowest means scores. Conversely, stayers reported the highest means scores on supports that would be facilitated by administrators such as crisis intervention and prevention training, support from behavior specialists, EBD mentors, and planning periods free of students.

Section five of the survey used for this study provided participants with the opportunity to include a narrative response regarding their thoughts on EBD teacher career longevity. One participant who plans on remaining in the EBD discipline enthusiastically offered "no critique from administration if they have not done the job!" Williams, Pazey, Shelby, and Yates (2013) posited that some administrators would not be comfortable with offering guidance on the behavior management of students as their experience in that field may be limited. EBD teachers who plan on remaining in the discipline may recognize this limitation to administrative support, and therefore they may place more importance on factors that would directly assist them in their immediate classroom experience. Another participant echoing the sentiments of Adera and Bullock (2009) stated:

> Rarely do I have a prep or lunch without the students returning with an issue or have to help assist with a concern in a mainstream class with a student. It isn't possible to begin due process paperwork and do it well/correctly when you have so many interruptions while trying to do so.

In all, EBD teachers who intend to stay may be provided the fundamental supports needed to be successful and therefore do not seek direct communication with

administrators. EBD teachers planning on leaving the position may not have the basic supports in place and therefore regard direct communication with administration as an avenue to needed supports.

Leavers and stayers found some common ground with items regarding support systems in place for new EBD teachers. Leavers indicated that induction programs for EBD teachers new to the field were one of the most important factors to their career longevity, and stayers reacted the same way to the item regarding EBD mentors for new EBD teachers. While induction programs could consist of elements such as training on IEP generating software or procedures for calling in sick, support from an EBD mentor could offer immediate assistance with EBD-specific skills. Albrecht et al., (2009) claimed that both induction programs and mentoring ease the transition of new EBD teachers. Sutherland et al. (2005) stated that induction and mentoring programs for novice EBD teachers would assist in expanding instructional competency and bridging the gap between theory and practice. Thornton et al. (2007) argued that induction and mentoring programs should be discipline specific. One participant in this current study offered that supports "needed to be in place before you start the job" and another stressed that "Teachers of students with EBD or mental health issues need significant support. They are often on their own and unless you are 'in' the field, immersed in the daily challenges, you just don't get it." Both EBD teachers who plan on leaving the profession and those intending to stay place value in support systems for novice EBD teachers.

Leavers and stayers also placed different levels of importance on supports for managing students with challenging behaviors. Leavers demonstrated an elevated mean

score on the survey item regarding professional development on psychological/mental disorders, while stayers indicated collaboration with behavior specialists as one of the factors that would increase their career longevity. Stefan et al., (2015) posited that training from mental health specialists could better prepare teachers to support students with EBD. Wood (2015) advanced this idea suggesting that the worlds of therapeutic intervention and education must be bridged in order to comprehensively support students with EBD. While training from a mental health specialist could be instructive direct support from a behavior specialist might be a more powerful form of support in that it would assist EBD teachers in managing the immediate concerns of student behavior. Cortez and Malian (2013) reported significant decreases in undesired behaviors after two weeks of teacher consultation with behavior specialists. Walker et al. (2013) noted that support from an outside behavioral specialist could have benefits for programming for students with EBD. However, one participant in this current study commented that "in reality, I work in a small poor district and I don't see the supports that are in person." Support from a behavior specialist was not one of the survey items that leavers indicated as significant to their career longevity. This result could be an indicator that EBD teachers who planned to remain in the position received support from a behavior specialist and recognize its importance as related to their job success while participants who plan on leaving the discipline did not receive this type of support, or received less than optimal support, so do not see its value.

Several other survey items produced interesting comparisons between leavers and stayers. For instance, leavers reported higher starting salaries as one of the highest means

scores. On the other hand, stayers did not indicate salary, rewards, or stipends as one of their top factors needed to increase career longevity. Perhaps higher pay is an attractive incentive but not a critically important element when compared to day-to-day job supports. Udechukwu (2009) found that job commitment for employees in stressful professions could be influenced by both job support and financial compensation.

College preparation. Leavers and stayers also indicated relatively low means scores on many of the survey items connected to college preparation for EBD teachers; items about college represented some of the lowest means scores for both leavers and stayers. In fact, leavers only indicated that a single factor from the college preparation scale was important to their career longevity. Stayers only indicated that crisis prevention and intervention as a college support that would increase their career longevity, although they also indicated that this same support is necessary at the job level. Leavers reported relatively low means scores on items about classes for IEP development or academic instruction for students with EBD. Additionally, leavers recorded the lowest mean score on teaching certifications specific for EBD (as opposed to general special education certification with EBD included). Stayers indicated longer student teaching experiences and college classes devoted to one's mental health among their lowest means scores.

These results could suggest that college preparation for the EBD field did not resonate with either leavers or stayers as being particularly important to career longevity in the field. However, Wrobel (1993) noted the importance of preparation programs for EBD teachers and Adera and Bullock (2009) found that although most EBD teachers felt

competent their role, over half of their participants planned to leave the discipline. Oliver and Reschly (2010) discovered that college EBD preparatory programs vary widely from one university to the next, perhaps indicating that graduating EBD teachers enter the workforce with differing levels of preparation. Given the lack of importance they placed on college preparation, participants in the current study may feel that the best preparation for the EBD position occurs in the EBD classroom itself (Blake & Monahan, 2007). Kindzierski et al., (2013) asserted that EBD teachers sometimes enter the field lacking the fundamental skills associated with the discipline.

Job benefits/amenities. Interestingly, both leavers and stayers indicated few high means scores on items within the job benefits/amenities scale. However, leavers did report higher starting salaries for EBD teachers as their second highest mean score. Overall, however, survey items regarding stipends, tuition reimbursement, and, emotional well-being were not among the highest means scores for leavers or stayers. Both groups gave strong indications that mandatory counseling for EBD teachers would not increase their career longevity. Teacher counseling support as a mandatory part of the job might not have appealed to participants. However, being able to discuss feelings of frustration with administration was a support that resonated somewhat with those planning on leaving the EBD field. Stayers scored this same survey item as their third lowest mean when considering influence on career longevity. In their study, Adera and Bullock (2009) found that stressors within the EBD position influence attrition rates. Prather-Jones (2011) supported this finding, maintaining that job stressors were among the determinants that guided EBD teachers to leave the profession. When given the

opportunity to voice their opinions, one stayer in the current study wrote, "Acknowledging the mental and physical toll that the job can take on the educator is significantly important." Further expressing the frustration felt by some EBD teachers, one leaver offered:

> As a parent of young children at home, I should NOT be so exhausted from having to multitask so much throughout the day that I can't even find the enjoyment of helping my own kids at home... It's becoming too much to manage, track, support, and maintain without becoming so mentally exhausted that you want to throw in the towel.

Indeed, although it was not indicated as a statistically significant factor regarding EBD teacher career longevity, the importance of physical and emotional well-being was not lost on some respondents.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations associated with this study that could influence its generalizability, trustworthiness, validity, and reliability. The most obvious was the low number of respondents that participated in the study. The study was made available to professional organizations and in Facebook groups advocating for the needs of children with special needs or behavior disorders. Through these means, the survey had the potential to reach a significant number of EBD teachers. However, the survey generated 39 responses. Most of which were removed during the data cleaning process, leaving 15 participants: 6 leavers and 9 stayers. The response rate was a far cry from the recommendation of G-Power (64 leavers and 64 stayers) for conducting an independent-

samples *t*-test (Faul et al., 2009). Considering the dissonance between the actual and suggested response rates, the results of this study should be taken with caution. While some aspects of the current study results were in alignment with past research, the findings should not be used to unilaterally generalize perceptions regarding the EBD teacher population. This study should instead be looked upon as a single building block in the construction of EBD research. It could be recognized as a preliminary study to future researchers exploring the issue of EBD teacher attrition rates.

Another substantial limitation to the study was the fact that the survey was of my own development. It might have been better to use an existing and reputable survey for the study, but no currently available instrument would provide answers to the research questions. The survey for this current study was modeled after two surveys that have withstood statistical scrutiny, and the results of the reliability analyses for the current survey were more than acceptable. Finally, the survey created for this study was piloted by a panel of individuals connected to the EBD field in order to improve its organization and wording. Nonetheless, the EBD Teacher Support Survey has not been used in other studies, and this limitation warrants contemplation when considering the results.

The study was also conducted via internet websites and social media which is a limitation in itself. The study's announcement and survey were conducted through the CCBD website, Facebook and Twitter platforms. It was also advertised in the Facebook theaters of several advocacy groups for children with special needs and behavioral challenges. Because all participation was anonymous, it was impossible to verify whether the participants were in fact EBD teachers. In an effort to ensure that only

currently practicing EBD teachers participated in the survey, the first question on the survey posed "Are you currently employed as an EBD teacher?" Participants who indicated that they were not EBD teachers were removed during the data cleaning process. However, this does not necessarily indicate that all responses in the statistical analyses came from EBD teachers. Even so, it is unlikely that non-EBD teachers would take the time and energy to participate in a study that was not related to their profession. Nevertheless, this lack of verification was a limitation to this current study.

There were a few minor points to consider when examining the results of this research. Individuals who belong to professional organizations or join Facebook groups advocating the support for students who present behavioral challenges may not paint an accurate picture of the views those who plan to leave the EBD profession. EBD teachers who belong to professional organizations or Facebook groups may be inherently more dedicated to the profession as shown by their participation in the group or organization. Because the study targeted organizations and professional groups, it may not have included a significant sample of EBD teachers who plan on leaving the EBD field, thus skewing the statistical analysis.

The survey used for this study required participants to indicate if they were leaving or staying in the EBD discipline. However, it did not ask the participants who indicated that they were leaving the EBD position to indicate a reason for their departure. It is possible that some of the six participants designated as leavers were abandoning the EBD discipline for reasons other than being unhappy or burned out. In fact, it is possible that some were leaving because of promotions to leadership positions or for retirement.

A review of the survey responses for leavers seemed to indicate that this was not the case; more likely reasons for abandoning the EBD profession were frustration or lack of support. However, this cannot be said with any degree of certainty and must therefore be considered a study limitation.

Recommendations

The high rate of EBD teacher attrition continues to be a challenge to school districts, EBD teachers, students with EBD and their families, educational leaders, and those that prepare future EBD teachers. While this study was able to provide some insight into what EBD teachers need to remain in the field for longer periods of time, it by no means served as a comprehensive solution to this issue. There are several recommendations to be gathered from this study. These recommendations may assist educational leaders in retaining EBD teachers for longer periods. They also may help future researchers to design studies that address the issue of EBD teacher longevity rates in a more comprehensive manner.

Recommendations for Future Action

The following is a list of recommendations based on the research conducted for this current study as well as the results yielded by the statistical analyses. Educational leaders and policymakers at the elementary, secondary, and collegiate levels may find these suggestions useful when considering how to increase the career longevity rates of EBD teachers.

1. School leaders should provide induction programs specific to EBD teacher needs as well as experienced mentors to novice EBD teachers.

2. Training in verbal and physical intervention techniques should be provided to EBD teachers during college preparation and at the professional level.
3. School leaders should provide EBD teachers with the opportunity to collaborate with and receive continuous training from experts such as mental health professionals and behavioral specialists.
4. Administrators should remain aware of the challenges associated with the EBD position and be responsive to symptoms of frustration, stress, or burnout in EBD teachers, especially newer hires. Novice EBD teachers may require more frequent communication and collaboration with administrators.
5. Administrators should consider providing EBD teachers periods of the day without responsibility for students for focusing on instructional planning and special education paperwork. This may require some creative scheduling and flexibility among school staff.
6. Universities should consider the special needs of the EBD profession and ensure that potential EBD teachers have pre-service programming that emphasizes behavior management, functional behavior analysis, and research based positive behavior intervention plans.
7. School systems should use incentives such as higher salaries in conjunction with appropriate support to increase EBD teacher job commitment levels.
8. School administrators should ensure that EBD teachers are provided with adequate paraeducator support and some means of immediately communicating with necessary staff members throughout the day (radios).

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations for other study possibilities on the subject of EBD teacher attrition rates may serve the interests of future researchers:

1. The results of this study were based on the input from 15 EBD teachers. Future researchers should consider a similar study with a larger EBD teacher population. This may be possible by partnering with district or state level education leadership. This current study could be used to outline future studies with larger EBD teacher sample populations.
2. The results of this study were yielded from a self-created survey. Future researchers should review and modify the survey in order to bolster its effectiveness and reliability.
3. The results of this study were based on input from individuals who were associated with professional organizations or internet advocacy groups for children with special needs. Future researchers in this area may want to consider that EBD teachers may not seek membership in these groups and could potentially be left out of study participation. Access to a comprehensive EBD teacher population might be accomplished through partnerships with district or state level education leadership.
4. This current study was broad in scope, addressing college preparation, job support, and job benefits/amenities needs. Future studies which conduct a deeper examination targeting each of these areas separately may yield more specific results.

5. While this current study was predominantly quantitative in nature, it did offer participants the opportunity to voice their perceptions anecdotally. Future researchers may consider a purely qualitative methodology in addressing the issue of EBD teacher career longevity because the limited narrative information received from EBD teachers for this current study provided a great deal of personal materials regarding EBD teacher needs.
6. This current study endeavored to determine what supports EBD teachers needed to remain in the position for longer periods of time. More quantitative or qualitative research that focuses on why EBD teachers elect to remain in the discipline is warranted.
7. While results from EBD teachers on provisional licenses were not included in the statistical analyses of this current study, provisionally certified EBD teachers have similar high attrition rates. Further study into what is needed to support this group of EBD teachers is necessary. Quantitative and qualitative studies in this area could illuminate the experience of novice or provisionally certified EBD teachers.
8. This current research focused on EBD teachers. Comparative research focusing on education leadership at the school, district, and state levels centered on perceptions of what supports are needed to increase EBD career longevity rates is needed could be informative.
9. The results from this study were based on anonymous survey responses from participants via internet and social media. Future researchers should consider

examining this issue through sample populations that could be authenticated. Access to a verifiable EBD teacher sample population might be accomplished through collaboration with district or state level education leadership.

Implications

This study aimed to determine what supports EBD teachers indicated were needed in order to increase their career longevity. The results were based on a small sample population of EBD teachers, so caution should be used when attempting to generalize the findings. Nevertheless, this research has several implications for positive social change.

Primarily, this current study provided results on specific college preparation factors needed to increase career longevity rates for EBD teachers according to the teachers themselves. This information could be useful to college and university curriculum and program developers as they assess the preparatory needs of potential EBD teachers. As it stands, EBD teacher programming at the college level can look very different from one institution to the next (Reschly, 2010). EBD teachers may demonstrate greater confidence when entering the workforce if they had a comprehensive pre-service education in evidence based practices for instructing students with EBD. Armed with these tools, novice EBD teachers might feel more secure in their initial abilities and have less difficulty in reaching their maximum professional potential (Maslow, 1943).

Participants in this study also identified specific supports within the workplace that would increase EBD teacher career longevity rates. This information could be particularly useful to district and state level education offices who have difficulties filling

EBD teacher positions (AAEE, 2000, 2004, 2010, 2015) and are seeking to reduce the cost of recruiting, hiring, and inducting replacement EBD teachers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014). Understanding the support and benefit needs of EBD teachers has the potential to decrease attrition rates.

The specific job supports and benefits identified as important to EBD teacher career longevity could prove informative to school principals as well. School leaders may not completely understand the challenges that EBD teachers face. Administrators may also not realize what specific supports EBD teachers need in order to remain in the position for longer periods of time. In this study, EBD teachers indicated what specific supports they needed in order to increase their career longevity. Administrators could use the results of this study and other research in this field to provide EBD teachers with the supports needed to increase their feelings of confidence and security in a very demanding job (Maslow, 1943). In turn, EBD teachers who receive comprehensive support from school administrators could demonstrate higher levels of organizational commitment and remain in their positions for longer periods of time (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Perhaps the greatest social implication of this study center on EBD teachers themselves and the students they support. EBD teachers may feel more confident in their ability as instructors if provided the appropriate college preparation, job supports, and incentives identified in this study. These supports could alleviate some of the job dissatisfaction and burnout felt by EBD teachers. Currently, EBD teachers are leaving the field due to a host of issues such as inadequate college preservice programming (Berry et al., 2011; Billingsley et al., 2006) lack of support (Albrecht et al., 2009;

Prather-Jones, 2011) and the stressors associated with the position (Center & Steventon, 2001; Short & Bullock 2013). It is hoped that this current study will add to the field of research which aims to better prepare and support EBD teachers.

Although it was not the emphasis of this study, there is the potential for positive social effects for children with EBD and those that care for them. Children with EBD represent an extremely vulnerable portion of the special education population (Poulou, 2004; Ryan & Rozalski, 2013). Like all children, they benefit from consistency. Unusually high EBD teacher attrition rates interfere with programming consistency; students can sometimes have several different EBD teachers in a year. Perhaps career longevity would increase if EBD teachers were provided with the necessary tools to be confident and successful in the position. Until that point, students with EBD will continue to be supported by a procession of EBD teachers, many of whom are not qualified to teach the position (Berry et al. 2011; Sutherland, Denny, & Gunter, 2005). This will result in inconsistent academic instruction and social/emotional support, both of which are critical to their quality of life as adults (Maggin et al., 2016; SPLC, 2007).

Conclusion

The focus of this quantitative study was the historically high attrition rates of special education teachers who support students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Specifically, this study sought to determine if there was a difference between EBD teachers who leave the position and those who stay when considering the independent variables of college preparation, job support, and job benefits/amenities. Members of the CCBD and several other Facebook groups that advocate for children with special needs

and behavioral disorders received an electronic survey. In all, 15 EBD teachers took part in the study, 6 leavers and 9 stayers. Caution should be taken when interpreting the results since 15 participants is a considerably smaller sample than the suggested sample size of 128 despite heavy recruitment efforts. An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted comparing the dependent variable (number of years EBD teachers plan on remaining in the profession) to the independent variables (college preparation, job support, job benefit/amenities). The results of the statistical analysis indicated that there was no statistically significant difference on any of the independent variables when comparing leavers and stayers. However, stayers reported higher mean scores on all three survey scales. Both groups indicated higher mean scores on the job support scale when compared to the college preparation and job benefits/amenities scales. Stayers indicated identical mean scores on the college preparation and job benefits/amenities scales while leavers reported a slightly higher mean score on job benefits/amenities when compared to the college preparation scale.

While there was no statically significant difference in mean scores between those who left and those who stayed, the individual survey items yielded more intriguing distinctions. Many of the lowest mean scores for both groups were reported on survey items regarding job benefits/amenities and college preparation. This could indicate that both groups placed more emphasis on job support as opposed to college pre-service experiences or job incentives because neither of these latter variables would assist them in the immediate classroom environment. While college preparation may be important to success, it does not result in tangible support when the school bell rings. Bonuses or

tuition reimbursement programs may be regarded as niceties or recognition although they may not be as influential to EBD teachers as institutional support when a student is becoming verbally and physically aggressive. College pre-service experiences may better prepare teachers for these situations and rewards could provide a sense of acknowledgement from leadership; however, neither college nor compensation directly helps an EBD teacher physically assist a student in crisis. In those instances, real-time support is needed.

When examining individual survey items it was evident that both leavers and stayers placed more importance on job support than college preparation or job benefits/amenities. However, leavers seemed to place more emphasis on items that would foster communication with administrators, whereas stayers indicated that administrative support was very important. In fact, stayers indicated lower mean scores on survey items which involved direct administrative communication. This might suggest that EBD teachers who are provided with the tools they need are more confident in their abilities and need less face time with administrators. The fact that leavers placed more significance on communication with administrators might indicate that they perceived direct contact with school leadership as way to improve their daily work experience. Leavers may also see contact with leadership as important because they simply do not have any other supports that would assist them in being successful. Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that administrative support must go beyond simple encouragement. It should include facilitation efforts to provide EBD teachers with tangible opportunities and that assist with day to day EBD business.

EBD teacher attrition rates have been a problem for a number of decades. Despite the extensive research that already exists, EBD teacher attrition rates continue to warrant further examination. The 2002 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) mandates that all children must have access to a qualified teacher. Federal regulations such as the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require all schools to provide a free and appropriate education (FAPE) to all children (Radford, 2017). As it stands, neither of these federal requirements are being met in schools throughout the nation for students with EBD. Children with EBD do not have a say in state hiring practices nor do they have input regarding professional development opportunities for EBD teachers. They do not have a voice concerning college curriculums or incentive plans for retaining EBD teachers. Much too often, children with EBD do have a bleak future. When EBD teachers are provided appropriate training and support, it is possible that the outcome for children with EBD will be brighter.

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Appendix A: Warsame Survey Use Permission

X-CrossPremisesHeadersFilteredByDsnGenerator:
BY1PR01MB1337.prod.exchangelabs.com

Final-Recipient: rfc822;kitty.warsame@email.waldenu.edu
Action: failed
Status: 5.1.1
Diagnostic-Code: smtp;550 5.1.1 User unknown
Remote-MTA: dns;MDEDGEXCH2.loe.corp

——— Forwarded message ———
From: Leroy Smith <leroy.smith@waldenu.edu>
To: <kitty.warsame@waldenu.edu>, <kbwarsame@pvamu.edu>
Cc:
Date: Sun, 21 Feb 2016 17:51:41 +0900
Subject: Survey use permission

Hello,

My name is Leroy Smith and I am a current doctoral student with Walden University. After reviewing your dissertation entitled Evaluating the Effectiveness of Novice Teacher Support Structures I wanted to see if I could obtain your permission to use the Novice Teacher Support Structure Evaluation Survey from your dissertation. In particular, I am interested in using Likert scale used in the instrument as well as organization of survey items when developing my own testing instrument. This will require me to make some changes to the survey so it is more adaptable to my dissertation focus for Walden University.

I will not use any of the additional information without asking your permission.

Best regards,

Leroy Smith

Warsame,Kitty <kbwarsame@pvamu.edu> Mon, Feb 22, 2016 at 1:48 AM
To: Leroy Smith <leroy.smith@waldenu.edu>

Yes, you are welcome to use my survey. Good luck!

Kitty Warsame Ed.D
Assistant Professor
Coordinator Early Childhood Education
Curriculum and Instruction
Whitlowe R. Green College of Education
Prairie View A&M University

"Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none"

[Quoted text hidden]

Appendix B: Miller Survey Use Permission

Gmail by Google

Leroy Smith <leroy.smith@waldenu.edu>

Survey use permission

6 messages

Leroy Smith <leroy.smith@waldenu.edu> Sun, Feb 21, 2016 at 5:45 PM
To: Denise.Miller@waldenu.edu, Denesedm@gmail.com

Hello,

My name is Leroy Smith and I am a current doctoral student with Walden University. After reviewing your dissertation entitled Factors Contributing to the Turnover Rate of Teachers at State Controlled Schools I wanted to see if I could obtain your permission to use the Teacher Attrition Survey from your dissertation. In particular, I am interested in using components of the demographics section as well as the organization of survey items when developing my own testing instrument. This will require me to make some changes to the survey so it is more adaptable to my dissertation focus for Walden University.

I will not use any of the additional information without asking your permission.

Best regards,

Leroy Smith

---

denese miller <denesedm@gmail.com> Mon, Feb 22, 2016 at 9:43 AM
To: Leroy Smith <leroy.smith@waldenu.edu>

Hello Mr. Smith,

Yes, you have my permission to use the Teacher Attrition Survey from my dissertation. I understand that changes may be required to suit your dissertation. Best wishes with your study!

Denese
[Quoted text hidden]

Appendix C: EBD Teacher Support Survey

EBD Teacher Support Survey

This questionnaire was designed to help get a better understanding of what college preparation, job support, and job benefit/amenity factors EBD teachers indicate will promote career longevity in the EBD teaching discipline.

In Part I of the survey there will be several items regarding your experience and future plans as an EBD teacher.

In Part II of the survey you will be asked to rate your opinions about each of the statements by clicking on:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

In Part III of the survey you will have the opportunity to offer suggestions of college preparations, job supports, or job benefits/amenities that would increase EBD teacher career longevity.

Part I: Experience and Future Plans

1. **Are you currently employed as an EBD teacher?**
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No
2. **What type of EBD teaching certification do you have?**
   [ ] A general special education certification which includes EBD
   [ ] A certification specific to EBD
   [ ] A provisional or emergency license to teach EBD
3. **How many years have you been teaching in the EBD field?**
   [ ] Less than 1 year
   [ ] 1-3 years
   [ ] 3-5 years
   [ ] 5-10 years
   [ ] More than 10 years

4. **How many years do you plan on staying in the EBD field?**
   [ ] I plan on leaving the EBD field as soon as possible.
   [ ] 1-3 years.
   [ ] 4-6 years.
   [ ] 7-10 years.
   [ ] Until retirement.

Part II: College preparation, job support, and job benefit/amenity factors

Please indicate your opinions about each of the statements below by selecting Strongly disagree Disagree, Undecided, Agree, or Strongly agree.

The following COLLEGE PREPARATION variables would increase my career longevity as an EBD teacher.

5. **College classes which emphasize behavior management.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

6. **Longer student teaching experiences with students with EBD.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

7. **College classes which emphasize functional behavior analysis (FBA) behavior intervention plans (BIP).**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

8. **Verbal and physical safe crisis intervention training.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

9. **College classes which emphasize psychological/mental disorders.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

10. **College classes which emphasize the academic component of teaching students with EBD.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

11. **College classes which emphasize social and emotional learning (SEL).**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

12. **Teaching Certifications offered specifically for teaching EBD.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

13. **College classes which emphasize IEP development.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

14. **Case study experiences on students with EBD.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

15. **College classes which emphasize one's personal mental and physical health.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

16. **College Classes which center on special education policy and law.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate your opinions about each of the statements below by selecting Strongly disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, or Strongly agree.

The following JOB SUPPORT variables would increase my career longevity as an EBD teacher.

17. Mentors (with EBD experience) for new EBD teachers.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

18. More paraeducator support.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

19. Opportunities to collaborate with mental health specialists.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

20. Support from colleagues.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

21. Professional development on psychological/mental disorders.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

22. Planning periods free of students.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

23. Training in verbal and physical safe crisis intervention techniques.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

24. Professional development in functional behavior analysis (FBA) and behavior intervention plans (BIP).

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

25. Walkie- talkies (for communication with paraeducators and administration).

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

26. Opportunities to collaborate with behavior specialists.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

27. Behavior management training for paraeducators.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

28. Feedback from administration on behavioral management practices.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

29. Induction programs for new EBD teachers.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

30. Professional development on school wide positive behavior interventions and supports (SWPBIS).

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate your opinions about each of the statements below by selecting Strongly disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, or Strongly agree.

The following JOB BENEFIT/AMINITY variables would increase my career longevity as an EBD teacher.

31. Stipends or bonuses for agreeing to teach EBD.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

32. Tuition reimbursement for taking more classes related to EBD.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

33. Professional support from a face to face EBD teacher support group.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

34. Professional support from an online EBD teacher support system.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

35. Free counselling services to ensure EBD teacher mental/emotional well-being.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

36. Opportunities to discuss feelings of frustration or hopelessness with the administration.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

37. Mental health days given by administration.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

38. Higher starting salaries due to the physical and mental demands of the job.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

39. Mandatory counseling services to ensure EBD teacher mental/emotional well-being.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

40. Free Gym memberships to promote the physical health of EBD teachers.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

41. Stress management training for EBD teachers.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

Part III: Please feel free to offer any suggestions you have regarding other college preparation, job support, and job benefit/amenity factors that could increase your career longevity as an EBD teacher.

Appendix D: Pilot Study E-Mail

Hello,

My name is Leroy Smith. I am the special education coordinator for the Japan district DODEA school system.

I am currently a doctoral student in the last stages of my Ph.D. program. My study focus is on determining the support factors that EBD teachers (EI, SED, BED, ED, depends on the district) need in order to increase career longevity rates. EBD teachers have historically had unusually high attrition rates when compared to other teaching disciplines. I was an EBD teacher myself for many years.

I have already received IRB approval to conduct the study. However, since I created the survey instrument best practices would have me conduct a pilot study to shore up the instrument's validity and reliability.

Please find the informed consent form (with IRB approval) as well as the teacher survey attached.

If you could, please disseminate this email to faculty members who are currently EBD teachers (EBD, EI, ED, BED, SED) or have been previously employed in this role.

The participants are asked to complete the survey and make recommendations to improve the organization of the survey as well as the phrasing of survey items. The participants may elect to offer suggestions using the track changes function in Word or to print the survey and write their thoughts. Lastly, the participants are asked to send the completed survey, with comments for improvement, to me via email leroy.smith@waldenu.edu

Again, thank you for your assistance and support in this process which aims to improve the professional success of EBD teachers and encourage the growth of the children they serve.

Leroy Smith

Appendix E: Main Study Permission Letter

Letter of Permission

My name is Leroy Smith. I am the Special Education Instructional Systems Specialist for the Japan district Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA). I am working on my Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) through Walden University. In order to complete my degree, I must do a research study, and I am requesting your help.

My study focuses on the college preparation and job support needs of special education teachers who predominately work with students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). These teachers might be titled Emotional Disturbance (ED teacher), Severe or Serious Emotional Disorder (SED teacher), Behavior Emotional Disabled (BED teacher), Emotional Impairment (EI teacher), or Emotional Behavior Disorder (EBD teacher).

I am seeking EBD teachers who would be willing to participate in an electronic survey study about college preparation and job support needs. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to take. Upon completion, participants will be asked to click the "submit" button in order to return their survey to me. By this means I will not have access to the participants' names or email addresses. The participants may elect not to participate in the study at any point in the process.

Would you be interested in helping me in this process? If you would, please disseminate the enclosed invitation and consent form to all CCBD members via CCBD newsletter, Facebook page, website, and or twitter account. The invitation and consent form contains a link to the survey. I am requesting that only those CCBD members currently employed as an EBD teacher (ED, EI, SED, BED) take the survey.

If you have any questions, you may contact me at leroy.smith@waldenu.edu and I will respond as soon as possible. You may also contact my dissertation advisor, Dr. Anne Hacker at anne.hacker@waldenu.edu.

Thank you and I look forward working with you membership.

Leroy Smith
Special Education ISS, Japan District, DODEA schools

Appendix F: CCBD Survey Recruitment Protocol

The Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

A Division of the Council for Exceptional Children

Protocol for requests for CCBD to publicize research initiatives and recruit survey responses

CCBD Support for Field Studies

CCBD recognizes the importance of empirical research in advancing efforts to improve educational outcomes for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. As a service to our members, CCBD will consider requests to link members to surveys as per the guidelines below. Additionally, researchers are advised that the CCBD membership list may be purchased from CEC for direct contact information.

1. CCBD will consider requests to promote field studies which include the survey to be administered and evidence of IRB approval for the study. That documentation must be provided to the CCBD President.

2. CCBD will consider the alignment of field studies with the CCBD mission.

3. With satisfaction of #1 and #2 above, the CCBD President will notify the CCBD Webmaster to provide a notice of the field study in the CCBD newsletter and on the website with a link to the field study site which has been provided by the researcher. CCBD will not provide a direct link to the survey.

Appendix G: Walden Participant Pool Pilot Study Guidance

Smith, Leroy V Mr. CIV OSD/DoDEA-Pacific

Subject: FW: Instructions
Attachments: Researcher_FAQ.DOC

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: Participant Pool <participantpool@waldenu.edu>
Date: Tue, Feb 9, 2016 at 7:50 AM
Subject: RE: Instructions
To: Leroy Smith <leroy.smith@waldenu.edu>

Hi Leroy,

The attached document provides some basic information for researchers who are interested in posting a study on the website. I would encourage you to also create a participant account (if you haven't already) to get familiar with the site. Please let me know if you have any specific questions.

Many students use the site to recruit for interviews or other studies that do not allow for anonymity. Since the site functions as a sort of bulletin board, you could plan to have potential participants contact you directly rather than use the system's survey function.

Sincerely,

Libby Munson

Research Ethics Support Specialist

Office of Research Ethics and Compliance

Walden University

100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 900

Minneapolis, MN 55401

Phone: (612) 312-1283 <tel:%28612%29%20312-1283>

Fax: (626) 605-0472 <tel:%28626%29%20605-0472>

Information about the Walden University Institutional Review Board, including instructions for application, may be found at this link: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/orec

From: Leroy Smith [mailto:leroy.smith@waldenu.edu]
Sent: Monday, February 08, 2016 3:54 AM
To: Participant Pool
Subject: Re: Instructions

Hi Sorry,

I found the information. I do have a question before beginning the participant request process and changing my IRB application and methodology section.

I plan on using the participant pool to find people (5-10) interested in taking a pilot survey but also need them to provide feedback on the phrasing of survey items so I can make adjustments.

I noticed on the tutorial that participation is anonymous and that my survey would have to sent electronically. I guess my question is how could the participants send the survey back to me with their hand written comments/critiques and remain anonymous? Would there be a drop box available or some mechanism that would allow participants to provide feedback while keeping their identity unknown?

Thank you,

Leroy

Appendix H: Research Questions and Survey Items Alignment

Research question	Survey items
Research Question 1 – Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified college preparation needs of leavers and stayers?	Items 5-16
Research Question 2 – Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified job support needs of leavers and stayers?	Items 17-30
Research Question 3 – Is there a statistically significant difference between the identified job benefits/amenities needs of leavers and stayers?	Items 31-41

Appendix I: Human Research Protections Training Completion

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Leroy Smith** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 06/09/2013

Certification Number: 1194265

Appendix J: Statistician Editor Confidentiality Agreement

Dissertation Editor
"America's Premier Dissertation and Thesis Service!"

CONFIDENTIAL DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT AND GUARANTEE OF AUTHENTICITY

THIS AGREEMENT, dated effective as of 7/10/2016 is by and between Dissertation-Editor.com ("RECIPIENT") and Leroy Smith ("DISCLOSER.")

RECITALS

The parties hereto desire to enter into discussions and exchange of certain written documents owned by DISCLOSER which may require the services of RECIPIENT to write original content, provide original research, or revise and edit the same.

In the course of such discussions, it will be necessary for the parties to disclose to each other certain information, which they deem to be Confidential Information (as defined herein) and a DISCLOSER (as defined herein) is willing to disclose its Confidential Information to a RECIPIENT (as defined herein) only in accordance with this Agreement.

For good and valuable consideration, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, the parties agree as follows:

1. Definitions

1.1. "DISCLOSER's Work(s)" means any and all writings and other creative works of DISCLOSER, whether or not the same have been publicly released or published.

1.2 "Confidential Information" means: (1) identity of the DISCLOSER and his related affiliates, including committee members and academic institution, any and all nonpublic or proprietary creative works or business, commercial or technical information, of a DISCLOSER, whether in written or verbal form, relating to its works, business, products, customers, operations, financial status, technology and/or intellectual property; and (2) all information marked or otherwise designated by a DISCLOSER as confidential or proprietary. Confidential Information may include, but is not limited to, academic documents of various forms, books to be published, creative writing, other copyright-protected works, business plans, business projections, financial data, technical data, memos, research, databases, designs/design rights, drawings, specifications, techniques, programs, processes, know-how, inventions, specimens, contact/customer lists, marketing plans, marketing projections, and financial records/information received from a DISCLOSER, as well as any and all research and writing information, copy, and concepts created by RECIPIENT based on information or requests disclosed by DISCLOSER.

Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, **DISCLOSER's Works** are hereby declared, and shall be treated as, Confidential Information of DISCLOSER.

1.3 "DISCLOSER" means any party to this Agreement, and its affiliates, that disclose, or have disclosed on its behalf, Confidential Information to a RECIPIENT.

1.4 "RECIPIENT" means the party, and its affiliates, that receive Confidential Information of the DISCLOSER.

2. RECIPIENT agrees to receive and hold all such Confidential Information acquired from DISCLOSER in strict confidence. RECIPIENT agrees to bind all RECIPENTS to an equivalent or stronger CONFIDENTIAL DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT when performing work for the RECIPIENT and all RECIPIENTS reside and perform work in the United States.

3. RECIPIENT agrees that it will not disclose or use Confidential Information acquired from DISCLOSER, in whole or in part, for any purposes other than for the explicit Purpose as such term is defined herein. Without affecting the generality of the foregoing, RECIPIENT agrees that (i) it will not disclose any of the DISCLOSER's Confidential Information to any third party; (ii) it will only use the DISCLOSER's Confidential Information for the Purpose; and (iii) t will not use DISCLOSER's Confidential Information for its own benefit or for the benefit of any third party.

4. The foregoing restrictions on RECIPIENT's disclosure and use of Confidential Information acquired from DISCLOSURE shall not apply (proven to the reasonable satisfaction of DISCLOSER) to the extent such information (i) was known to RECIPIENT prior to receipt from DISCLOSER (ii) was public knowledge without breach of RECIPIENT's obligations here under, (iii) was rightfully acquired by RECIPIENT from a third party without restriction on disclosure or use, (iv) was disclosed by DISCLOSER to a third party without restriction on disclosure or use, or (v) was independently developed by RECIPIENT relies as relieving it of the restrictions here under on disclosure or use of such confidential information, and provided further that in the case of any of events (ii), (iii), (iv), and (v), the removal of restrictions shall be effective only from and after the date of occurrence of the applicable event.

5. The furnishing of confidential information here under shall not constitute or be construed as a grant of any express or implied license or other right, or a covenant not to sue or forbearance from any other right of action (except as to permitted activities here under), by DISCLOSER to RECIPIENT under any of DISCLOSER's patents or other intellectual property rights.

6. This Agreement shall commence as of the day and year first written above and shall continue indefinitely with respect to any disclosures of confidential information by DISCLOSER to RECIPIENT.

Upon DISCLOSER's request (at any time and from time to time), RECIPIENT shall immediately cease any and all disclosures or uses of Confidential Information acquired from DISCLOSER (except to the extent relieved from restrictions pursuant to paragraph 4 above) and at DISCLOSER's request RECIPIENT shall promptly return all written, graphic and other tangible forms of the Confidential Information (including notes or other write-ups thereof made by RECIPIENT in connection with the disclosures by DISCLOSER) and all copies thereof made by RECIPIENT.

7. The obligations of RECIPIENT respecting disclosure and use of Confidential Information acquired from DISCLOSER shall survive the expiration, cancellation or termination of Agreement, unless such duty of the RECIPIENT is explicitly and unambiguously waived by the DISCLOSER by written consent of DISCLOSER.

8. All Confidential Information (including, but not limited to, manuscripts, documents, electronically submitted material, and orally transmitted information, as well as any original writing requested by DISCLOSER) disclosed by a DISCLOSER shall at all times remain the sole and exclusive property of DISCLOSER and cannot be used by RECIPIENT for any purpose, financially or otherwise, unless explicitly authorized by DISCLOSER in writing. Thus, DISCLOSER is the sole owner of any and all material shared with the RECIPIENT. Without limiting the foregoing in any way, DISCLOSER shall at all times remain the sole and exclusive owner of all rights, title and interest in and to all of the DISCLOSER Works (as defined herein) and the same may not be used by RECIPIENT for any purpose other than the Purpose (as such term is defined herein). Notwithstanding the generality of the foregoing, in the event RECIPIENT claims any right, title or interest of any kind in any Confidential Information of DISCLOSER, RECIPIENT hereby automatically, by operation of this Agreement and without any additional consideration (i) relinquishes said alleged right, title and interest; and (ii) transfers the same to DISCLOSER.

9. Without prejudice to the rights and remedies otherwise available to DISCLOSER, the RECIPIENT agrees that DISCLOSER shall be entitled to equitable relief, including injunction, if RECIPIENT or any party under RECIPIENT's control breaches or threatens to breach any of the provisions of this Agreement and that RECIPIENT shall not oppose the granting of such relief.

10. No failure or delay by DISCLOSER in exercising any right hereunder shall operate as a waiver thereof, nor shall any single or partial exercise thereof preclude any other or further exercise thereof or the exercise of any right, power or privilege thereunder. This Agreement may not be modified or waived as to any provision except by a separate writing by the parties hereto expressly so modifying or waiving such agreement. This Agreement shall insure to the benefit of and may be enforced by DISCLOSER and any of its successors and assigns. This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which will be deemed an original, but all of which together will constitute one

and the same instrument and be binding upon the parties. If any suit or action is filed by any party to enforce this Agreement or otherwise with respect to the subject matter of this Agreement, the prevailing party shall be entitled to recover reasonable attorney fees incurred in preparation or in prosecution or defense of such suit or action as fixed by the trial court and, if any appeal is taken from the decision of the trial court, reasonable attorney fees as fixed by the appellate court. This Agreement shall be governed, and construed, by the laws of Massachusetts without reference to conflicts of interest provisions and each party agrees that any claim, action, suit, or proceeding between the parties arising out of this Agreement will be brought and conducted exclusively within the state courts of Essex County, Massachusetts; provided, however, that if a claim must be brought in a federal forum, then it will be brought and adjudicated exclusively in the U.S.District Court for the District of Massachusetts. By execution of this Agreement, both parties consent to the jurisdiction of such courts.

GUARANTEE OF AUTHENTICITY AND COPYRIGHT

1. RECIPIENT agrees that all writing and revisions produced by RECIPIENT and returned to DISCLOSER will be original in verbiage and not plagiarized or copied from other sources in any way. Any and all information submitted to DISCLOSER that is inspired or researched from another source must be paraphrased and properly cited to ensure the material's integrity as original work.

2. RECIPIENT agrees that all writing and revisions produced by RECIPIENT on request of DISCLOSER, or in any way related to the Confidential Information provided by DISCLOSER, will not, under any circumstances, be used for any other purpose than those explicitly requested by DISCLOSER. All documents, materials, and information within these documents and materials that are submitted to DISCLOSER are the sole property of DISCLOSER and cannot be used in any way for another purpose, whether in part or in whole.

Signature of RECIPIENT: 

Signature of DISCLOSER: 

Appendix K: CCBD Website Announcement

Council for Exceptional Children | Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

The voice and vision of special education

NEWS & NOTES FROM CCBD

Let Your Voice Be Heard!!!

The Advocacy and Governmental Relations Committee (AGR) is seeking ideas on topics for our 2017 focus to assist those who work with children and youth with emotional and behavioral disorders. We began soliciting ideas from attendees at the Teacher Educators for Children with Behavior Disorders Conference this past October and wish to hear your ideas too.

Share your topical ideas with us through the survey on the CCBD website - www.ccbd.net - or by contacting any of the members of the CCBD Executive Committee between **now and February 19, 2017.**

Some past topical ideas have included: seclusion and restraint, position paper on response to intervention, mental health and PBIS monograph, and policy paper on disproportionality -- all of which, and many more, are available on the CCBD website. Please complete the following survey to let your voice, opinions, and ideas be heard.

Specific venue (e.g., journal, conference, etc.) *

回答を入力

I am interested in assisting with what topic and my name and contact information is (optional):

回答を入力

送信

Google フォームでパスワードを送信しないでください。

Opportunity to Participate in a Research Study

January 25, 2017

Dear CCBD members,

We are pleased to announce a survey study which seeks to determine the college preparation and job support needs of teachers who work with children with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). The study is being conducted by Leroy Smith for his Walden University dissertation. The researcher invites participation by all teachers of students with Emotional Disturbance, Severe or Serious Emotional Disorders, Behavior Emotional Disabilities, Emotional Impairment, or Emotional Behavior Disorders.

> CCBD recognizes the importance of empirical research in advancing efforts to improve educational outcomes for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. As a service to our members, CCBD considers requests to link members to surveys as per the guidelines below, both of which have been met for this study.
>
> 1. CCBD reviews requests to promote field studies which include the survey to be administered and evidence of IRB approval for the study.
>
> 2. CCBD will consider the alignment of field studies with the CCBD mission.
>
> Therefore, the opportunity to participate in this study is made available to you by CCBD; however, endorsements should not be inferred.

If you are willing to provide your opinions to support this important work, please you use the link below to complete the 20 minute survey. The consent form and survey are included in the link. **The link will be accessible until March 24, 2017.**

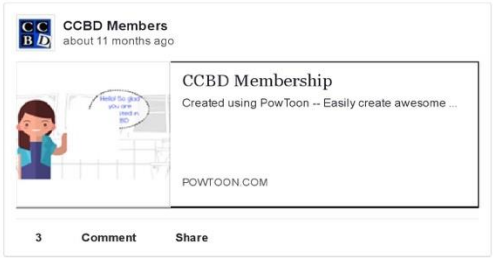
https://www.dropbox.com/s/bwuk1moyum8r4m4/Informed%20Consent%20and%20Survey%20Link%20%282%29.pdf?dl=0

Mr. Smith appreciates your consideration of supporting this research to inform practices of preparation and support of teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

Respectfully,

Kathleen Lynne Lane, CCBD President
Nick Gage, President Elect
Justin Cooper, Vice President
Wendy Oakes, Past President

How to join CCBD



Journal Announcement

ation Grants & Funding

Why CCBD

Appendix L: CCBD Newsletter Announcement

Council for Exceptional Children | CCBD Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

The voice and vision of special education

Behavior Today (CCBD Newsletter)

Opportunity to Participate in a Research Study

January 25, 2017

Dear CCBD members,

We are pleased to announce a survey study which seeks to determine the college preparation and job support needs of teachers who work with children with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). The study is being conducted by Leroy Smith for his Walden University dissertation. The researcher invites participation by all teachers of students with Emotional Disturbance, Severe or Serious Emotional Disorders, Behavior Emotional Disabilities, Emotional Impairment, or Emotional Behavior Disorders.

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1. CCBD reviews requests to promote field studies which include the survey to be administered and evidence of IRB approval for the study.

2. CCBD will consider the alignment of field studies with the CCBD mission.

Therefore, the opportunity to participate in this study is made available to you by CCBD; however, endorsements should not be inferred.

If you are willing to provide your opinions to support this important work, please you use the link below to complete the 20 minute survey. The consent form and survey are included in the link. The link will be accessible until March 24, 2017.

https://www.dropbox.com/s/bwuk1moyum8r4m4/Informed%20Consent%20and%20Survey%20Link%20%282%29.pdf?dl=0

Mr. Smith appreciates your consideration of supporting this research to inform practices of preparation and support of teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

Respectfully,

Kathleen Lynne Lane, CCBD President
Nick Gage, President Elect
Justin Cooper, Vice President
Wendy Oakes, Past President

Changes to CCBD Journals

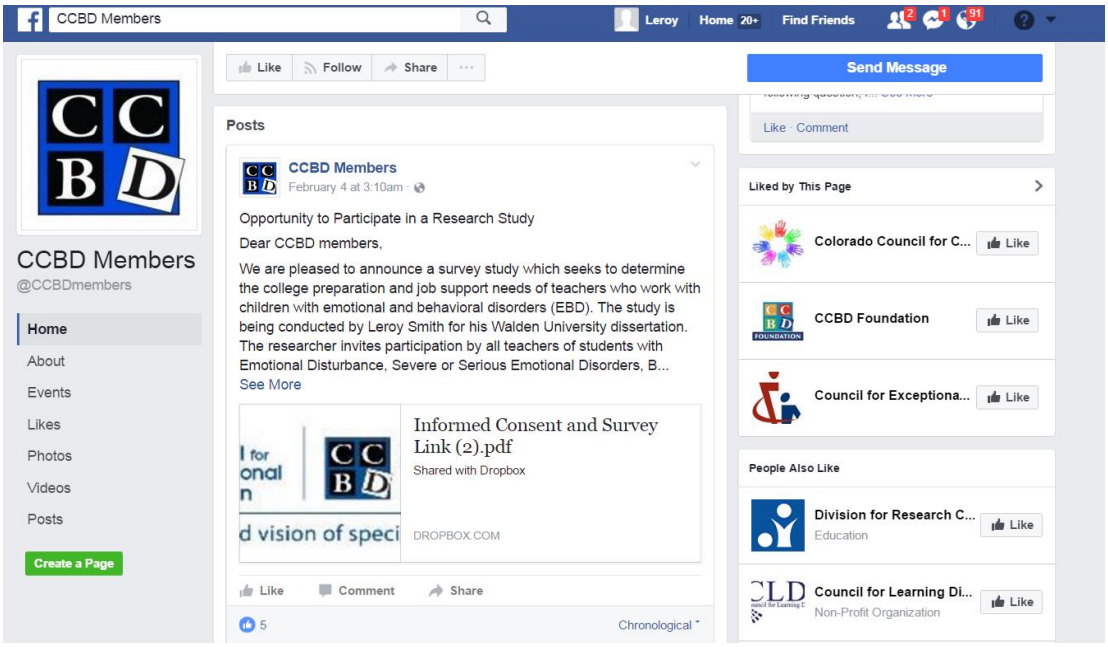
The Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders is proud to announce some recent changes to the premier research journal in the field -- Behavioral Disorders. These changes include the appointment of a new editorial team of Bryan Cook, PhD (University of Hawaii) and Daniel M. Maggin, PhD (University of Illinois at Chicago). In addition, Behavioral Disorders has joined the Hammill Institute on Disabilities. Hammill is the leading publisher of special education research and practice and affords several benefits that will assist the journal remain at the forefront of research on students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). Examples of these benefits include enhanced visibility; increased support for authors, reviewers, and editors; use of Manuscript Central / Scholar One's user-friendly online system for manuscript submission; online archiving of journal issues; online first version of articles that will provide readers with immediate access to the most up-to-date research; and a return of hard copies in addition to the electronic versions of the journal for subscribers. These exciting developments will allow Behavioral Disorders to better serve students with EBD and the dedicated professionals working in their service through the dissemination of rigorous and relevant research.

Beyond Behavior (BB) has also joined the Hammill Institute family as a journal designed specifically for practitioners (e.g., teachers, administrators, counselors, paraprofessionals) who work with children with EBD. BB will now be publishing six articles each issue that promote evidence based methods and materials for use in a wide variety of educational programs and settings.

Want to submit a manuscript? Check out the link below for changes and information!

Submit manuscripts at https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/bd.

Appendix M: CCBD Facebook Announcement



Appendix N: CCBD Twitter Announcement