A POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE APPROACH TO TEACHING STUDENTS

WITH BEHAVIOR DIFFICULTIES IN JUNIOR HIGH

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the implementation of a Positive Behavior Support (PBS) program on students with behavior difficulties in junior high according to the perceptions of the principal and teachers. A qualitative research design was used in order to produce a reliable and valid study that answered the research questions and provided a theoretical context for the findings. The population of interest was the principal and teachers in a junior high school. The sample studied was a subgroup containing one principal and eight teachers who answered ten interview questions pertaining to the affects of PBS implementation on students with behavior difficulties. The findings of the first research question were developed into three overall themes derived from the data of the study. It was determined that the principal and teachers perceived PBS programs had affected students with behavior difficulties academically, behaviorally, and socially. The last two research questions were answered through a coding process that provided categories and smaller themes to be explored in future research. The results of this research study revealed an example of successful implementation without previous exposure to a similar PBS program in elementary school. This research also implied that the implementation of PBS has positively affected the overall climate in junior high schools. Implications derived from the study helped improve the current PBS program and showed encouraging results for other junior high schools to imitate in the future.

Dedication

This research study is dedicated to my family and friends. My husband, Michael Sebetka, has been the most supportive and understanding person possible throughout my PhD. He has encouraged me to keep writing and staying positive through it all. I also was pregnant with our first son during the last portion of my research. This definitely was a big motivator to get finished before he arrived, and I appreciated his cooperation through it all. I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my husband and son.

As a former special education teacher in Iowa, I have to also thank all my previous students who inspired me to do more in the field of education. I was fortunate enough to teach in Iowa for eight years. Although there was no Positive Behavior Support (PBS) program in place at the junior high school that I worked at, the teachers and administrators strived to create a positive environment.

My family and friends' support has helped make this an easier process. I want to especially thank EmmyLou Houston, for always being such a great friend, and inspiring me on an everyday basis. My mom and dad, Ann and Mike Herzberger, have also encouraged me to follow my dreams, and I really appreciate all of the values that they have instilled in me. My Grandma Chiaramonte was a role model for me as a child and now as an adult. She taught me that a smile is contagious and that it is important to have a positive attitude. I feel very lucky to have been surrounded by such wonderful people throughout my life.

I really enjoyed the dissertation process and researching a subject that was close to my heart. I have always believed that a positive demeanor as a teacher creates positive reactions from students.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

The job description of the principal and teacher has increased in public schools, requiring a supportive set of behavior management skills that are needed to provide effective administration and instruction to meet the needs of students at all ability levels. Inclusion initiatives have changed special education settings dramatically, and more students with behavior difficulties are educated in the general education classroom (Freeman et al., 2006). Hieneman, Dunlap, and Kincaid (2005) showed that Positive Behavior Support (PBS) programs have helped teachers provide consistent instruction to students with behavior difficulties in the general education classroom.

Students with behavior difficulties are more prevalent in schools today, and teachers need support to effectively instruct these students (Bambara & Kern, 2005). PBS programs have been shown to be beneficial in elementary and high school to decrease problem behaviors and increase student achievement (Lane, Wehby, Robertson, & Rogers, 2007). Studies have shown that PBS programs have helped students adapt to a more positive environment, conducive to learning, and exceeding expectations in preschool and elementary school levels (Lane et al., 2007).

Students with behavior difficulties can be defined as those students in special education with behavior disorders or any student in general education who misbehaves on a regular basis (Bambara & Kern, 2005). Principal and teacher perspectives on this topic can lead to future implementation of PBS programs in junior high schools. This study

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expanded on existing knowledge of how PBS programs have affected elementary and high school students. The term *PBS* is used to encompass the wide variety of Positive Behavior Support programs used in schools. Research in a junior high setting could contribute to the field of education and help future principals implement behavioral programs that will lead to academic and behavioral success.

Background of the Study

There is extensive research to show that punishment and negative reinforcement does not work for students at the junior high level (Cotton, 2001). Fox, Dunlap, and Powell (2002) explain that children can develop antisocial behavior patterns at a young age, and it can be a hard habit to break. Elementary schools that develop PBS programs to meet the needs of their students have shown improvement behaviorally and socially with the students that participate in the program (Bambara, 2005). Students, who enter junior high school with a history of having PBS strategies implemented from elementary school, have been shown to experience a smoother transition in a new educational environment than those students without PBS programs (Wheeler & Richey, 2005).

It is not always a solution to educate these students in a specialized classroom anymore (Armstrong, 2000). Special education law requires that students are educated to the greatest extent possible within the general education environment (IDEA, 1997; Pub. L. No. 105,17). It is apparent that general education teachers are providing instruction to more students with behavior difficulties than in the past (Lohrmann & Bambara, 2006). Therefore, new and effective classroom management techniques are essential for the success of the students in the general education setting (Armstrong).

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Inclusion initiatives have created the problem of unequipped teachers dealing with a student's behavior that is impeding the learning environment of all students. Research has been done on preschool, elementary, and high schools to show the benefits of PBS programs (Lane et al., 2007; Scott, Park, Swain-Bradway & Landers, 2007; & Sularski, 2010), but junior high schools have not been studied in order to show what works in this type of setting without previous exposure.

PBS emerged in the mid 1980s as a systematic and effective approach for significantly improving student behavior across academic settings (Freeman, et al., 2006). This program offered an alternative to punishment and previous failed attempts to improve problem behavior. There has been growing acceptance in the twenty-first century of PBS programs. This is due to the reauthorization of IDEA and NCLB, which encouraged the use of Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and positive supports for students with behavioral challenges (Skiba, Bear, & Browning Wright, 2004).

PBS can be a school-wide approach to behavior and classroom management in order to provide a clear and consistent plan for implementing inclusive practices, or it can be individualized to improve outcomes for students with behavior disabilities (Hieneman et al., 2005). It can also be implemented separately in each classroom to improve classroom management techniques and provide teachers with supports and interventions to work with students. PBS is an empirically validated set of strategies for preventing problem behaviors before they occur and promoting pro-social behavior in schools (Carr et al., 2002).

Tillery et al. (2010) showed that school personnel learn a common language that combines positive strategies from special and general education classrooms to develop a

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consistency and fairness in education through PBS programs. There has been much research on the effectiveness of individual behavior support plans that are derived from functional behavioral assessments in the school setting (Hieneman et al., 2005). These assessments provide possible interventions to decrease problem behavior by determining antecedents and consequences of the behavior. PBS programs may be a positive solution in supporting teachers and students with and without behavior difficulties in the junior high school setting.

<h2 style="text-align:center">Statement of the Problem</h2>

There is a gap in the literature regarding how principals and teachers perceive the impact of the implementation of a PBS program at the junior high setting. It is evident that students who exhibit problem behavior have difficulty being successful in junior high school (Warren et al., 2006). PBS programs are developed for the whole school, classrooms, and individual students with behavior difficulties (Hieneman et al. 2005). It is important to explore a consistent program to teach appropriate social skills and behaviors in order to increase the student's success in junior high school.

Research is needed on junior high schools that have implemented PBS programs in order to determine the effectiveness of the overall outcome. The literature on junior high schools is based on students who have already been accustomed to PBS in elementary school. Sularski (2010) points out that principals play a large role in the acceptance and implementation of PBS. They determine the parameters and mold the program to fit their particular school each year. It is the principal's job to work

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collectively with the teachers and staff in order to develop an effective PBS program for their particular school.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the implementation of a PBS program on students with behavior difficulties in junior high according to the perceptions of the principal and teachers. The results could be beneficial for principals and teachers in junior high settings and ultimately increase the success of students academically, behaviorally, and socially. Principals and teachers are dealing with more difficult behaviors than in the past and need to collaborate more to provide consistent expectations (Scott et al., 2007).

The term *behavior difficulties* was used in this study in order to encompass the majority of students who exhibit behavior that is problematic, misguided, aggressive, and/or negative. These characteristics can cause great difficulty in the school environment for teachers, administrators, and other students (Bartlett, Etscheidt, & Weisenstein, 2007). This study can provide an example for other junior high schools on what was successful in the implementation process of a PBS program. The principal and teacher's perceptions were analyzed in order to find similar themes and develop patterns through open-ended questions.

The principal and teachers work with students with behavior difficulties on a regular basis and should be on the same page when it comes to reinforcement, rules, and expectations. It causes problems when there is a disconnect between students, teachers, and the principal (Carr et al., 2002). PBS programs are intended to provide consistency

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for the students in working with these individuals at school. The principal's perception of how the PBS program has affected students with behavior difficulties could provide clarity on what is working and what needs more improvement (Frey, Lingo, & Nelson, 2008). Teachers could also provide understanding on how PBS has affected students' success in their classroom.

The principal and teachers spend the majority of time with these students therefore their opinions should be taken into consideration. More research literature was needed on how principals and teachers work collaboratively in order to implement a new program successfully in junior high. The results of this study could contribute to the field of educational administration and leadership by providing an example of a school-wide program that promotes consistency and behavior management.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the study was determined in order to better understand how the implementation process of PBS programs have affected the perceptions of students with behavior difficulties in junior high schools. There has been an increasing amount of research and interest in the application of PBS programs in order to provide instruction and promote a safe learning environment for all students (Wheeler & Richey, 2005). PBS programs are often adapted by school districts and start in elementary schools. More research conducted on junior high schools that are first to implement PBS programs could provide a foundation for future schools to follow. This study will contribute to new knowledge in the field of education and behavior management.

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The principal at the junior high was interested in knowing how PBS has affected her students and teachers after implementing it in 2005. This school was the first junior high in the district to incorporate PBS in the curriculum and expectations; therefore the students were not previously accustomed to it in elementary school. Students typically begin misbehaving in elementary school and develop bad behavior patterns that are hard to break (Magiera & Zigmond, 2005). Junior high school can be a tough time for students with behavior difficulties and this can become a chronic problem for them. The school has continually changed and improved their PBS program to meet the needs of the individual students each school year.

The junior high in this study consisted of seventh and eighth graders of all ability levels. Special education teachers and general education teachers co-taught in some academic subjects in order to meet the needs of all students. All the special education students at the school were educated in the least restrictive environment, with individualized support from special education teachers when needed. It was one-out-of-three junior high schools in the district that had full or partial inclusion of students with behavior difficulties. The school in this study was also the only junior high school that had fully implemented PBS over a five-year period.

Research conducted on this junior high could support the primary theoretical topics of co-teaching and inclusive practices. As a result of the theoretical framework developed, it will provide an example for other schools in the district or in other states that have not yet adopted a PBS program. This research will also provide an example of a school that has fully implemented a PBS program without students having prior experience in elementary school.

Research Questions

The following three research questions guided this study:

R1: What are the perceptions of the principal and teachers regarding how Positive Behavior Support (PBS) programs have affected students with behavior difficulties in a junior high setting?

R2: What are the perceptions of the principal and teachers regarding how PBS has affected the overall climate in a junior high school?

R3: What factors do the staff at a junior high school identify as having contributed to the successful implementation of PBS programs?

Significance of the Study

In order to fix what is wrong in education, it is important to determine what a school is doing right. Tillery et al. (2010) discuss the fact that recent research has focused on how schools are failing and students are increasingly misbehaving. It is important to also study the positive environments, to determine what the struggling schools need to change or imitate in order to be effective. Programs are being developed in order to decrease negative behavior and increase the success level of students with behavior difficulties. PBS has shown to be beneficial in preschool, elementary, and in high schools to create a safe environment that is conducive to learning for students of all ability levels (Lane et al., 2007; Sularski, 2010).

This study was significant because it revealed how PBS programs in junior high have affected students with behavior difficulties academically, behaviorally, and socially. Hieneman et al. (2005) believe "PBS is well suited to helping students with behavior

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disorders adapt their behavior to general education classrooms so that emotional and intellectual growth can occur" (p. 780). If positive perceptions occurred through interviews with teachers and the principal, it could be determined that the implementation of PBS has increased the success of students with behavior difficulties in the junior high setting.

The term *PBS* was used to encompass the wide variety of Positive Behavior Support programs with a combination of different acronyms. Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) is now used in many schools and districts to describe their program. The word *intervention* was added throughout the implementation of many programs. Bartlett et al. (2007) contest that when the "behavior of a student interferes with the student's learning or that of others, there needs to be positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports" (p.75).

Some schools and districts use School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS) to describe their PBS program. All of these acronyms and names describe a common concept of positive reinforcement and are developed from the original PBS program. The idea of teaching consistency and clear behavior expectations in PBS programs has not yet been shown in research to have a negative effect on education, no matter which acronym is chosen.

Definition of Terms

There are a number of terms that are important to this study. As such the following terms were operationally defined:

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Accommodations. Changes in testing materials or procedures that enable students to participate in assessments in ways that reflect their skills and abilities rather than their disabilities (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 2004).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). As a result of NCLB, each state has developed a plan for the minimum levels of improvement in measurable terms of student performance that local educational agencies must achieve within the given time frames specified by the NCLB legislation. In Iowa, student proficiency is determined through student achievement data in reading and math from the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) assessments and the alternate assessment (Mass-Galloway, 2008).

Attitude. Attitudes are internal beliefs that influence personal actions and that reflect characteristics. They cannot be directly observed; therefore they are inferred by teachers and principals in a school setting (Schunk, 2008).

Behavior Difficulties. Students with behavior difficulties can have a majority of different symptoms that can negatively affect their academic achievement. The terms *Emotional Behavior Disturbance, Behavior Disability,* or *Behavior Disorder* are interchangeable from state to state. Federal regulations define it as a condition exhibiting one or more characteristics that affect a child's educational performance for a long period of time and to a marked degree. The characteristics included in this definition are an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a

general pervasive mood or unhappiness; and a tendency to develop symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems (Bartlett et al. 2007).

Collaborate. To work jointly with others, especially in intellectual efforts such as solving problems and setting goals (Owens & Valesky, 2007).

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA). A way to identify environmental events that influence negative behaviors in the school setting. The purpose is to provide effective and nonaversive interventions for the most severe problems (Hieneman et al., 2005).

Inclusion. Refers to the aspect of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) legal requirements that mandate that all considerations of the educational placement of a child with disabilities begin with placement in the general education classroom and in regular student activities (Bartlett et al., 2007).

Individualized Education Plan (IEP). A document that specifies the long-term and short-term goals of an instructional program, where the program was delivered, who will deliver it, and how progress was evaluated (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 2004).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Legislation implemented in 1977 that established education as an entitlement for children with disabilities who needed special education and related services in states that accepted federal funds. A reauthorization of Public Law 94-142 in 1990 where congress renamed the Education for All handicapped Children Act and reaffirmed a national intention to support alternative education for students with special learning needs. The term *handicapped children* was replaced with *children with disabilities* and autism and brain injury were added to the disabilities approved. This law required individualized transition plans for students who were 16 years of age or older (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 2004).

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Intervention. Extra considerations for disruptive behavior to help a student succeed in the general education classroom. They can include behavioral, academic, or social interventions at all educational levels (Bartlett et al., 2007).

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Children with disabilities are required to be educated in the classroom most appropriate to their ability levels. School board officials must provide a continuum of alternative placements from least to most restrictive. Educators must review a variety of factors when considering the restrictiveness of the environment where children are educated (Russo, 2004).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB). United States federal law that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 in order to improve the performance of U.S. primary and secondary schools on January 8, 2002. It increased the standards of accountability for states and school districts to provide more flexibility in choosing which schools to attend and increased focus on reading and math (Spring, 2008).

Positive Behavior Support (PBS). An assessment-based approach for supporting students with behavior problems that provides an empirically validated set of strategies for preventing problems and promoting prosocial behavior (Carr et al., 2002). The term *PBS* is chosen in this study to also represent *PBIS* and *SWPBS*.

Assumptions

The assumptions of this study were statements by the researcher that certain components of the research are understood to be true. They were elements in the study that were taken for granted and assumed to happen. The assumptions were made about

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the participants, the students, the interview, the classroom environment, the analysis of the study, and the results. The participant's answers to the research questions were assumed to be answered truthfully and accurately. This assumption was made in many qualitative studies and determines part of the reliability of the study (Creswell, 2008). It was assumed by the researcher that the teachers had a positive outlook on PBS before implementing this study, which explains the second assumption listed below.

Special education laws and regulations supported the third assumption that these students would be educated in the general education classroom (Bartlett et al., 2007). This was an assumption because all schools do not follow this regulation on a consistent basis with students with behavior difficulties. It was also assumed that there were students with behavior difficulties every school year that PBS was being implemented over the past five years of the initial process of the program. The last assumption was that the decrease in negative behavior was due to the implementation of the PBS program and not due to another external factor.

The list of the following assumptions were present in this study:

1. The principal and teachers would respond to interview questions with accuracy and elaborate enough for the researcher to develop themes and patterns.

2. The teachers supported the implementation of PBS and thought it was benefiting the success of students with behavior difficulties.

3. The junior high students with behavior difficulties are in the general education classroom on a regular basis.

4. There were students with behavior difficulties in the junior high school every year that PBS was implemented in this research study.

5. Students decreased negative behaviors in junior high as a result of the implementation of PBS.

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Limitations

The limitations were the elements in the study where the researcher has no control. The main limitation in qualitative research is that the results cannot be directly generalized to the larger population (Creswell, 2008). Many assumptions can later turn to limitations of the study after the results are achieved. The sample in this study was limited to nine participants who answered interview questions. This was a limitation because it was a small number compared to the larger population of teachers at the junior high school. The school chosen was considered a limitation because it was just one-out-of-three junior highs in the district and might not represent the district as a whole population.

It is difficult to require teachers to be thoroughly consistent in their classroom management techniques, because all teachers have different personalities and teaching styles. This was considered in the third limitation to this study. Generalizing information in this study was difficult to do for every junior high and middle school in the country. Different demographics need to be taken into consideration, and some school districts do not have junior high schools. Middle schools are present in some districts and consist of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students, while other districts have other configurations of which grade levels are together in each school. The last limitation presented in this study was the fact that there was not a baseline that was established before the school implemented PBS to determine a change after implementation.

The list of the following limitations were present in this study:

1. The sample consisted of one principal, four general education, and four special education teachers.

2. The study was limited to one junior high school in a district where there was a total of three junior high schools.

3. The teachers' classroom management techniques were not consistent with each classroom in the school.

4. The information in this study might not generalize to students with behavior difficulties in other junior high and middle schools.

5. There was not a baseline that was established at the junior high before they implemented PBS.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative, descriptive research design was used in this case study. Qualitative research is described as a type of educational research where the "researcher relies on the views of participants, asks broad, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words from participants; describes and analyzes these words for themes; and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner" (Creswell, 2008, p. 46). This type of research was chosen in order to produce a study that provides an in-depth look at the educational context from the perspectives of the teachers and principal. Gall et al. (2003) describe case study research as a descriptive study of "instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspectives of the participants involved" (p. 619).

Through a case study design, the qualitative purpose statement and research questions were broad and involved studying a small number of individuals thoroughly. Creswell (2008) explained that it consists of collecting data using forms with general, emerging questions to permit the participant to a generate a response. Through gathering word or image data and collecting information from a small number of individuals, qualitative research can be very beneficial. A case study is typically used when the

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questions come from the themes that emerged from previous inclusive research. On the topic of implementing PBS programs to increase the success of students with behavior difficulties, case studies were not prevalent in the current research on this topic. The perspectives of special education and general education teachers could provide insight on what is working in the classroom and add to an existing theory.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

This study was divided into five chapters in order to fully explain how PBS was implemented in a junior high setting and how it has affected students with behavior difficulties. Chapter 1 described the problem and purpose of the study. It explained the importance of a study of this nature and the lack of literature on implementing PBS in a junior high setting. The second chapter provided the literature review of previous research on this topic. Chapter 3 described the methodology developed in order to fully understand the problem and provide a way to measure the results. Chapter 4 presented the data produced from the methodology in a systematic and organized manner. The last chapter summarized the results and conclusions, and provided recommendations for future research.

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CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The current literature pertaining to Positive Behavior Support (PBS) and how it has affected students with behavior difficulties was reviewed comprehensively in this chapter. Positive Behavior Support focuses on proactive ways to teach students how to act appropriately and positively in school (Carr et al., 2002). Students with behavior difficulties can exhibit negative behaviors in junior high school. They need guidance and support in order to be successful academically and socially. Teachers and principals play a vital role in the lives of students exhibiting this negative behavior. PBS research literature in the past decade has focused on the theoretical framework of the program, the historical context, and the positive reinforcement aspect (Soukup, 2011).

In the past decade, it has become apparent that educational law is continuously changing. PBS programs were started throughout the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) era. NCLB has a negative connotation considering the fact that the word *no* and the word *behind* are negative words, instead of positive. NCLB will be replaced in 2014 with the *Race to the Top* educational reform, which has a much more positive name.

Educational reform has also played a vital role in the implementation of PBS programs in junior high schools. Special education classes were not separated in the schools as much anymore, and *Highly Qualified* mandates were changing the look of the "one teacher" classroom. Co-teaching initiatives began in schools all over the United States to adhere to the changes in educational law. Special education teachers were

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teaching in the same classroom with general education teachers. Students of all ability levels were learning together and differentiated instruction was the norm.

In a typical seventh or eighth grade classroom, there could be students reading at the first grade level sitting next to students who were reading beyond the high school level. Teachers had a larger responsibility to deliver instruction to students with a wide variety of skills. The student population got broader academically and behaviorally over the NCLB era, and programs were being developed in all states to meet the needs of students in public schools. PBS programs had a theoretical background that formed a framework and provided data for schools to research before implementing the program (Hieneman et al., 2005).

Positive Behavior Support

Students with behavior difficulties have been around since the start of the very first public school and have been handled in many ways throughout history. Previous reprimands are now considered illegal, and negative punishments are in the past. School districts have initiated zero-tolerance policies, installed metal detectors, required uniforms, hired security guards, implemented in-school detention, suspension, expulsion, and assigned alternative placements for schools (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

PBS followed a theoretical framework within the fields of psychology and education. It was founded on three theories that have to do with: Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA), Inclusion, and Individualized Interventions (Carr et al., 2002). ABA determined the motivation for specific undesirable behaviors and replaced negative behaviors with positive reinforcement. The goal of ABA was to determine what was

causing the behavior and promote a positive change in that behavior. PBS was implemented after ABA was in schools, in order to provide an intervention and approach to reduce problem behaviors and enhance the quality of life of all students (Dunlap, 2006). The last theoretical concept that PBS was developed for was the person-centered values that focused on interventions to meet the unique needs of students experiencing behavior difficulties (Carr et al.).

There is a large amount of research on the token economies used in PBS programs all over the United States (Wheeler & Richey, 2005). Students receive incentives or some sort of tokens when they follow directions, stay on task, and display positive behaviors. Many studies have been conducted to determine if this *token economy* is effective and useful in elementary settings (Sularski, 2010; Tillery, 2010; Hieneman, 2005). These incentives for making positive choices are not implemented in every school that has initiated PBS programs. It is just one aspect that was included to promote positive choices and get students to buy into the overall concept of PBS.

A research study conducted by Lohrmann, Gorman, Martin and Palmieri (2008) showed how teachers can have some resistance to the new adoption of PBS programs in their schools. The researchers in this study identified five barriers to this change that impacted the implementation of PBS. These barriers were lack of leadership, hopelessness, skepticism about a universal intervention, feelings of disenfranchisement towards the mission of the school, and philosophical differences. Lohrmann et al. discussed the importance of providing education and support to eliminate these barriers.

Skiba and Sprangue (2008) showed evidence that school-wide PBS programs can prevent the onset of behavior difficulties and reduce school disruptions. This research

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provided data to suggest that PBS programs have also had a positive impact on school climate and academic outcomes. Many schools are still in the initial phase of implementation of PBS programs and have not had an opportunity for evaluation and improvement. Since PBS programs are increasing in public school systems, there is a need for more research on the implementation process.

PBS programs can provide consistency through a prevention-oriented approach, by eliminating problem behaviors before they can negatively affect students. Previous research studies have shown that administrators spend too much time on discipline and reacting to negative situations that could have been prevented (Soukup, 2011; Sularski, 2010; & Tillery, Varjas, Meyers, & Collins, 2010). Too many students are being kicked out of the classroom and sent to the principal's office (Bartlett et al., 2007). Therefore, they miss out on important instructional material in order to succeed in school. PBS could be a positive solution to the problem of misguided behavior in junior high schools today (Hieneman et al., 2005).

These negative behaviors are of concern because they are interfering with the student's own learning and the learning of their peers. In today's classroom, less time is spent on instruction and more time is being spent on discipline and reprimanding students for negative behaviors (Lohrmann & Bambara, 2006). Many teachers are unable to provide an environment that is conducive to learning for all students. If this continues, academic success could decrease for students with behavior difficulties and for all other students that are affected by their disruptions (Armstrong, 2000).

The 2004 provisions to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) have also increased inclusive practices in most school districts (Russo, 2004). "The expansion of the role of

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the federal government in education has taken place in a climate of strong public reaction against the schools" (Spring, 2008, p. 389). *No Child Left Behind* has a negative connotation considering the fact the title is written in a negative manner. With the enactment of NCLB, students with behavior difficulties are fully included in the general education classroom. Inclusion initiatives have risen in public school systems, and special education classes are diminishing.

PBS programs have supported the educational legislation on inclusion and increased the likelihood of success for these students (Scott, Park, Swain-Bradway & Landers, 2007). Soodak (2003) points out that inclusive education is primarily about belonging, membership, and acceptance in the school and community. Inclusive settings have more than tripled in the past 15 years (Soodak, 2003). Principals provide leadership and educational administration in order to promote an academic environment conducive to learning for students at all ability levels. School wide PBS programs are implemented by principals in order to meet the needs of these students and encourage a positive and proactive approach to teaching.

Historical Context of PBS Programs

The historical context of PBS can be traced all the way back to well known psychological perspectives beginning in the 1890's. The Freudian era continues to contribute to research literature in the twenty first century, and the popular term of Pavlov's dog played a significant role in the underlying concepts of PBS. This term was used to describe someone who reacts to a situation before thinking critically. The well

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known story of Pavlov's dog salivating before a positive stimulus broke grounds for positive reinforcement and changing behavior.

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis viewpoint did not have any research to back it up but it was also historically significant. His ideas and concepts have transference to other psychological perspectives on how to deal with children at the school age. Freud's work had a large contribution to the conscious and unconscious of decision making and the overall hope was to improve the client.

Erik Erikson, who was a student of Freud's, had a psychosocial perspective that described development as covering the entire lifespan. He broadened Freud's perspective and believed that problems were based on individuals versus society (Corey, 2004). Many psychologists at the beginning of the 1900s suggested that people wanted their basic needs met on a regular basis, as well as feeling loved and a sense of self worth (Evertson, Emmer, & Worsham, 2005). PBS programs strive to meet the basic needs of students and provide necessary support and encouragement to feel appreciated and worthy of attention.

Carl Rodgers also played a role in the underlying concept of PBS. His perspective was more positive, and he developed a person-centered theory on how to change behavior. He believed that there were three things that were needed in order for an environment to be effective. The three concepts were congruence of the counselor, unconditional positive regard, and empathetic understanding (Corey, 2004). All of these concepts from Rogers, Erickson, Freud and Pavlov have been added upon to ultimately develop PBS programs that effectively work with students in a public school setting.

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According to research, B.F. Skinner's ideas and concepts are perhaps the most related to the current underpinnings of PBS today (Carr et al., 2002). Skinner invented operant conditioning and focused on positive and negative reinforcement in order to increase the likelihood of behavior patterns. Skinner is known as the most influential psychologist of the twentieth century (Corey, 2004). Skinner's work was considered a behaviorist theoretical perspective. Skinner's research on operant conditioning led to the idea of reinforcement and punishment, which had a positive or negative response by his subjects. The research showed that when negative reinforcement occurred, the response or behavior was directly followed by the removal of the negative stimulus, which, in turn, increased the behavior's frequency of occurrence (Skinner, 1976).

Carr et al. (2002) discussed the fact that the operant conditioning framework adapted from Skinner's research had a significant impact in the overall development of PBS. The combination of previous psychological perspectives and valid research has played a role in the implementation of PBS programs in public school systems. There have been numerous research studies on well-disciplined and struggling schools, in order to compare discipline programs and structure (Sagett, 2004). Canter and Canter (2001) created PBS by combining theoretical and practical aspects of assertion training with competencies based on effective teaching and learning. PBS was developed after extensive research on the historical data and educational reform had changed how education was being delivered (Fox, Dunlap, & Powell, 2002).

Wheeler and Richey (2005) researched the history of theoretical models for understanding the behavior of students in order to maximize their learning potential and decrease problem behaviors. The psychodynamic, biological, developmental, and

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ecological model all describe behavior patterns and relate to the historical context of PBS initiatives. Research suggests that although these models played a large role in the underlying concept of PBS, the program has changed to meet the needs of students at all levels (Fox et al., 2002). Fox et al. showed in their research that students can be more challenging today considering the fact that they do not always have positive role models at home. This research also pointed out the fact that PBS needed to be addressed at home as well as in the schools for it to be truly effective.

Educational Reform

Educational reform has happened throughout history and has helped shape the PBS program. PBS began in the mid 1980s for a substitute to the punishment and negative reinforcement techniques being used in schools (Hieneman et al., 2005). This instructional approach was more positive than previous attempts to eliminate behavior problems in school aged children. Hieneman et al. researched the trends in educational service delivery and showed that the majority of students with behavior difficulties were being educated in the general education classroom. Educational reform played a large role in this new environment for students and PBS programs supported this change.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) enacted in 1997 was one of the first educational laws which required the use of positive interventions as behavioral change strategies (Sugai & Horner, 2002). The Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions was developed in 1999 as a result of the IDEA legislation and the increased amount of research being conducted on PBS (Sularski, 2010). This positive educational support phenomenon continued to expand through the 2004 provisions of IDEA, and states were

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beginning to establish PBS technical assistance centers for schools to access. Each state soon developed websites in order to support PBS implementation in many school districts that were ultimately funded by IDEA (Sularski).

NCLB was put into law on January 8, 2002, to close the achievement gap of students in American schools. Johnson's (2003) research states that the NCLB Act reshaped student, teacher, and administrator evaluation and dramatically recast the consequences for below-par performance. Public school accountability was widely supported in this article, but there are many different viewpoints on how to implement accountability standards that could pertain to students with behavior difficulties. There are penalties against schools who failed to meet these standards, and teachers and principals have been fired if they did not meet AYP consistently. Some of the most influential education groups at the state level are teachers' unions, state departments of education, school boards' associations, administrators' associations, and parent-teacher associations.

The Safe School Act was a federal law in order to create a safe and orderly environment in schools after NCLB was enacted. The enactment of this law showed the importance of developing school-wide programs to meet the needs of students and teachers. PBS programs were being developed across the nation to show that schools were doing something to keep their environment safe for everyone. This law also required that all schools would be free of violence, as well as drugs and alcohol. It was thought that if schools were safer, then students would learn more and be less likely to misbehave. Schools were federally funded in 2008 to develop a safe school plan to create a positive learning environment (Department of Education, 2003). Frey, Lingo, and

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Nelson (2008) reported that more than 5300 schools had implemented school-wide PBS programs by 2008 compared to only 500 in 2002.

President Barack Obama initiated the "Race to the Top" program to reward states for making changes to improve struggling schools. This was part of his economic stimulus plan to form a completion for funding through a point system showing improvements. This happened during a time when educational funding was decreasing due to NCLB and schools not meeting AYP. The goal of this education reform was for all students to graduate from high school and be prepared for college and a career. This law would change the previous funding techniques and provide over four billion dollars to struggling schools throughout the nation. This is the largest amount of federal discretionary education money in history. In his State of the Union Speech on January 25, 2011, President Obama stated that "Race to the Top should be the approach we follow this year as we replace No Child Left Behind with a law that's more flexible and focused on what's best for our kids." It is apparent that even educational reform is being approached in a more positive manner.

Race to the Top was being discussed in legislation during the preliminary literature review and research conducted in this study. There is a need for research about the effects that this law has had on students with behavior difficulties and positive reinforcement. The positive perceptions of teachers and principals about the changes in educational reform could have an even more positive effect on the students. The literature on positive reinforcement has shown a positive correlation between teacher attitude and student behavior. If a teacher shows that they want to be in the classroom and enjoy their job, the students are more likely to behave. A happy mood and demeanor generally

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attracts the same behavior. Teachers can also experience more support through PBS programs, and in turn, they have a positive attitude in the classroom.

With the demands of education increasing on administrators, teachers, and students to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), academic success is being accounted for and monitored more closely. Schools are required to develop Safe School Plans and implement programs that are meeting the diverse needs of the students (Frey, et al., 2008). PBS programs implemented in junior high are used to support the educational legislation and contribute to the success of students with behavior difficulties and the overall success of the school (Morrison, 2005)!

Advantages of Positive Behavior Support Programs

PBS programs strive to accomplish many tasks and support principals, teachers, and students consistently through teaching appropriate behaviors. Other school staff, parents, educational administration, and community members can also benefit from the implementation of a PBS program. Proper implementation is essential to provide positive results. School districts often adopted PBS programs and put them in the hands of the principals of the schools. Some districts outlaid the parameters of the program and provided professional development to teach the components. Research indicates that consistency in school expectations improves student grades and classroom behavior (Cotton, 2001).

The consistent expectations of PBS programs provide support to increase the chances of students being successful. The program was designed to proactively teach appropriate behaviors in order to decrease the need of punishment. Interventions are used

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to support the teachers and the students and create a safe learning environment conducive to learning for all students. PBS programs recognized the fact that students learn and behave on different levels and need different support strategies in order to succeed.

Putman, Horner, and Algozzine (2006) described encouraging studies that supported the concept of PBS programs improving academic success. There is evidence in research to back up the academic effects of PBS programs. Comparison studies have been done to determine effects of both schools with PBS programs and schools without PBS programs. A study in Illinois showed that 47% of students without PBS programs met their state standards. This is compared to 80% of students with PBS programs in place (Putman, et al.). A positive correlation was concluded between improving standardized test scores and implementation of PBS programs.

Another advantage of PBS programs would be the consistency of classroom management techniques and whole school expectations. The program's initial development is based on a collaboration of school administrators, teachers, and support staff. It can be altered to meet the needs of different school populations, but each school would develop it individually. This would allow schools to provide consistent rules in each classroom and in the school hallways, cafeteria, on school grounds, and in the buses. This consistency of expectations has been shown to benefit students experience at school.

Classroom management techniques provide structure and support for students and teachers. Morrison (2005) explained that positive classroom management techniques have been thoroughly researched in academic literature, and it was determined that when teachers are not effective, it directly contributes to less learning and more disruptive behavior. Consistent classroom management techniques are essential at the junior high

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level because students change classrooms for each subject. When teacher expectations are similar from one classroom to the next, students are more apt to follow the rules. Students at the junior high age need consistency to develop skills necessary for high school.

Elementary school experiences often determine how a student will adjust to junior high. PBS programs in elementary schools have shown to be beneficial for students exhibiting problem behavior at a young age. An example in research literature shows that elementary boys with serious behavior difficulties and disabilities, showed a significant improvement after PBS implementation. The boys in this study had Secondary tier interventions in place plus individualized supports (Freeman, et al., 2006).

Secondary tier interventions include universal screening, progress monitoring, increased structure and adult feedback. This type of intervention develops a system for combining academic and behavior performances and increasing home/school communication. Data collection is used for the decision-making process and provides research for future studies (Bambara & Kern, 2005). Secondary prevention has been shown to be needed in 15% of students that are at risk of school failure due to poverty, culture, and other external factors. Secondary tier interventions are found the least in literature surrounding PBS, and more studies are needed to determine the effect on students with behavior difficulties.

Primary and Tertiary intervention tiers are used more extensively in literature to describe the level of support a student needs through PBS programs (Sugai & Horner, 2002). The primary tier interventions include: defined behavioral expectations, taught appropriate behavior, reward system, and a continuum of consequences for problem behavior (Dunlap, 2006). School-wide programs teach all students about primary tier

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interventions and policies. A proactive model is used in place of reactive measures to punishment. Students with and without behavior difficulties benefit from primary tiered interventions. Sularski (2010) showed in research that the primary tier interventions are also beneficial for teachers and principals in order to develop a positive school culture. Sugai and Horner (2002) found that Primary prevention could prevent problem behaviors among 80% of elementary students.

Tertiary tier interventions include: Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA), linked academic and behavior supports, team-based comprehensive assessment, individualized interventions, and an extensive amount of data to support decision making (Dunlap, 2006). This type of prevention is aimed at students with more severe behaviors and disabilities. Tertiary tier interventions have specialized individual supports in the school system. The three tiers in the PBS prevention model are integrated together to meet the needs of all the students in the junior high school and be very beneficial at different levels.

Disadvantages of Positive Behavior Support Programs

PBS has shown in research to have practical applications, validations, and a history of theoretical development patterns, but there are also some disadvantages of the program (Sugai & Horner, 2009). It is essential to implement PBS appropriately and not rush through the learning process of the program. Principals help teachers go through the change process in order for them to fully accept the reasons behind the implementation of a new program, such as PBS. If principal and teachers move too rapidly into implementation, the results would decrease for the students (Calabrese, 2002). It is not

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always easy to get teachers to change their classroom management techniques. Therefore, continuous professional development and learning opportunities need to be addressed on a regular basis.

The disadvantages of PBS programs are not as prevalent in research on the subject. Many studies show the impact of PBS starting in preschool and elementary school. The peer-reviewed literature has not focused on the impact of PBS implementation at the junior high level without any exposure to the program at an earlier age. By the time students reach the junior high age, they develop patterns of behavior that can be hard to break. Teaching students to behave appropriately and positively, when they are younger, has been shown in research to decrease negative behavior when they reach junior high or high school (Putman, et al., 2006).

When students reach junior high, it is hard to teach them new skills and behaviors. To avoid the disadvantage of not having a PBS program in place in elementary school, the implementation process is essential. Students need a good example of rules and expectations to follow and positive reinforcement to increase the likelihood of appropriate behavior in junior high. Dunlap (2006) indicated that family members can also be good examples of positive behavior patterns. Unfortunately, not all families are a positive example for their children; therefore, schools play a large role in teaching appropriate skills in order to succeed.

In order for PBS programs to be effective, there also needs to be an evaluation framework in place. This evaluation can be formal or informal and should happen on a regular basis. Principals, teachers, students, school personnel, parents, and community members could provide insight into what works and what needs improvement in the

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program. Collegial development groups offer a change in the previous professional development procedures that most schools have in place and require change in other aspects of the evaluation process. A collegial development group is a "small voluntary group of teachers who meet together regularly on a long-term basis to support one another's personal and professional development through critical analysis of theory's and ideas, new and existing practices, and student and teacher work" (Nolan & Hoover, 2008, p. 136).

Implementing new programs and evaluation practices require funding for professional development and appropriate materials. Educational funding comes from a variety of sources and needs to be taken into consideration before change can take place in the current PBS program. Federal, state, local, and private sources provide the amount of money it takes to educate students with and without behavior difficulties. The federal government, through the legislative process, provides assistance to the states and schools in an effort to supplement state support of PBS programs (Brimley & Garfield, 2008).

The funding system provides opportunities to meet school wide and individual behavioral goals. Each student benefits when this funding is increased since the funding formula is student driven. The school finance formula is the major determinant of the amount of money a school district or area education agency will receive. This basic funding secures resources and support for the factors that influence student achievement and is the means by which equity and adequacy goals are met. The State Board of Education believes that Iowa cannot be committed to educational excellence unless it is also committed to the adequate funding of the system to meet the current needs of students (King v. State of Iowa, 2008). It is important to remember that the end result of

PBS programs and evaluation procedures of a school district is to ultimately benefit the students.

Students With Behavior Difficulties

Students with behavior difficulties can participate in the general or special education curriculum. The term *behavior difficulties* was specifically used in order to encompass a wide variety of students. A behavior difficulty is an act that is usually repetitive in nature and elicits negative reactions from others. Some students deliberately misbehave while others have less control over their behavior. Negative behavior patterns can show up in preschools, (Sularski, 2010), elementary schools (Warren et al., 2006), middle or junior high schools (Soukup, 2011), and high schools (Lane et al., 2007).

When students do not behave in a positive manner in school, they have a tendency to also misbehave in society and often get into legal trouble. Parents need support to help teach their children how to behave appropriately at times. Some students do not have positive role models at home to learn necessary social skills to be successful at school and in life. Perry's (2001) research indicated that most students with behavior difficulties have unresolved issues that can affect them academically, socially, and/or emotionally.

Students with behavior difficulties can perform academically on many levels. They can be gifted and talented in education; academically on target; be a little above or below their peers; and/or have a behavior, learning, or mental disability. For whatever the reason, students with behavior difficulties exhibit a chronic problem with their behavior in school. They do not follow instructions and often impede the learning of the other students. Goodlad (1994) explained that students at the junior high age, typically between

twelve and fourteen years old, found it more difficult to ask for help or resolve issues. Students with behavior difficulties in junior high can be very difficult to teach, and therefore they cause many problems in the school setting.

The U.S. Department of Education (2003) discussed the fact that principals, teachers, and parents should be aware of students with behavior difficulties who are aggressive or reclusive. No matter the severity, negative behaviors create negative activity in the classroom. Students often mimic one another and learn behaviors that cause problems for others. When teachers lose control over their classroom, they often lose control over their positive teaching style. Frustration then leads to raised voices, a chaotic atmosphere, and safety issues. Teachers need to be educated appropriately to affectively work with students with behavior difficulties. Parents send their children to school to learn and behave appropriately; therefore, they have a right to feel safe and supported (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000).

Students with behavior difficulties were the focus of PBS from the beginning (Carr et al., 2002). The state of Iowa's PBS model was established in the fall of 2002 to provide assistance needed for social, emotional, and behavioral success of all Iowa students in preschool through high school (Mass-Galloway, Panyan, Smith & Wessendorf, 2008). It was a collaborative effort between Drake University, Iowa State University, the Research Institute for Studies in Education, the Iowa Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, and the Iowa Department of Education (Mass-Galloway, et al.).

Not all districts and schools made the change immediately because the program took money, training, and acceptance. The junior high in this study was willing to take on

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the challenge of promoting success through positive reinforcement and proactive strategies. It provided an example for other schools in the district and the state of Iowa. The goal of PBS according to Freeman et al. (2006) is to create a positive social culture in which appropriate behaviors are explicitly taught and reinforced for all students and adults in a consistent matter. This consistency can benefit students with and without behavior difficulties and needs to be supported by educational administration (Warren et al., 2006). Implementing PBS can be a multiyear commitment and require a lot of professional development and change in the school culture.

When students reach the junior high level (seventh and eighth grade), these behaviors can be looked at as offensive and deliberate (Warren et al., 2006). It is essential to develop a program for students, teachers, and administrators to use in order to eliminate these negative behaviors before they occur. When punishment is afflicted on students after they exhibit behaviors that are inappropriate, it does not always work to prevent the behavior from occurring again. Proactive strategies that are consistent and positive could help prevent these situations from happening in the first place. Some students need the guidance at the junior high level on how to act in a positive manner in order to be successful in school (Warren et al.).

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Special Education

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If a student with behavior difficulties is in special education, the IEP team must use a variety of evaluations and strategies to gather relevant functional and developmental information to assist in the determination of the disability. The 2004 Amendments to IDEA specify 13 disability categories to determine special education

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eligibility. Bartlett et al. (2007) point out that these 2004 Amendments do not require that children be classified by their disability, but the child must have one of the disabilities listed and require special education and related services. The first IEP team meeting must be held within 30 days of this determination in schools.

The special education case manager of each individual student leads the meetings and helps develop the academic and behavior goals. This team of professionals includes the school administrator, a special and general education teacher, the parents, other educational professionals, and the student depending on age level and understanding.

The IEP is a legal document that explains the appropriate special education services for each individual child. It should be modified and reviewed yearly and a general consensus needs to be achieved by the team members to implement each new IEP (Bartlett et al., 2007). It is important to be prepared in advance before conducting an IEP meeting. In Iowa, IEP development is computerized and progress monitoring and graphing is required.

After the paperwork is completed and signed, the special education administrator of the district reviews each IEP before it is put into place. When it is approved, the finalized draft is copied and one copy is given to the parents, one is put in the cumulative file of the student, one is sent to the district central administration office, and one is kept in the teacher's classroom in a locked file cabinet. Continuous monitoring of IEP goals and accommodations are updated four times a year and sent home to parents.

Many components need to be completed in order to create IEPs that meet disability law and state requirements. According to Bartlett et al. (2007), there needs to be a statement regarding the present levels of academic achievement and functional

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performance of the student. This includes how the disability impacts participation and progress in the general curriculum. The IEP document includes annual goals and behavior interventions when the specific behavior interferes with the education of the student or others.

It is also important to include a clear statement of special education services and an explanation of the extent to which the child will not participate in the general education classroom. Accommodations and modifications to the curriculum need to be explained, including any assistive technology devices, supplementary aids and supports for school personnel (Bartlett et al.). Johnson (2003) explained that accommodating and motivating special education students can be achieved in an inclusive setting. These students do not necessarily need to be educated in an alternative setting in order to get their needs met during the school day.

According to the American Psychiatric Association (1994), a common disability type that is currently seen in three to five percent of America's school age population is Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). These students are not required to be in special education or have an IEP document. Although, a student with ADHD at the beginning of their teen years often has difficulty paying attention, concentrating, listening, following directions, and remembering information at school, home, and in the community. Some of these behaviors are lessened by the use of medication which can positively affect their behavior at one or more of these settings.

Some of the core characteristics of ADHD include inattention, impulsivity, hyperactivity, and social problems (Bartlett et al., 2007). The academic setting can be a struggle for students exhibiting these behavior problems. Some students are in self

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contained classrooms that are taught by special education teachers to meet their

individual needs. Curriculum is usually modified in these classrooms and

accommodations are provided to benefit their learning outcome. Some studies show that

these environments can increase negative behaviors because the students do not have

good role models from their peers. Research has shown that many parents want their

children to be as normal as possible and educated in the same general education

classroom and taught the same curriculum (Freeman et al., 2006).

PBS has been identified as a means to address students in special education

programs within inclusive settings and help develop intervention strategies. Educational

inclusion for students with behavior problems is one intended outcome of PBS (Bambara,

2005). The intervention strategies attempt to "change the environment, provide

instruction on appropriate behaviors, and offer consequences to make appropriation

behaviors more powerful than problem behaviors" (Lohrmann & Bambara, 2006, p. 158).

Students with the most significant behavior challenges are provided with assessment-

based and individualized supports. Using the whole school as a unit of analysis, school-

wide positive behavior support systems have been shown to benefit the educational

outcome for students, teachers, administrators, and parents at home (Freeman et al.,

2006).

Co-Teaching

In the past decade, literature and research has focused on co-teaching as a possible

solution to successfully working with students with behavior difficulties in the general

education setting (Murawski & Lochner, 2011). Co-teaching is one technique described

as the implementation of instruction to students with and without disabilities in a single general education setting by both the special and general educators (Magiera & Zigmond, 2005). This reduces the student-teacher ratio and could lessen the stigma placed on students with disabilities that are taught in an alternative setting. Co-teachers could collaborate together on effective interventions and give more individual attention to students who need more help.

Districts implement some co-taught classes but there has been resistance to this change. Some general education teachers do not want to share their classroom with another teacher, while there are others who do not even want these students in their classroom. This service delivery model and classroom management technique is fairly new in most settings. Magiera & Zigmond (2005) point out that there is not a lot of research related to the students' experience of learning when a second teacher is present. Co-teaching is just one strategy that can be used to deliver special education services in a general education setting.

Part of the principal's role in special education is to "be knowledgeable about and have the authority to commit school resources, ensure that IEP services will be delivered, and be knowledgeable about the general education curriculum" (Bartlett et al, 2007, p. 68). Principals should supervise and evaluate the teachers working together and offer suggestions when needed. Danielson (2007) promotes a framework for teacher evaluation that focuses on four domains of teacher responsibility that include 22 distinct activities.

Based on this breakdown of teaching activities the process of teacher evaluation is to look at each of the 22 teaching tasks and see how well each is being completed. The ICCSD has eight teaching standards that serve as a "framework" to the teacher evaluation

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process. The framework of Danielson (2007) is a differentiated approach to evaluation of teachers. This approach accommodates a variety of approaches to data gathering and includes focused classroom observations (Nolan & Hoover, 2008).

During co-teaching in the classroom each teacher is able to informally evaluate the other teacher on a regular basis (Murawski & Lochner, 2011). "Efforts to increase teacher professionalism are frequently cited as reasons to increase the involvement of teachers in the evaluation of teacher colleagues" (Peterson, Kelly, & Caskey 2003, p. 320). PBS programs should also be evaluated consistently and co-teaching initiatives can help support this effort. This could be helpful for principals and teachers and lessen the time spent on formal evaluations.

Classroom management techniques, co-teaching initiatives, and behavior difficulties have changed the classroom environment dramatically in the past decade (Magiera & Zigmond, 2005). Teachers are working with students who have more behavior problems, and they need the support and understanding of the principal (Vaughn, 2006). Principals and teachers at a junior high school need to learn to work together in implementing a PBS program to increase the chances of success for all students (Zins & Illback, 2007).

Principals and Teachers

Research has shown that it is beneficial for a school principal to create an environment supportive of the change she desires (Calabrese, 2002). It is difficult to expect change if other teachers in the school do not understand the reasons for change and what the ultimate outcome would be. Open communication and collaboration is the

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key to the success of the school. The principal, teachers, parents and the students should all be involved in the educational experience and implementation of PBS in order for it to be successful.

Eisner (2002) discussed the kind of schools we need by giving many suggestions to principals, teachers, students, and the community at large. Similar research is needed in the literature to offer solutions to problems instead of just pointing out the negative and what needs to be fixed. There is not enough literature on what the schools are doing correctly and what implementation processes have been successful. Eisner relays that the focus has been on standards and monitoring procedures to find the best scientific methods that work for every child, instead of focusing on the individual child. He states that "we are not in the business of producing identical products" (Eisner, p. 6).

Eisner (2002) emphasized that we need a paradigm shift in education. Principals and teachers need to be willing to step outside their comfort zone in schools and focus on the individual children. At the end of the day, a teacher must first be a good student and listen to the needs of the individuals in the classroom. In order for the school culture to flourish and students to succeed, teachers must feel respected and be empowered to collaborate with principals (Nolan & Hoover, 2008). Principals help with early intervention techniques used in the classroom before students can exhibit behavior difficulties. They can provide professional development activities for teachers to learn new strategies and techniques to improve the outcome of academic performance in these students.

Principals should provide efficient, effective, and appropriate professional implementation systems, improve communication and cooperation among teachers and

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parents, and strive to meet student needs through the use of school resources (Bartlett et. al., 2007). PBS has been implemented in junior high programs to create a supportive environment that meets the individual needs of the students, teachers, and parents. Fowler (2009) explained that sometimes principals do not want to attract attention to an issue because it keeps it from becoming a governmental policy agenda. Research has shown that it is critical for the principal to gain teacher acceptability in order to implement a successful PBS program (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008).

The junior high principal is recognized as playing an important role in implementing this change, but contemporary organizational interventions place significant emphasis on the active participation of teachers, parents, and students (Zins & Illback, 2007). "The most effective way to achieve this goal is to persuade policy makers that solving the behavior issue or adopting the solutions advocated by proponents would be prohibitively expensive" (Fowler, 2009, p. 189). It is recognized that there are different opinions and mental models that exist about implementing PBS. Identifying the driving and restraining forces with honesty and trust in the group is a critical first step to implement change (Calabrese, 2002).

Amatea and Clark's (2005) wanted to build an understanding of how school principals conceptualize the school counselor role in their qualitative study. It was pointed out that few efforts have been made to explore the current conceptions of the school counselor role held by today's school administrators. The overall goal was to gain administrators' descriptions of how they prefer to have their counselors structure their role in the school. The perspectives of the school principals are explored through this article using grounded theory. This was one way grounded theory research was helpful to

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me when reading the article. This qualitative methodology focuses on the meanings of social phenomena based on interpretations of interactions people have with one another (Amatea & Clark, 2005).

The teachers in the school need to model acceptance. Proper PBS implementation can help support this goal and increase the likelihood that all students will succeed academically, socially, and behaviorally. Teachers have the ability to make students feel accepted and valued in the classroom, no matter what ability level they are at or how many mistakes they have made (Bryner, 2005). PBS gives teachers consistent positive behavior management techniques to use in the classroom with students at all different ability levels.

Individualized instruction and differentiated learning is also supported through PBS initiatives. Teachers participate in professional development and learn how to monitor behavior and to proactively teach the skills needed to behave appropriately in the classroom. It is obvious that when students behave appropriately, more learning is achieved and academic success rates rise.

Ascher's (1995) research provided evidence that students who were successful in school had a positive relationship with their teachers and principal. These students were also less likely to have behavior difficulties and cause problems in school. If teachers trust and respect their students through consistent classroom management techniques, then students have the tendency to show that same respect in return. It is like the saying: a smile can be contagious. A positive and happy demeanor by the teacher often elicits the same response from the students. PBS programs encourage positive communication

verbally and non-verbally. This can create a calm learning environment where students feel safe and supported by their teachers, principal, and classmates.

In order for principals and teachers to make their students feel safe, they need to integrate educational theory into their decision- making process. Green (2009) defines decision-making as "a systematic process of choosing from several alternatives to achieve a desired result" (p.134). Principals have to make big decisions on a daily basis, and it is important to be consistent in this process. Taking the time to research, evaluate, and analyze different theories and personal beliefs can have a positive effect on the overall culture and student achievement at the school.

Educational Leadership and Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework should be used to guide the practice of administrators in educational settings (Owens & Valesky, 2007). Many theorists develop their personal theories from ideas taken from philosophers, psychologists, and other prominent people in past literature. Theories are characterized by Hoy and Miskel (2005) as interrelated concepts, generalizations, and assumptions that explain regular behavior in a systematic, organized way. Not all behavior can be explained by a theory, but it is important to have an understanding of the underlying theories behind actions and how to respond to situations appropriately, legally, and ethically in schools.

Fullan (2008) argues that it is too difficult to truly understand all the techniques used within different theories. Principals should have a general background on past research to help them conceptualize the complexity of theory in education. Kowalski (2008) believes that "theories synthesize, organize, and classify facts that emerge from

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observations and data collections in varying situations" (p.9). He points out that theories are like research studies in this manner. It is true that research studies need to synthesize, organize, and classify facts in a systematic way to determine the results, but they are not always expected, which can leave the researcher discouraged (Kowalski). On the contrary, most theories are different than research because they allow people to be optimistic about a subject or situation and feel confident about the process.

This confidence and optimism can be contagious in a school setting. Teachers tend to follow the example of principals, and students follow their teachers example (Owens & Valesky, 2007). This chain reaction can increase the likelihood of success through positive reinforcement. Theories reinforce our actions and reactions to unexpected situations and help lead people's decisions. Fullan (2008) states that a good theory is defined as one that travels well in all kinds of situations. This is important to realize before making a decision to follow one theory without reflecting and analyzing on how it would work in different environments with different variables that affect the outcome.

Learning is the ultimate outcome that should be positively affected by educational leadership theories (Fullan, 2008). Principals want the students in the school to learn appropriate material in order to one day become a successful member of society. Through their leadership techniques, teachers learn to be effective in providing instruction to learn. There are behavioral, social and cognitive views of learning theories in educational research (Woolfolk, 1998).

These theories developed by psychologists provide a scope and sequence to the learning process and can be very helpful to administrators and teachers. Woolfolk (1998)

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explained that behavioral learning theories focus on external events as the cause of changes in behavior that is observed. Behaviorists typically believe that learning can be observed while cognitivists believe that learning is not directly observable. Woolfolk discusses the fact that an administrator with a cognitive view of learning would view it as a mental process of acquiring, remembering, and using knowledge in an organized way.

The social cognitive theory is different from the behavior and cognitive viewpoints because it emphasizes learning through the observation and imitation of others. Observational learning happens in schools on a daily basis. Students learn from observing their classmate's behavior and mimicking the teacher's examples. Social learning can be positive or negative but it should be taken into consideration when developing a personal theory for school leadership and education. Theory can pertain to many perspectives on students, teachers, and how to effectively lead an educational organization to success.

Theory enables people to describe what is going on, explain it, predict future events, and to think about ways to control the situation (Owens & Valesky, 2007). Educational administrators have the power to control situations and make decisions to positively affect the future. All educators strive to improve the future for students, and it would be helpful to be able to predict the occurrence of some situations from previous experiences based on theoretical perspective. Learning by example can also be an effective way to continuously define personal theory. This immediate learning can eliminate a common problem from happening over and over. Owens and Valesky believe that when people "accept, internalize, and act on a theory of action, that theory becomes an important element in the theory of practice" (p. 73).

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Theory of practice is the combination of different theories that ultimately give direction to a person's professional decisions. It informs the method of school leadership that might guide an administrator's decisions when choices are difficult. This can make a leader seem more understanding, believable, and trustworthy to others (Owens & Valesky, 2007). Most effective leaders have these qualities and an underlying understanding of theory of practice.

Owens and Valesky (2007) contest that a good theory "provides foundation for taking appropriate action in a busy, complex world where few problems are truly simple, where times chronically short, and where any decision usually leads only to the need for further decisions" (p.72). There are some leadership traits that are well received by followers but it is a combination of theories that allow people to experience success (Green, 2008). As an administrator in a school system it would be essential to decipher the individual needs of that educational setting and work towards the yearly goals. Typically, the administrator or principal has a hierarchical control of authority on final decisions (Owens and Valesky). This is usually part of the job and should be planned for in advance. There will be times where other people in the school system do not agree with administrative decisions. It is important to develop a personal theory to explain the reasons behind an important decision that will lead to a shared vision of learning (Fullan).

This personal theory should be only used after proper analysis of the situation. It is essential to first understand the parameters around the phenomenon being defined by theory. There are many different theories about leadership roles in schools depending on the problem or environmental circumstances. Noddings (2006) points out that "at the very least, an educational leader should have a defensible position on the aims of

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education, on a theory of motivation and on what constitutes ethical practice" (p. 342). Administrators should define their personal theory on education in general to determine their overall perspective on how to lead the school successfully.

Administrators should work collaboratively with colleagues to help them come to conclusions on different topics. Fullan (2008) discusses the fact that leadership is interactively shared and not distributed among others. A team approach should be taken when necessary and other people's opinions can be helpful. School administrators should not be afraid to ask for help when needed. Just because they are the leaders of the school does not mean they have the answer for everything.

To achieve the goals to become a successful leader in an educational setting, administrators need to understand the culture that exists in the school and underlying viewpoints of the other teachers. There have been many studies on leadership that suggest the more successful leaders "exhibit democratic principles, initiate structure, are considerate of followers, and allow them to participate in the decision-making process" (Green, 2008, p. 56). Administrators should collaborate as much as possible with teachers, parents, students, and other community members to make positive and effective changes in the school system using theory.

Summary

Research oriented studies provided evidence to show that PBS programs were increasing in public schools, therefore more research on the effects of PBS is needed. Cohn's (2001) review of the literature and research on the effectiveness of PBS on problem behavior showed that in more than half the studies, there was over a 90%

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decrease in problem behavior after implementation of PBS programs. This negative behavior stopped completely in 26% of the studies that were reviewed (Cohn). The extensive research on PBS programs provided beginning data for this qualitative study. Through this literature review, it was found that there is a lack of research on how teachers perceive the effects of PBS implementation on students with behavior difficulties in junior high school.

Principals and teachers work collaboratively to develop a PBS program that will meet the needs of the individual students in each school. Co-teaching initiatives have been shown to increase the likelihood of success of students with behavior difficulties in special education programs. Consistency and order in the school system improves academic and behavior outcomes. The majority of literature pertains to early childhood and elementary research studies on the implementation of PBS programs. The current research does not take into consideration students with behavior difficulties who have not been previously exposed to PBS programs before entering junior high.

Qualitative data on the principal's and the teacher's perspectives of how PBS has affected students with behavior difficulties will provide an understanding of what works with these students. Inclusion of students with behavior difficulties in the general education classroom cannot be done without special accommodations for the students and teachers (Lohrmann & Bambara, 2006). PBS programs provide a framework for students to follow and they can also help principals and teachers consistently provide clear expectations.

Case-based literature provided the historical context of the PBS implementation process. The research conducted in this study was useful because it made new

contributions to the empirical and theoretical knowledge base of PBS programs. It provided a clear example of the implementation process of a PBS program in a junior high school where students had not been exposed to previous consistency. This is one way that this study has extended information to what is already known in the current literature.

This research could be used as a basis for other junior high schools that are first implementing PBS programs without previous exposure in younger grades. Generally, there has been a large amount of research literature pertaining to improving outcomes for students with behavior difficulties. Principals and teachers play a vital role in the lives of these students, and their opinions are a valuable resource to increase the likelihood of the success of PBS programs in junior high.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The research topic chosen for this study was the implementation of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) programs in the junior high setting. This topic was chosen because the current research does not show any evidence of how PBS has affected junior high students with behavior difficulties, who have not previously been accustomed to this program in elementary school. The Eastern Iowa school district adopted this behavior management program five years prior to this study, and it was initiated at one junior high school before any other schools in the district. This school has been through the five year implementation process required for the program, and it would benefit from a research study conducted on its effectiveness. The perceptions of the principal and teachers were studied through an in-depth interview process to determine the overall impact of PBS on the climate of the junior high school after the implementation process was completed.

This chapter reviewed the purpose of the research study, the problem, and the research questions. The research methodology was determined in order to answer the research questions effectively and thoroughly after the literature review was conducted. The population was chosen for this study and the sampling procedures were discussed. Reliability, validity, and ethical considerations are taken into consideration and determined to be an essential component of the outcome of the study. The data collection and data analysis procedures were also reviewed in this chapter to provide a summary of how the results were achieved.

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Statement of the Problem

There is a gap in the literature regarding how principals and teachers perceive the impact of the implementation of a PBS program at the junior high setting. It is evident that students who exhibit problem behavior have difficulty being successful in junior high school (Warren et al., 2006). PBS programs are developed for the whole school, classrooms, and individual students with behavior difficulties (Hieneman et al. 2005). In order to increase the student's success in school, there needs to be a consistent program in place to teach appropriate social skills and behaviors.

Research is needed on junior high schools that have implemented PBS programs in order to determine the effectiveness of the overall outcome. The literature on junior high schools is based on students who have already been accustomed to PBS in elementary school. Sularski (2010) points out that principals play a large role in the acceptance and implementation of PBS. They determine the parameters and mold the program to fit their particular school each year. It is the principal's job to work collectively with the teachers and staff in order to develop an effective PBS program for their particular school.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

R1: What are the perceptions of the principal and teachers regarding how Positive Behavior Support (PBS) programs have affected students with behavior difficulties in a junior high setting?

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R2: What are the perceptions of the principal and teachers regarding how PBS has affected the overall climate in a junior high school?

R3: What factors do the staff at a junior high school identify as having contributed to the successful implementation of PBS programs?

Research Methodology

A qualitative research design was used in this research study. Qualitative research is described as a type of "educational research, in which the researcher relies on the views of participants, asks broad, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words from participants; describes and analyzes these words for themes; and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner" (Creswell, 2008, p. 46). This type of research was chosen in order to produce a study that provided an in-depth look at the educational context from the perspectives of the principal and teachers.

Creswell (2008) reviewed numerous approaches to qualitative research such as participatory action research, discourse analysis, and many others that have been used in educational research. These qualitative strategies were researched carefully to determine which one would be most appropriate to use in this study. Grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenological studies, and case studies are four methods of qualitative research that are prevalent in educational literature on PBS programs.

Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) contested that qualitative research can increase knowledge about teaching, learning, educational administration through thorough and consistent investigation. This kind of research plays a large role in improving educational practices and was chosen for this study for that reason. The educational research on PBS

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has continued to grow over the past decade, while the majority of the studies have been quantitative in nature and focus on elementary schools (Hieneman et al., 2005). A quantitative case study was done on school-wide application of PBS in an urban high school, although full implementation of the program had not been achieved (Bohanon et al., 2006). Bohanon's research, as well as many other studies, has been published in the Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions. It is obvious that more research needs to be done on PBS since there is a journal dedicated to this ever changing field of study.

Qualitative methodology was chosen in order to answer the research questions provided in this study. Eisner (1998) stated that the key skill for qualitative research is "the ability to see what counts" (p. 34). Qualitative research was a more general, but descriptive, outlook of data analysis involving themes and codes. The open-ended interview approach allowed the researcher to ask for clarification and go into greater detail with the principal and teachers. Varjas, Nastasi, Moore, and Jayasena (2005), discussed in their study that qualitative research provided trustworthiness in order to provide results that are a credible representation of the participants in the study.

Research Design

A case study design was used to answer the research questions of this research study. Gall et al. (2003) describe case study research as a descriptive study of "instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspectives of the participants involved" (p. 619). A case study is a qualitative method of research that gives a general description of a situation that is being studied. The narratives of a case study can have

several purposes in education. They can be a method of research, evaluation, policy studies, or a method of teaching (Kowalski, 2008).

Creswell (2008) defines case studies as "strategies of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals" (p. 13). A strength of using case studies while conducting qualitative research is that it provides the researcher with details to develop themes and commonalities within the results. The researcher could spend a majority of time with one participant and really learn about their opinions and perceptions on the topic being researched. Case studies use a variety of data collection procedures to strengthen the validity and reliability of the results.

Conducting interviews on perceptions of the principal and teachers was appropriate for this research design because they could provide a clear understanding of the effects PBS has had on students with behavior difficulties in junior high. In addition, a field test was given to eight random teachers in order to determine the appropriateness and understanding of the interview questions. The field test will indicate if the questions were appropriate and understood clearly. All eight of these participants in the field test were not in the actual research study and signed confidentiality forms before the interview process. They were asked to not share any information about the study with others in the school and not to discuss their answers. This process improved the consistency of the interview questions and increased the reliability of the study.

After reviewing the literature pertaining to PBS research, it was apparent that there were many strengths and weaknesses to each method. In order to critique one type of research design for a particular study, it was essential to understand all the

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possibilities. Research in the public educational setting has been ridiculed in the past for being "trivial, shallow, and largely lacking academic rigor (Owens &Valesky, 2004). Current research is lacking on PBS programs through case studies in junior high settings, which is why it was chosen for this study.

Population and Sampling Procedures

The school that was chosen for this study was a junior high school in Eastern Iowa. The population of teachers consisted of 32 general education and special education teachers and one principal. There were ten male teachers and 24 female teachers in this junior high school. The student population consisted of 188 seventh graders and 209 eighth graders. The ethnic background of the students was very similar in both grade levels. In seventh grade there were ten students that were Asian, 24 African American, eight Hispanic, two American Indian, and 144 European American students. In eighth grade there were ten Asian American, 22 African American, four Hispanic American, and 173 Caucasian. Therefore, 80% of the students were Caucasian in the school, which is a common representation of many school districts in Iowa. The teachers represented a common population in most school districts in Iowa also. They were educated on what a case study consists of and how their names and identities would be disguised. The setting was selected by the qualitative researcher based on the fact that the junior high was the first to implement the PBS program in a large school district in Iowa.

The sample consisted of one principal and 32 teachers. This sample was a subgroup of the population that was studied for the purpose of coming to generalizations about the target population (Creswell, 2008). Qualitative research participants were

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chosen on the basis of characteristics and knowledge of the research questions that were investigated (Nastasi & Schensul, 2005). Systematic sampling was used in order to reach the desired sample size. There was a total of eight teachers who answered interview questions; four were seventh grade teachers and four were eighth grade teachers. The teacher participants were three special education teachers and five general education teachers. There were three co-teachers, who taught special education students, that participated in this study. Using eight teachers and one principal provided a clear and detailed understanding of the answers to the qualitative research questions.

Sources of Data

The source of data that were used in this study was face-to-face interviews. Interviews provided the principal's and teacher's perceptions of how PBS implementation has affected the overall school climate and students with behavior difficulties in the junior high setting. The interview process was consistent and professional, in order to provide a valid and reliable study.

The school was opened for one year before the PBS program was implemented. The students came to the school from five different elementary schools who previously did not have a PBS program in place. Student and teacher names were kept confidential throughout this process. The interviews were typed and color coded in order to maintain the confidentiality of the names of the teachers.

Validity

Validity is the extent to which a test measures what the researcher intended it to measure. It is concerned with the appropriateness of the inferences made on the basis of the test results. In qualitative studies, the validity is important to determine biases derived from the interpretation of the interview questions (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 2004). The content of this study was inspected to see whether each question was valid and all aspects of the domain were represented. Construct validity was determined based on the extent to which the interviews measured the theoretical trait that is derived from the results of the study.

The researcher determined the credibility and accuracy of the research study by validating findings through member checking and triangulation (Creswell, 2008). Methodological triangulation was used by gathering more than one method of data. Interviews and documents were used in this study to determine the experience of the participants and perceptions of the teachers regarding PBS. Triangulation was used to cross verify sources and increase the validity of the study and credibility of the results. Threats to internal validity were addressed in order to eliminate any possibility of problems that interfere with the cause and effects of the results of the study. The threats of internal validity were avoided that were related to participants, treatments, and procedures. Random selection was used to help eliminate the threats related to participants. The threats related to treatments were not a concern because there was not a control group and experimental group (Creswell). To correct the problem of the threats related to procedures, the interview questions were standardized and used on the same observational scale.

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The threats related to external validity were the interaction of selection and treatment, setting and treatment, and history of treatment. These problems were avoided in order to draw appropriate inferences from the sample data and relate that to other people, settings, and situations. To increase generalizability, the researcher made the interviews as convenient as possible and analyzed the effect the PBS program has had on other school settings (Creswell, 2008).

Content validity, criterion validity, and construct validity were also taken into account throughout this research study. The researcher asked questions that were related to PBS, selected an outcome from the coding procedure, and assessed the relevance of the answers to the interview questions based on the purpose of the study (Creswell, 2008). The social consequences of the study were addressed and did not have any negative effect on the school, principal, teachers, or students at the junior high.

Reliability

Reliability was addressed throughout the course of this research study. Reliability is the extent to generalize from an observation of specific behavior, observed at a specific time, by a specific person (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 2004). This was compared to observations conduced on similar behavior, at different times, or by different observers. There are several factors that can affect reliability. For this study the factors were the length of the interview questions, internal consistency reliability, and the variation of teacher opinions and responses. Salvia and Ysseldyke contend that "reliability is important only insofar as it affects the validity of an assessment" (p. 144).

In order to eliminate unreliable data, the researcher made sure the questions in the interview were clear and simplistic. The questions were the same for every participant and the participants did not feel forced to answer any questions they did not want to answer. The procedures of the administration were consistent and standardized to increase the reliability of the study. The participants had the option to ask questions to clarify the interview process and were not nervous to participate in the study.

Internal consistency reliability was accomplished through accuracy of interview questions throughout the face-to-face contact with each participant. This was determined after the interviews took place to account for consistency in the answers of each question (Creswell, 2008). If the participant had a positive response to PBS programs at the junior high at the beginning of the interview, then the response should had been similar at the end of the interview process.

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to the data collection procedures, the superintendent and principal were given consent to the study and the IRB process was completed. Interviews were used to collect the data in order to answer the research question. The data was collected from a junior high school in Eastern Iowa during the 2011-2012 school year. The researcher developed the interview questions, and the principal and teachers answered the open-ended questions through the interview process.

The data collection steps were setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through interviews, and establishing a protocol for recording information (Creswell, 2009). For the purpose of this research study, the data was collected on a

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public school district in Iowa. This school was chosen because it had gone through some recent changes, where all special education students were included in the general education setting in all core academic areas.

The researcher contacted the participants, after receiving informed consent, through a phone call to determine the time and place appropriate for the interview. Data was collected through interviews in the classroom of each teacher. The choice of data sources depended on the questions, time and resources, availability of individuals, and sources of information (Creswell, 2008). The interview protocol was followed with a proper heading, instructions, open ended questions, probes for follow up, and a thank you letter at the end of the research (Creswell, 2009). Data was typed by the researcher on a laptop with the answers to the interview questions.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis took place simultaneously with data collection to answer the research questions. The results were analyzed using charts that were arranged in categories to facilitate the detection of patterns in answers of the participants. Written memos were used as a method to document how the researcher would develop conclusions from the results of the interviews with the principal and teachers. Through this analytical process, the researcher retraced steps and identified inconsistencies in the results to determine reliability and validity of the data collection strategy (Atkins et al., 2005).

The interview responses provided differences and similarities in the data. After the interviews were conducted, they were collected, compared, and analyzed thoroughly.

In order to use a deductive and inductive approach to data analysis, themes were developed through interpretation of the interview questions (Nastasi & Schensul, 2005). A review of theoretical and empirical literature provided a framework of categories to answer the research questions in a systematic way. The principal's and teacher's responses to the questions allowed the researcher to develop commonalities in the themes so that a conclusion can be made from the data.

Themes and categories were identified through data collection to develop patterns and theories about the results. These themes were similar to the topics that were covered in the interviews and represent the converging and diverging procedures and policies of inclusion of students with behavior difficulties (Atkins et al., 2005). It was the intention of the researcher to develop categories from these interviews, so coding could take place after they were completed. Coding was a way to assess and display the qualitative research to determine commonalities and come to conclusions about the results.

Ethical Considerations

The research that was conducted in this study was done in an ethical and truthful manner. The researcher had not worked in this particular school and conducted herself professionally at all times. The participants' names were kept confidential and the data was analyzed without bias. The students' names were not used in the interviews with the teachers, and there were no identifiers that connected the data to the participants. The International Review Board (IRB) and Informed Consent processes were carefully submitted and reviewed by the researcher in a timely manner. The approval of the IRB

application ensured that the ethical treatment and protection of human research participants was achieved.

Respect for persons, beneficence, and justice was in place throughout the research study. The teachers and principal were aware of the parameters to the study and did not feel forced to participate. Their comments and opinions were expressed freely, and they also had the option to not answer any of the questions. The participants were encouraged to be honest with their positive and negative perceptions of the PBS implementation process. The researcher secured all records and interviews in a private location and did not share the information with others. The records and interviews were kept in this location until the completion of the study. This information was then shredded and destroyed to protect the identity of the participants and the results of the study. Beneficence was demonstrated through the clarity and organization of the study. The researcher had the best interest of others in mind and wanted this study to help the overall climate of the school and others in future years.

Justice was considered by equal treatment of all the participants. Each interview was given during the same time period during the school year. The answers to the interview questions were used no matter what the content provided. Nothing was eliminated from the conversation, and participants were encouraged to ask questions and make additional comments if they wanted. Trustworthiness and credibility was demonstrated through member checking, reflexive journaling, and peer debriefing (Nastasi & Schensul, 2005).

Member checking was accomplished through meeting with additional teachers and staff members in the school who were not participating in the study, in order to

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present the results in an ethical manner. Reflexive journaling provided detailed descriptions of the researcher's reactions to the interviews and analysis of the overall process. Peer debriefing was used in order to test for any misinterpretation of the data and to provide opportunities for feedback. The researcher paid special attention to ethical considerations throughout the study.

Summary

The methodology of a study was an essential aspect of how research was conducted and followed during this specific protocol. A qualitative research study was used because the information that was gathered from the interviews was detailed in nature and the information was developed into themes and categories. Creswell (2008) points out that these themes or categories could be put into patterns that lead to generalizations that can be compared to personal experience or previous research literature. It was determined from the literature review that a study on the effects of PBS implementation on students with behavior difficulties was needed in the junior high setting and would benefit many schools in the near future.

CHAPTER 4. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The objective of this study was to determine the impact of the implementation of a Positive Behavior Support (PBS) program on students with behavior difficulties in junior high according to the perceptions of the principal and teachers. Research was needed on junior high schools that have implemented PBS programs in order to determine the effectiveness of the overall outcome. There is a gap in the literature on junior high students who have not already been accustomed to PBS in elementary school. The purpose of this study was to lead to future implementation of PBS programs in junior high schools. A qualitative methodology was used in order to answer the research questions provided in this study. All three research questions were intended to provide an analysis of the results of this study in order to determine the effectiveness of PBS programs in junior high schools.

The following research questions guided this study:

R1: What are the perceptions of the principal and teachers regarding how Positive Behavior Support (PBS) programs have affected students with behavior difficulties in a junior high setting?

R2: What are the perceptions of the principal and teachers regarding how PBS has affected the overall climate in a junior high school?

R3: What factors do the staff at a junior high school identify as having contributed to the successful implementation of PBS programs?

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This chapter will cover the data collection, analysis of the interview questions, and results of this study in a non-evaluative manner. Themes and patterns are presented in order to determine the outcome of the interview questions. Tables are used to organize the data and present the demographics of the research participants. The research questions will all be addressed with descriptive data and the method used to analyze the data will be provided. Finally, there will be an identification of any sources of error and how these sources have impacted the results.

Descriptive Data

The study was conducted during the 2011-2012 school year at an Eastern Iowa junior high school. One principal and eight teachers were interviewed in the first semester of the school year to determine their perceptions of how PBS has affected students with behavior difficulties. Out of the nine total interviewees, six were female and three were male. The research participants were chosen as a representative proportion of the adult female/male ratio in the whole school. Four of the teachers were seventh grade teachers and four were eighth grade teachers. Three were special education teachers and all three also co-taught classes with general education teachers during each school day.

The sample of eight teachers was chosen by the principal in order to represent the school as a whole. Their teaching experience ranged from two years to 34 years and they all had experience teaching in a PBS school. The representation of their teaching experience is contained in Table 1. The Eastern Iowa junior high school that the participants all taught at during this study had been opened for six years, but they did not have a PBS program in place the first year. Therefore, this was the fifth year that the PBS

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program was implemented by the district to determine the outcome on students of all behavior and ability levels. Carr et al. (2002) point out that by fifth year that PBS programs are in place at a school, there should be full implementation and understanding of the components of the program by all teachers. Table 2 represents how many years each teacher has been a part of a PBS school. One participant had prior experience in another PBS district in Iowa.

Table 1. Classroom Teachers' Years of Teaching Experience

Years of Teaching	Number of Teachers
Less than 1 Year	0
1-2 Years	1
3-5 Years	1
6-9 Years	0
10-14 Years	1
15-20 Years	2
20 or More Years	3

Table 2. Classroom Teachers' Years of Teaching at a PBS School

Years of Teaching	Number of Teachers
Less than 1 Year	0
1-2 Years	2
3-5 Years	5
6-9 Years	1
10 or More Years	0

Every research participant signed an informed consent form and agreed to be a part of this study. They were debriefed on the purpose of the study and what their participation entailed. Their identities were confidential to each other, and their answers to the interview questions were kept in a locked filing cabinet and destroyed after the results were recorded. The descriptive data included typed answers to the ten interview

questions by all nine participants. There were not any known risks in being a part of this study, and they were all cooperative and answered the questions in a timely manner. Each interview took approximately one hour, and the participants were allowed to ask any further questions about the study at any time. When the interviews were concluded, the research participants were given the researcher's contact information if they had any additional comments or concerns.

Data Analysis

Data analysis took place simultaneously with data collection to answer the research questions. The results were analyzed using charts that were arranged in categories to facilitate the detection of patterns in answers of the participants. Written memos were used as a method to document how the researcher would develop conclusions from the results of the interviews with the principal and teachers. The interview responses provided differences and similarities in the data. A review of theoretical and empirical literature provided a framework of categories to answer the research questions in a systematic way. The principal's and teachers' responses to the questions allowed the researcher to develop commonalities in the themes so that a conclusion could be made from the data.

The raw data obtained from the interviews related directly to the research questions of this study. Each participant was asked to answer the research question directly in the interview during the first three questions. This was presented in this way to eliminate error from interpretation of the answers to the other questions solely, in order to determine an outcome based on themes from the interview results. Data results were

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framed relative to each research question and further details were provided through the remaining interview questions and answers. Each research question was analyzed the same by developing themes to the responses.

The validity of the data was determined by the extent to which the interviews measured what the researcher intended it to measure. The researcher paid special attention to the appropriateness of the inferences made on the basis of the interview results. Biases were determined from the interpretation of the interview questions. The main bias that was found in the research questions was that the overall tone of the questions provided in the interview was positive. It could have been perceived by the research participants that the researcher was a proponent of PBS programs and looking for positive results from their answers to each question. The content of this study was inspected to see whether each question was valid and all aspects of the domain were represented. Construct validity was determined based on the extent to which the interviews measured the theoretical trait that was derived from the results of the study.

Threats to internal validity were addressed in order to eliminate any possibility of problems that interfere with the cause and effects of the results of the study. The threats of internal validity were avoided that were related to participants, treatments, and procedures. Random selection of the participants by the principal was used to help eliminate the threats related to participants. The threats related to treatments was not a concern because there was not a control group and experimental group. The interview questions were standardized and used on the same observational scale for each question in order to eliminate the threats related to procedures.

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The sources of error most common in qualitative research according to Onwuegbuzie and Daniel (2003) are failure to provide evidence for judging the dependability and credibility of findings, generalizing findings beyond the sample, and failure to estimate and to interpret the effect sizes. One of the reasons for the rejection of validity by some qualitative researchers stems from their perceptions that the definition and interpretation of validity is the only example on how all the results are evaluated (Onwuegbuzie and Daniel). This error is accounted for in the discussion of how the researcher accounted for the validity of the interpretation of the results. Another source of error in this study is the failure to represent the reliability of the observed results. This impacts the data by lessoning the dependability of the results. The themes derived from the data are credible sources of interpretation of the results, but another researcher might develop different themes than the ones provided in the next section.

Results

The results were obtained from an interview conducted by the researcher on eight teachers and one principal at an Eastern Iowa junior high school. They were asked about their experience with PBS programs pertaining to students with behavior difficulties. Each of the ten interview questions were open-ended and allowed for the participants to provide as much information about the topic as they wanted. They were given an unlimited amount of time to answer the questions so they did not feel rushed and could take time to think about their perceptions on the topic. To validate the results, they were also allowed to ask any questions to clarify what the researcher meant by the questions, and they had a choice to not answer any of the questions at all. Every participant was free

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of distractions in their classroom when completing the interview and each question was answered thoroughly. The answers to the interviews were analyzed by the researcher after all the data was collected, and a conclusion was made based on the research questions provided in this study.

For the results, the researcher coded the ten interview responses into segments based on where a concept began and ended. These concepts were determined by dividing the sentences into categories and then subcategories based on the discussion obtained from the interview results. The segments decoded were organized into separate themes that were obtained from dividing the interviews into categories. These themes came about from patterns of responses from each participant of the study. The amount of time the participants brought up a specific topic provided a higher weighted theme within each category. The researcher read the interview responses numerous times to find differences and commonalities of the responses. The three research questions formed a basis for the themes derived from the results. The following is an analysis of the data presented by each research question.

Research Question 1

The participants were asked: What are your perceptions regarding how Positive Behavior Support (PBS) programs have affected students with behavior difficulties in this junior high school? This first research question was answered by all nine participants in the first half of the interview through their responses to the interview questions. Further questions pertaining to the same subject were asked throughout the interview, and the results were coded into themes from their responses. Their responses to this question formed a basis for the three main themes provided in Table 3. Each participant brought

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up an academic, behavioral, or social theme within their responses. More than half of the participants felt that the PBS program had affected the students behaviorally the most. Only one teacher felt that the students' academic level had increased the most due to PBS and, two felt that the students with behavior difficulties benefited socially from the program.

Table 3. Principal and Teachers' Responses to the Question: How has PBS Affected the Students the Most?

Responses	Number of Participants
Academically	1
Behaviorally	6
Socially	2

The principal pointed out that PBS had a positive response on student and teacher behavior. She felt that the commonality of the positive language from the teachers supported behavior concerns of students and also helped when reporting concerns to parents. She reported that "the description of the concerns to parents are much more behavior-specific, and less judgmental" due to PBS training. When asked how students with behavior difficulties improved with the current PBS program in place, the principal brought up the reward system.

> The system allows for all staff to provide extrinsic reinforcers to students across the board. Students are able to track their own progress via their reward accounts. It also provides an avenue to look for positives with struggling students as well as a consistent way to deal with behavior concerns.

The "extrinsic reinforcers" that the principal spoke about is based on a token economy. The students were given a small piece of paper in the shape of a dollar bill to represent something positive that they had done. They could trade in the tokens at the end of the

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week at the school store to receive small tangible items for their good behavior. Some of these items included pencils, stickers, bracelets, school pride memorabilia, etc. Most of the students saved their tokens until they had enough to buy something bigger from the store. The principal also mentioned that some students collected these tokens all year and ended up keeping their stack of "dollar bills" to represent how well they did in junior high.

Each teacher also commented on this form of positive reinforcement in the school and how it affected students with behavior difficulties. One teacher commented on the fact that some of the students with behavior difficulties would receive more tokens than the students who behaved well on a regular basis. She explained that "each teacher needed to be genuine and balanced with this system so that PBS is not just a trade-off for not doing inappropriate things." When asked about her perceptions regarding how PBS programs have affected students with behavior difficulties, she spoke very positively about the progress that was made over the past five years.

> What I love about the program for students with behavior difficulties is that PBS gives you the opportunity to look for the good instead of focusing on the behaviors that you are trying to extinguish. This was always my philosophy, but I think more of the teachers that work with these students will come to see the good in them overcoming their perceptions of their inappropriate behaviors. I also think the students are more likely to buy into the program when they are seeing their teachers be more positive with them, the caveat is that it has to be genuine.

This teacher brings up a valid discussion that most of the participants commented on in some form. Every teacher has his/her own philosophy, teaching style, and personality. These things all have a tendency to play a role in how the teachers perceive students with behavior difficulties in general. When they are forced to use more positive statements when dealing with these students, their outlook on these students could, in

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turn, become more favorable. This has a snowball effect by creating a more positive atmosphere for these students to behave appropriately.

Three out of eight teachers and the principal all commented on the fact that PBS might have a different effect on seventh graders compared to the eighth graders' behavior. By the time some of the students are in eighth grade, they lose interest in the incentive program and token economy aspect of PBS. They are encouraged to follow the rules and set a good example for the seventh graders but they do not "buy into the program" as much. The seventh and eighth grade teachers are also responsible for keeping their students motivated.

> I think PBS is beneficial but of course the program relies on teachers constantly enforcing these qualities by pointing it out to students when they are demonstrating one or more of the qualities and with the additional positive enforcement of making sure to hand out tokens as well when a student is caught doing a good deed. It seems that seventh graders are more impacted positively with this program whereas the eighth graders that I've experienced, have not had their behavior influenced as much by PBS.

One of the key components that PBS allows the junior high school to do is to create an appropriate environment to educate all students. A pamphlet about the PBS program that is given to all the students and parents was discussed at the interview with the principal. In bold letters on the back of the pamphlet, it states that "this approach fosters successful social behavior and encourages school staff, students, families and community members to work together to create a safe social culture with consistent expectations." These consistent expectations were brought up by every participant pertaining to the first research question. Academic, behavior and social improvements were all seen from the students based on this consistency.

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Themes derived from Research Question 1. The academic theme was determined from the responses to the interview questions. Four of the nine participants did not bring up any improvements in academic performance of the students with behavior difficulties due to PBS implementation. Therefore more than half of the participants brought up academic improvements at some point during the interview process. Only one participant spoke about students with behavior difficulties having a wide range of ability levels in their classroom. This teacher went on to explain that the co-teaching initiative had improved her ability to work collaboratively with another teacher in the same classroom. She mentioned that this allowed students with special behavioral needs to excel academically in her classroom. Her interview responses were considerably focused on the academic improvements of these students with the help of the PBS program and her co-teaching experiences.

Another teacher provided examples of how the students with behavior difficulties improved academically in class when they followed the PBS guidelines. She felt as though test scores were not affected as much as in-class homework completion rate and how well the students were retaining the information presented by the teacher. This teacher discussed the importance of academic improvements for students with behavior difficulties.

> These students struggle academically because they are not able to focus due to the distractions of their behavior. They also have the tendency to get in the way of other students' learning. Every year that PBS has been in place at our junior high school, I see improvements being made in the classroom. Students are more able to focus in class without as many disturbances and they have a positive outlook on education. They are congratulated on a regular basis and seem to have an overall happier demeanor in class. I feel as though this helps them be more successful academically.

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This teacher commented on how the students with behavior difficulties can also play a role in how the other students learn in class. When they misbehave or disrupt the learning environment, this affects the outcomes in their academic performance. The PBS program in place at this junior high school allows the teachers to be proactive instead of reactive with student behavior, and this in turn can improve academics.

The behavior theme was determined from the majority of participants' responses to the interview questions. All nine of the participants spoke about behavior improvements of students with behavior difficulties due to the implementation of the PBS program at the junior high level. Three of the participants brought up the behavior theme in their responses to more than nine of the ten interview questions. This could be due to the fact that the word "behavior" is part of the PBS acronym and a large component of the program as a whole. One teacher spoke about how PBS affected students who exhibited different levels of behavior difficulties.

> It is a motivator for those students who have mild behavior issues, such as, not coming prepared, talking out of turn or completing assignment notebook. I work with students who tend to have more difficult behavior issues, so the PBS system is an extra reward when they are having a fabulous day. Students who have severe behavior needs also benefit. When the expectations are clear and the positive behaviors are recognized by adults and incentives are provided, I think these students have a better chance of succeeding.

Students with behavior difficulties are a part of every classroom of each teacher at the junior high school. They are defined as special education students and general education students who misbehave on a regular basis in all academic and social settings. The principal stated that she sees these students making more positive choices with the PBS program compared to when the program was not fully implemented. It took time for the staff and administration to grow accustomed to the program and consistently use the

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proactive interventions. She discussed the fact that there needed to be clear, consistent consequences for inappropriate student behavior as well as appropriate behavior. "The program provides additional support for students with more significant behavioral needs," according to the principal. She also commented on the fact that PBS is research-based and this study will also provide useful data to make decisions in the future.

The third theme taken from the research question of how PBS programs have affected students with behavior difficulties in junior high was the social effects. Students change a great deal socially at this age level (Akos, 2002). When students transition from elementary to junior high school in seventh grade, they experience many changes in their lives. Some examples of these changes would be more homework, school sports, and puberty. Akos reviews these changes in his study about student perceptions of transitioning from elementary school.

The students pertaining to this study were not previously accustomed to PBS in elementary school and were just learning the underlying principal of the program in seventh grade. The principal discussed this transition in the interview by explaining the first few days of school. She stressed the importance of this time for the students and the teachers to develop consistency and provide proactive intervention.

> This time is spent in homeroom discussing how PBS works and different strategies to promote positive behavior. The students go through a learning process to help them accept the new expectations at the junior high level. Each teacher works with the students on how to behave socially with other students and adults in the school.

Social behavior is a large component to the success of the program according to numerous participants. One teacher said that "students seem more socially mature" since the PBS program has been in place. It is a goal to provide a safe social culture with

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consistent expectations for teachers and students to follow on a regular basis. If students act socially more appropriately, then their behavior and academic performance can improve as a result.

Validation of themes. In order to validate the main themes, Maxwell (1996) explained the importance of determining the frequency of occurrence taken from the interview results. If a theme was mentioned by each participant, it was noted by the researcher and tallied into a category. The amount of times each participant mentioned the theme was calculated after the interview and the researcher determined categories to convey the frequency of the themes.

If the participant mentioned the theme one or two times it was considered limited. If the theme was mentioned three through five times, it was considered moderate, and six through eight times was considered frequent. Lastly, if the theme was mentioned nine or more times, it was considered to be consistent. The academic, behavior, and social theme were prevalent throughout the interview process without prompting from the researcher. The participants each brought at least two themes during the interview.

Table 4 provides a summary of the frequency of each theme taken from the interview results. The academic theme was not mentioned at all by four of the participants, while the behavior theme was mentioned numerous times by all nine participants within the interview. The social theme was not discussed at all by two participants, but it was mentioned consistently in each answer to the ten research questions by two of the participants. It is apparent from this table that the participants were focused on the behavior outcome more than academic improvement of the program.

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Table 4. Frequency of Themes Pertaining to Research Question 1

Participants	Academic Theme	Behavior Theme	Social Theme
Principal	Limited	Consistent	Moderate
Teacher 1	None	Moderate	Frequent
Teacher 2	None	Consistent	Limited
Teacher 3	Limited	Frequent	Limited
Teacher 4	Moderate	Moderate	None
Teacher 5	Limited	Frequent	Moderate
Teacher 6	None	Limited	Consistent
Teacher 7	Limited	Consistent	None
Teacher 8	None	Consistent	Frequent

Although there are additional themes that are provided from the other two research questions, it was determined that the academic, behavior, and social themes were the main concepts taken from the data results. They provided an outline as to how the principal and teachers felt the students with behavior difficulties were affected by the implementation of the PBS program at a junior high level.

Research Question 2

The second research question was: What are the perceptions of the principal and teachers regarding how PBS has affected the overall climate in a junior high school? The answers to this question provided additional categories that were later developed into four smaller themes based on the responses to the interviews. Many teachers discussed different attributes of the program that they felt had contributed the most to the success of PBS throughout the interview. The overall climate was determined to be more positive in general according to eight out of the nine participants.

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One teacher did not feel that PBS had affected the overall climate of the junior high school significantly. This participant did not answer all the questions with a negative tone, because he felt like PBS initiatives helped develop a lot of consistency in the teachers. This was considered a positive outcome of the program.

> I think that PBS has made us all have the same language and expectations for the common areas of the school. I also think that the school code has helped with having common language in regards to classroom expectations. It is nice that we train all of the kids at the beginning of the year because the seventh graders need a refresher course. Most of the time there are two ends of the spectrum, the students that do not care about any rewards no matter what they are and the kids that work for anything. This does not matter if there is PBS in place or not. I do think that the students in the middle are the ones that often do not get noticed by the PBS program because they are doing what they are supposed to be doing.

Another teacher commented on the fact that there needs to be a "buy in" by the students and staff to really make the program work. There is a code in place to demonstrate courtesy, integrity, self-discipline, and commitment at all times in this junior high school. The climate is based on the acceptance of these expectations by all students and teachers. The tokens are not given out unless the students are representing the school code. This is expected before, during, and after school hours in all locations of the school. The overall climate is not able to change unless the students buy into the program from the start of the school year (Sagett, 2004). It is the hope of the principal and teachers that the students carry out this school code and positive behavior at home and away from the school location.

Themes derived from Research Question 2. After dividing the interview responses into categories, it was apparent that there were four distinct themes within their responses to the second research question. The participants brought up classrooms, the hallway, cafeteria, and before and after school to describe where PBS has worked

effectively in the junior high school. The majority of the participants felt as though PBS worked the most in classrooms and provided a positive climate for students to learn. The principal described the "commons area" and hallway to be the most effective place the students showed respect through following the school code and PBS expectations. She gave examples of how the students followed these expectations based on courtesy, self-discipline, commitment, and integrity in this location.

> I see students being courteous by throwing garbage away and recycling in appropriate ways, as well as using appropriate voice level while they are in the hallway. Students show self-discipline by keeping hands and feet to themselves, keeping their locker combinations private, and the use of school-appropriate language. Commitment is shown by walking quickly and quietly to class between passing time and not being tardy. The students also show integrity by using the things that belong to themselves, being where they should be at all times, and using passes during class if they need to leave for any reason.

These examples are all outlined in the pamphlet about PBS handed out at the beginning of the school year. The students are reminded of them on a regular basis with posters on the way to class in the hallway and teachers pointing out when a student makes a positive choice. Every one of the statements the principal made and that are laid out in the school code are written in a positive manner. They tell students what is expected of them without using a negative connotation of what they cannot do. For example, the principal described students showing integrity by "using the things that belong to themselves" instead of saying "do not take things that belong to others." This positive language is intended to eventually lead to a positive climate.

One teacher spoke about the improvement of student behavior in the cafeteria. She felt as though the cafeteria represented where PBS had worked the most because students were respectful and followed the school code. This participant previously taught

elementary school and was surprised with how well the students transitioned to the new cafeteria in junior high. She discussed the chaos in elementary and how PBS would have been effective at her old school at this level. The climate in the cafeteria at the junior high was calm and less punishment was needed for misbehavior.

The last theme that was determined from the responses was before and after school. Many of the participants brought up the fact that students behaved more appropriately before and after school due to the PBS implementation. One teacher felt like it was the location where PBS had worked the most. This participant described going to other schools to watch extra-curricular activities and how it was apparent if that school did not have a PBS program in place. The participant felt as though the students from the school showed the most respect as fans of a sporting event or an audience at a musical festival. The climate in these locations was "enhanced due to the teachings of PBS."

Table 5 represents the location where each participant felt PBS worked the most. They each brought up numerous locations that pertained to the positive school climate, but they were asked which one they saw the most improvements in on a regular basis. From this data, it is apparent that the majority felt the classrooms and hallway were two locations were PBS had worked the most. This could be due to the fact that the students are in the classrooms the majority of the time they are in school and this is where the teachers see them the most. The hallway is a place where students usually have the most unstructured time and it was seen as the second most area where the school climate had improved.

The second research question was answered through this data representation and the themes presented formed a basis to describe the perceptions of the principal and

teachers regarding how PBS has affected the overall climate. Every participant felt as though the climate was improved with the implementation of PBS. One teacher summed it up best by saying, "In general, I think our focus on the positive with the students, creates a positive climate in our building as a whole."

Table 5. Principal and Teachers' Responses to the Question: Where has PBS Worked the Most?

Responses to the Question	Number of Participants
Classrooms	4
Hallway	3
Cafeteria	1
Before/After School	1

Research Question 3

The last research question was: What factors does the staff at a junior high school identify as having contributed to the successful implementation of PBS programs? This question was answered through the last half of the responses to the interview questions. Five categories were determined from the interview responses and three themes were developed from these responses. All of the participants mentioned rewards, teacher consistency, in-service training, positive language, and punishment at some point throughout the interview.

When asked what had contributed the most to the success of PBS, the participants felt that rewards, teacher consistency, and positive language had a large impact on the successful implementation of the program. Table 6 outlines these themes by tallying the amount of teachers who mentioned these three themes. All five categories are listed

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because they were consistent responses during the interviews but were not an overall theme.

Table 6. Principal and Teachers Responses to the Question: What has Contributed the Most to the Success of PBS?

Responses to the Question	Number of Participants
Rewards-Positive Reinforcement	3
Teacher Consistency	5
In-Service Training	0
Positive Language	1
Punishment-Negative Reinforcement	0

Categories derived from Research Question 3. In-service training and punishment was not considered a theme in this study although the participants did mention both categories throughout the interview process. In-service training was not perceived as having a large impact on the success of PBS, but it was considered an essential component of the program as a whole. Every participant spent some time in school level trainings on a regular basis at least once a month discussing PBS. Four participants also partook in district level trainings with other teachers and principals from other schools. One teacher discussed how these trainings helped the staff remember that they were all a part of the PBS program and did not have a choice of non-participation.

> No one could opt out! All staff are invested in the program and we are all expected to use PBS. It was taught in a way that you just don't hand out the buck, you state why they are receiving it, which makes it more genuine. We learned four common values we all reinforce daily, no matter where you are in the building you can use one of those four words: courtesy, self-discipline, commitment, and integrity. There were many staff who were on board right away and they shared ideas for implementing in the classroom with others.

Another teacher had a similar response to the question about what factors contributed the most to the successful implementation of PBS.

> During the first two days of the school year, significant time and effort are spent teaching and reviewing the meaning of the expectations. I honestly think this is as much for the staff as it is for the students. It sort of kick-starts the program for the year. Another important and influential aspect is the significant involvement and enthusiasm of a few of the teachers for the program. This probably has more of an impact than a motivated administrator in influencing other teachers' view of and acceptance of the program. Daily reminders of the core terms during announcements helps drive the vocabulary into the minds of the students and staff. Also, weekly target behaviors that are announced to staff to look for and to reward helps keep staff looking for the good stuff in all the students.

It was determined from the interview questions that the participants had different experiences with in-service training on PBS at the school and district level. Tables 7 and 8 provide the data on how much training was achieved prior to this study. School level in-service training was done after school on early release Thursdays. District level PBS training was done at the Central Administration Office (CAO) outside of the regular school day.

Four out of nine participants had not received any prior training at the district level and only one participant, who was the principal, received more than a week's training at the CAO. Every participant spent more than five days on PBS at the school level. They responded to the interview questions about the benefits of in-service training after school on a regular basis. All the participants felt that the school level in-service trainings on PBS were necessary to understand the underlying concepts of the program, but they did not have the largest impact of the success on the program at their school.

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Table 7. Amount of Time Spent in School Level PBS Training

Amount of Time	Number of Participants
None	0
1 Day	0
2-4 Days	0
5-10 Days	2
11-20 Days	2
More than 20 Days	5

Table 8. Amount of Time Spent in District Level PBS Training

Amount of Time	Number of Participants
None	4
1 Day	2
2-4 Days	2
More than 1 Week	1

Punishment or negative reinforcement was a category that three participants brought up during the interview process. It was not considered a theme because none of the participants mentioned it as being one of the larger contributions to the successful implementation process. When punishment was brought up in the interview responses, the teachers felt like there still needs to be some punishment or negative reinforcement when a student's misbehaved. The principal commented on the fact that the disciplinary reports had decreased since PBS was in place. She felt as though this was directly related to the consistency of the program by all teachers. Less of her time was spent on disciplining students and more time was spent on rewarding them. She did mention that it is important to still have procedures in place when a student does not follow directions and needs a punishment in order to understand the significance of his behavior.

Themes derived from Research Question 3. Teacher consistency, rewards, and positive language were the main themes developed from the data collected. Teacher

consistency was mentioned by five participants as having the largest impact on the successful implementation of PBS. One teacher described teacher consistency as "the sole aspect of PBS and a way to be proactive with expectations." She felt as though the students with behavior difficulties succeeded because the teachers were proactive and not reactive. This eliminated a lot of power struggles with teachers and students, since they all know what was expected of them and the rules do not fluctuate from classroom to classroom.

Rewards were mentioned by three of the nine participants as contributing the most to the successful implementation of PBS at the junior high level. Some participants used the term, "positive reinforcement" to describe the reward system and tokens given out to the students. All nine of the participants discussed the rewards as being an essential part of the program. When asked if PBS could still be successful if the tokens were taken away, seven out of nine of the participants did not think it would work as well at the junior high level without a reward system.

> Junior high students need that immediate satisfaction and something to work for in order for PBS to work in my opinion. I believe we would have to spend a great deal more time in the beginning of the setting and modeling the expectations and revisiting them much more often to show the kids how this will make an impact on them outside the school day. The students who really need such a program might not find a good reason to buy into the program.

Positive language was the last theme that was developed after determining categories from the interview responses. One teacher felt as though positive language was the main factor that had contributed to the successful implementation of PBS. This teacher explained that he had completely changed the way he said things in class. For example, when a student is leaning back in his chair, he used to say "Don't lean your

chair backwards!" After going through some training on how to use positive language, this teacher would now say "Please sit your chair upright" or "I would like you to sit properly in your chair." He explained that using "I statements" allows the student to feel less blamed for the behavior but instead gives the option to do what is right. This is an example of the common language used in the classroom by many of the teachers in the study. This teacher has also seen this positive language work with some of the students with the most severe behavior difficulties. His only complaint was that the parents do not always follow in the teacher's example with positive language and, at home, the student goes back to hearing negativity when reprimanded.

Summary

The descriptive data presented described the nine participants in this study, and the data analysis explained the methods used to analyze the data. The interview results were read through numerous times in order to develop categories and later divided into themes and themes based on each research question. The data results provided answers to the three research questions and allowed the researcher to delineate between different perspectives of the principal and teachers.

Significant themes were developed from the interview responses on how PBS programs had affected students with behavior difficulties in a junior high setting. The results to this first research question showed that the perspectives of the participants were that these students were affected academically, behaviorally, and socially. The frequency of these main themes were also presented in Table 4 in order to stress the amount of times these subjects came up in the interview responses. These were the most significant

themes of the research study and provided a basis for future studies to determine the extent to which PBS has affected students with behavior difficulties in junior high academically, behaviorally, and socially.

CHAPTER 5. RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provided a summary of the research study and a conclusion based on the data and results. It determined why the topic of how PBS programs in junior high schools have affected students with behavior difficulties, was important to research. It also described how the study was designed in order to contribute to the understanding of the topic. This final chapter provided recommendations for future research and practice and ended with a section on implications derived from the study. There will not be any new data introduced, but some references cited preciously will be used to validate the results. New frameworks and new insights will be discussed in order to provide a conclusion to the research study for future implications and research based on the interpretation and results.

Summary of the Study

This study was about the impact of a PBS program on students with behavior difficulties in junior high. Research has shown that elementary school PBS programs met the needs of their students behaviorally and socially (Bambara, 2005), but more research needed to be conducted on the implementation of PBS at higher academic levels. The perceptions of the principal and teachers were studied through an in-depth interview process to determine the overall impact of PBS on the climate of the junior high school after the implementation process was completed. A qualitative case study design was

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chosen in order to produce a research study that provided an in-depth look at the educational context and answered the research questions. The interview process was consistent and professional, in order to provide a valid and reliable study.

This research was conducted because students with behavior difficulties have become more prevalent in junior high schools over the previous decade (Bambara & Kern, 2005). Research was needed in order to help them succeed in school academically, behaviorally, and socially. PBS programs were designed to provide consistency and support for these students and the teachers and administrators who work with them on a regular basis. This topic was important to study because it provided an understanding of the perceptions of a principal and eight teachers about how PBS has affected students with behavior difficulties in junior high.

This research study was designed to contribute to the understanding of the topic by providing an example of how an Eastern Iowa junior high school implemented the components of PBS for students who had not been previously accustomed to the program in elementary school. The principal and teachers had experience with the current PBS program for five years, and it was fully implemented at the time of the study. A qualitative case study provided the researcher with descriptive data on perceptions of how the program affected students with behavior difficulties. The reason a case study research design was used was because it provided the researcher with details to develop themes and commonalities within the results.

The researcher spent time interviewing each participant, in order to really learn about their opinions and perceptions on the topic being researched. This strengthened the validity and reliability of the results and provided a basis for recommendations for future

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research. The study also provided an overview for the principal of how the current PBS program in place at the junior high school could be improved to increase the overall success for students and teachers. This Eastern Iowa school was also chosen for the purpose of providing an example for other schools around the United States that have recently implemented a PBS program or are looking for a program to support students with behavior difficulties.

Summary of the Findings and Conclusion

The findings of this study were organized according to the three research questions under the overall themes. A summary of the interviews with the nine participants was broken down into categories to develop themes based on the data presented in the previous chapter. It was determined from the participants responses to the interview questions that there were three main themes, and each research question could be described under these themes. The frequency of the three themes occurring from the first research question provided an understanding of the overall concept of how PBS has affected students behaviorally, academically, and socially.

Behavior Theme

Based on the findings obtained from the interviews, the behavior theme was consistently brought up by all the participants of the study. PBS programs were designed to establish a social culture and behavioral supports needed for students in schools to achieve social and academic success. The junior high school that partook in this research study developed their PBS program to reduce problem behaviors and provide consistent expectations for all students. The findings obtained from the researcher support the fact

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that this was a school-wide program that was adopted by a school district and fully implemented at the time of this study to improve student behavior.

The behavior theme was the focus of all nine participants throughout the interview process. The participants pointed out that PBS was a set of strategies and systems that enabled the school to create a culture of positive behaviors and reduce behavior disruptions. Since students with behavior difficulties were the focus of PBS from the beginning of the program development (Carr et al., 2002), it was not a surprise to the researcher that this theme was a large focus of the participants when answering the research questions.

Research Question 1. What are the perceptions of the principal and teachers regarding how PBS programs have affected students with behavior difficulties in a junior high setting? This research question was the basis for the three overall themes presented in the findings of this study. When each participant was asked how students with behavior difficulties were affected the most by PBS programs, the only three responses were: behaviorally, academically, and socially. The majority of the participants felt that the largest impact on these students was behaviorally.

The principal discussed the fact that the office referrals for negative behavior had decreased since PBS was implemented five years prior to the study. She perceived the program as being successful in helping eliminate behavior problems and increasing positive attitudes overall by the students and teachers. The program had gone through many changes from year to year, and the principal wanted to continue to make these changes to improve the outcome. These findings indicate that although there has been a

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positive change to student behavior, there is a need for continuous reevaluation of the PBS program to meet the needs of students with behavior difficulties.

Behavior expectations were more consistent due to the PBS program in place at this junior high school. This could be one reason why the students with behavior difficulties were exhibiting more positive behavior. It is helpful to these students to understand what is expected of them on a regular basis before the school year begins. Since the first two days of school are devoted to teaching the seventh graders how to follow the PBS strategies, less negative behavioral interventions need to take place during the school year.

Academic Theme

The academic theme was determined from the results of the second research question. The majority of the participants in this study felt that PBS had affected the overall climate within the classrooms at the junior high school. When students had experience with PBS programs, they were more likely to perform better in academic settings. The eighth grade students were accustomed to the expectations of the teachers from practice with PBS strategies during their seventh grade year. When they exhibited less behavior problems, more time was able to be spent on learning.

The teachers who spoke about academic improvements were all eighth grade teachers. They discussed how PBS strategies were used in their classrooms and how, when students followed the guidelines, there were less disruptions in class during instructional time. This improved the amount of information the students were taking in on a regular basis and led to an increased amount of homework completion in class.

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When the teacher did not have to spend time reprimanding students, they were given more time to complete the assignments during each class period.

The findings of this study showed that the principal and teachers would like to see a larger impact on academic outcomes due to the implementation of PBS. One participant discussed the importance of continuous evaluation of the current PBS program in order to determine what could improve the academic performance of students with behavior difficulties. These results indicate the need for additional research on how PBS programs in junior high schools have an overall effect on test scores and grades.

Research Question 2. What are the perceptions of the principal and teachers regarding how PBS has affected the overall climate in a junior high school? The interview questions pertaining to this research question showed that the PBS program was most effective in the classrooms, hallway, cafeteria, and before/after school. This was shown through the interview responses about locations that were most affected by the implementation of PBS. These results were coded into smaller themes and eventually were coded under the larger academic theme. The overall climate in the junior high school was improved in these settings.

The results from the interview with the principal indicated that the climate in the hallways was more calm and productive than it had been in the past few years. Students made it to class on time more often which allowed the teachers to start their class on time without as many disruptions. This could play a role in improving academic outcomes of these students because it promotes responsibility for their actions. It also lessons the amount of negative verbal interactions between the teacher and the student when they are not tardy for class. Junior high students have a tendency to make up excuses when they

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are late, which can cause an ongoing discussion with a negative connotation. When a student is accused of lingering around in the hallway or being late for class, they feel attacked by the teacher and may continue to have a negative attitude within the classroom. This can ultimately disrupt the learning of other students as well. The principal and teachers outline a consistent expectation of student behavior in the hallway, which is to walk quickly and quietly to class on time.

These consistent expectations and proactive approach to teaching students appropriate actions in school are developed to ensure a safe educational environment. When students feel safe and secure, they have less to worry about and they make better decisions. Academic outcomes can improve from a safer climate in the school and help students to have a more positive attitude about their education. This is the same concept for teachers, because when they know how to react to certain situations, they are more confident and feel safer in the public school environment. It is important for students and teachers to feel safe and secure at school in order to ultimately provide a positive climate conducive to learning.

Social Theme

Students' social behaviors have been impacted by the implementation of PBS programs according to the principal and teachers in this study. Students with behavior difficulties are likely to act socially immature in the junior high school environment. This is a transitional time for these students after elementary school and before high school. It is usually the first time a student changes schools after seven years in the same elementary school, which can be a big change for them. Junior high school principals and

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teachers need to help students get accustomed to this new environment and help them succeed socially.

The results of this study indicate that some teachers perceive this social change to be the largest contributor to how successful the implementation is of PBS programs at this level. Social interactions take place in every location in the school between students, between students and teachers, between teachers and principals, and between other members of the school community. Teachers are also impacted socially by the implementation of PBS programs. Social behavior can be exhibited through emotions and attitudes towards other people and also positive and negative attitudes about themselves. These positive or negative attitudes could also be geared towards the school or the PBS program overall.

In order for the program to succeed, more than half of the participants felt as though there needed to be "buy in" from the teachers and students. If they had a negative attitude about the PBS program, then the results would not be beneficial for them and might have an impact on others. Since PBS is a school-wide program and teachers do not get to choose if they want to partake in the proactive interventions, it is important to accept it with a positive attitude.

Research Question 3. What factors does the staff at a junior high school identify as having contributed to the successful implementation of PBS programs? The smaller themes derived from the results of this research question were rewards, teacher consistency, and positive language. The social implications of these three themes were apparent in the results of the last half of the interview questions. Teacher consistency was determined to have the largest impact on the successful implantation of the PBS program

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at this junior high school. This could be due to the fact that this program presented guidelines to follow to make expectations fair and balanced in every classroom and educational setting.

Teacher consistency is hard to accomplish with so many different teaching styles and attitudes about education and students with behavior difficulties. The leadership was also consistent throughout the duration of the study because the principal started working at the school the first year the program was in place, which was five years prior to the collection of data. The principal and six of the teachers that participated in the study had been at the school since the implementation of PBS had begun in the school and district.

Many of teachers struggled with behavior management at the junior high level, and PBS gave them more structure than just setting up classroom rules. Students also respected the fact that the same regulations and interventions are used by each teacher, because this is when they begin changing classes for each academic subject and have numerous teachers to learn from each day. The common language used by the teachers supported the students through consistent expectations.

Positive language is also used by the teachers in a consistent manner which encourages students to also use more positive language at school. The teachers in the study described how positive language contributed to the successful implementation of PBS over the past five years. They mentioned what a large impact this could have on the school climate overall if every teacher practiced using positive language more often. This can take additional time to accomplish, since PBS programs are designed to gradually be implemented over a five year process and can be ever changing to meet the needs of the individual students and school from year to year.

The final findings obtained from this research question indicated that the social behavior of students had improved since the implementation of PBS. Rewards and the use of positive reinforcement played a large role in the success of these students behaviorally. The token economy that was developed to track the progress of these students became a focus of many of the teacher participants. Some of the teachers felt as though the program would not be as successful with the student's social outcomes if there was not a tangible reward for their actions and attitudes. These factors were found to have contributed the most to the successful implementation of PBS, according to the participants in the study, but they also had no prior experience with a PBS program that did not give out tangible rewards.

Schools that implement a PBS program have the option to develop the guidelines in whatever way they choose, and they might not want to use a token economy for positive reinforcement. It would be beneficial to compare the outcomes of a school that used tangible rewards versus a school that only provided positive reinforcement through verbal praise and recognition. This might lesson the importance getting something in return for acting socially appropriate in school. The intrinsic motivation of feeling good about the decisions a person makes might be enough to promote positive social behavior in students at the junior high level.

Conclusion

The conclusion, based on the findings from the research study, was that students with behavior difficulties were not only affected behaviorally by the implementation of a PBS program, but they were also affected academically and socially in a positive manner. It was also concluded that a junior high school could successfully implement a PBS

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program, even if the students were not accustomed to a similar program in elementary school. It was found that the principal and teachers were also affected by the implementation of the PBS program, and it helped them be more consistent with expectations and positive language.

Rewards and positive reinforcement were seen as major factors in the success of this program, and the teachers were not sure it would be as effective if this aspect was taken away from the program. The overall climate in the school was positively impacted due to the PBS implementation, according to the participants of the study. In conclusion, the research questions were answered through the results, and it was determined that PBS programs in junior high schools have a positive effect on students with behavior difficulties, as well as on the principal and teachers.

Recommendations

The interpretation of the data of this qualitative research study indicates that future research and practice should be conducted on PBS programs at the junior high level. The majority of the current research is quantitative and focuses on the positive reinforcement aspect of PBS. Future research is needed on how the implementation of PBS programs has affected students with behavior difficulties academically, behaviorally, and socially in junior high schools. Since many elementary schools are adopting this program in Iowa, it will be more and more difficult to provide an example of how the program has affected junior high students who were not accustomed to the program beforehand. This study can form a basis for this research in Iowa and could be used in other states that have not yet adopted a PBS program at this level.

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Recommendations for Future Research

The four recommendations for future research were chosen based on the literature review conducted in this study. Each recommendation provides a full explanation of why the researcher made this recommendation and includes the methodology that should be used in the future research. The examples provided are not currently prevalent in the literature on PBS programs in junior high schools.

1. There needs to be more research completed before the implementation process of PBS programs in junior high schools compared to the initial implementation year of the program. This recommendation is made because it would provide a baseline for comparison to show how the program has changed the behavior of students at this level. A qualitative study would show how the principal and teachers perceive the program having an initial effect on students based on interview conducted before and after the implementation process.

2. It is recommended that a study could be conducted on the sustained implementation of PBS programs over a ten-year time frame. This longitudinal quantitative study could provide research on how the PBS program would change over a longer period and provide numerical data on the occurrence of office referrals due to behavior consequences. The results of this study would show if the program decreased the amount of office referrals that the principal dealt with from year to year. This would to determine if the students were behaving better after the program had been in place for more than ten years.

3. Research is needed on a school that uses PBS but does not provide a token economy for rewards. The current literature pertaining to PBS programs focuses

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heavily on the reward system and tangible items that students get in return for their good behavior. There are schools that have implemented the program without the tangible reward system or token economy in place. Two schools could be compared that have implemented PBS at the same time period, with one of the schools eliminating the incentive aspect of PBS. A qualitative study would provide perceptions of the students at a junior high level and provide evidence as to whether rewards are needed in order for the program to succeed.

4. A future study on how students have been affected academically by a PBS program would be very helpful to determine the success rates of the program solely based on academics. A quantitative research study would provide numerical data on test scores, and a qualitative research study would provide perceptions of how students improved on homework completion and in-class work. This research would focus on the academic component of PBS and how it affects students overall performance in certain class periods. This research should be handled at the same time of day during specific subject areas.

Recommendations for Practice

Principals have many responsibilities in order to provide an educational environment that is effective and safe for teachers and students of all ability levels. PBS programs were developed to promote consistent expectations for positive behavior strategies in schools. These programs have helped many principals increase the overall success in their schools and form a basis for future practice. PBS is a researched-based program that is used differently in every school level from elementary to high school. Junior high school is a transitional time, where students benefit from a consistent

proactive approach to positive behavior expectations. The four recommendations for practice were chosen based on the results of this study and the need for more PBS programs in junior high schools.

1. It is recommended that more junior high schools implement a PBS program, even if the students have not had a similar program in elementary school. Districts typically partake in this program and start the learning in elementary school before full implementation at higher educational levels. This study showed that there can be success with initial implementation of PBS with junior high students with behavior difficulties. Administrators should initiate these programs in their district if there is not a current system in place to promote positive social behavior.

2. More in-service opportunities are needed to improve the outcome of PBS programs. Schools that implement a PBS program should offer district level and school level educational opportunities for principals and teachers to learn how to sustain the program and increase the overall success for students. This should happen on a regular basis throughout the school year to offer support to the staff and show statistical progress on how PBS has improved students academically, behaviorally, and socially.

3. It is important for principals and teachers to spend time examining their own leadership and teaching styles. Through analyzing and synthesizing their ideas about how to promote a positive learning climate for students of all ability levels, they should make necessary changes to accomplish their goals. It is recommended that teachers keep an open-door policy for principals to offer suggestions on

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teaching styles and principals to accept feedback on how to make improvements to the school. PBS programs can form a basis for behavior expectations of principals and teachers as well as for students. Providing an opportunity for open communication is recommended for practice on positive interactions.

4. PBS programs can look differently from school to school and should not be a one-size-fits-all program. It is essential to develop a program that works well with the community as a whole and to encourage parents also to use positive language and proactive strategies to positive reinforcement. Offering educational opportunities for parents and community members to learn about the program would be recommended in order to promote consistency in the schools, home, and community.

Implications

The results of this research study on how principals and teachers perceive the impact of a PBS program on students with behavior difficulties at a junior high school provides an example of successful implementation without previous exposure to a similar program in elementary school. Future research could be attempted based on the themes presented under each research question and would form a basis to analyze current PBS programs and help future principals implement a new PBS program in their school.

As a result of this research, principals can implement PBS programs at a junior high level to support students with behavior difficulties. They can also determine what is necessary to improve students' outcomes academically, behaviorally, and socially from the results of the first interview question. This research implies that students are already

making improvements behaviorally and socially with PBS implementation, but teachers need to focus on how to improve academics from similar results.

This research also implies that the implementation of PBS has positively affected the overall climate in junior high schools. Some locations have been affected more than others, and it is apparent from the research that more attention needs to be placed on before and after school activities as well as within the community and home environments. Rewards, teacher consistency, and positive language were themes that were derived from the research to show what aspects contributed most to the success of PBS programs. This information implies that any future implementation of a PBS program would need some sort of positive reinforcement and consistency to succeed.

It is possible that this research study could encourage other junior high schools to implement a PBS program to promote positive behavior in students and teachers. Students have the tendency to react in a positive manner when the teacher exhibits a positive attitude. Mimicking behavior is a natural human characteristic and was shown in this study to be beneficial when the behavior was positive. It is much easier for a student to smile if their teacher have smiles on their faces and this provides a safe classroom environment conducive to learning. Teachers also mimic their students' behavior by having a good day when their students behave and a bad day when they have to deal with numerous misbehaviors.

Proactive expectations through PBS programs can lead to less confrontations between teachers and students, as well as less negative consequences for the principal to deal with on a daily basis. This can, in turn, free up the principal's time spent on student behavior problems and allow them to support the teachers and students in a positive

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manner. This might lead to principals spending more time in the classroom environment and offering better evaluations for teachers to improve throughout the school year. This could possibly help public schools begin to succeed again, reduce teacher burn out, and eventually reduce student dropout rates.

PBS programs can have a large impact on schools. Principals and teachers need support to work with the amount of students they encounter with behavior difficulties. A positive and proactive approach to teaching has been shown in this study to improve the overall academic, behavior, and social outcomes for these students. Consistency is the key to providing a safe educational environment for principals, teachers, and students that is conducive to learning. Teaching students to be positive in school will hopefully teach them to have a positive outlook on life. If every school adopted this attitude and implemented a similar PBS program, a positive change would take place in education.

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APPENDIX. SAMPLE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. What are your perceptions regarding how PBS programs have affected students with behavior difficulties in this junior high school? In your opinion, how has PBS affected students the most?

2. What are your perceptions regarding how PBS has affected the overall climate? Where have you seen PBS work the most?

3. What factors do you identify as having contributed the most to the successful implementation of PBS programs?

4. How do you see PBS in use on a daily basis in the different areas of school?

5. How could students with behavior difficulties improve with the current PBS program?

6. How do you think PBS has affected junior high students compared to elementary students?

7. What are the positive and negative attributes of PBS at your school?

8. If there was not a token economy offered in PBS, how would it still succeed as a program?

9. Who is benefiting the most from PBS programs and why?

10. What improvements need to be made to the current PBS program?

All questions developed by Jennifer Sebetka, 2012.