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Teacher Perceptions of School Climate and PBIS

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TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE AND PBIS

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The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

Mental Health Counseling

by

Douglas Eugene Periman

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CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

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ABSTRACT

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE AND PBIS

by

Douglas E. Periman

April 2017

The purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between perceptions of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), a behavior change system implemented in schools, length of teaching experience, and teacher perceptions of school climate. The sample for this study was made up of certified teachers in schools that had implemented PBIS, and from schools that had not implemented PBIS, located in Washington State. Data were collected from two surveys, one of which measured teacher perceptions of PBIS and the other measured teacher perceptions of school climate. A simultaneous multiple regression analysis was performed to determine if there was a relationship. Results showed that teachers who reported more positive perceptions of PBIS also had more positive perceptions of their school climate, with the PBIS survey predicting 53.6% of the variance in the school climate survey. This result strongly supports implementation of PBIS as a way to create a more positive school climate. There was not a significant relationship between years of certified teaching experience and perceptions of school climate.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Educational settings have always had a huge influence on the development of children. Students' experiences at school often dictate how their bodies and minds develop, which then can affect their functionality later in life. It has been shown that school climate is one factor that affects how students view their school, which has encouraged schools to turn to different methods of creating a more positive school climate in the hopes of providing positive experiences for their students (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). One of these methods is Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), an evidence-based practice developed to reduce negative behaviors by reinforcing positive behaviors (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). Previous research has been focused on how effective the PBIS system is at decreasing office discipline referrals (ODRs), suspensions, and expulsions (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Muscott, Mann, and LeBrun, 2008; Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). While there has been some research on how teachers view school climate in their schools, there has been little research done on the relationship between teacher perceptions of school climate and teacher perceptions of PBIS.

This thesis seeks to expand the research on teacher perceptions of school, as well as teacher perceptions of PBIS, and seeks to look at the relationship between the two. This thesis will survey certified teachers through an online survey which is a combination of three surveys: one demographic survey, one on teacher perceptions of PBIS, and one on teacher perceptions of school climate.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

This chapter explores the concept of school climate and the effect teacher perceptions about the school have on school climate. This literature review also looks at teacher perceptions of school discipline. After discussing teacher perceptions of those two topics, the review of literature will transition to describing PBIS, teacher perceptions of PBIS, and provide research results to support the positive outcomes outlined in PBIS literature.

School Climate

School climate is defined as “the shared beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape interactions between the students, teachers, and administrators” (Mitchell, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2010, p. 272). School climate includes the culture and atmosphere of a school. It also encompasses the values the school passes on to its students, as well as the resources that it provides for its students. Several factors go into the concept of school climate, which includes patterns of teacher-student interactions. Teacher-student interactions are the day-to-day interactions between teachers and students while at school. These interactions teach the students the goals, values, and norms set forth by the school. The students also learn the universal principles of teaching and learning, as well as the organizational structure of the school. These structures help promote a feeling of safety, both socially and emotionally, within the school. School climate is affected by several factors including: “student behavior and attitudes, school and classroom characteristics, and educator and student values and related perceptions regarding considerations of school safety and school effectiveness” (Gage, Larson, Sugai, & Chafouleas, 2016, p. 494). Research has shown that when students perceive their schools as having a positive climate, they are less likely to report depressive symptoms, as well as being less likely to

take part in deviant behaviors such as drug and alcohol use (Gage et al., 2016).

School climate has been shown to be an important factor in student and school success (Fan, Williams, & Corkin, 2011). Research has shown that a positive school climate can create an increase in student outcomes, such as academic success, positive student interactions, and student satisfaction with their school. It has also been shown that a positive school climate can increase student attendance, positive attitudes toward their school and teachers, and motives to do well academically. Students' social experiences, along with their learning level, are also affected by the school environment (Fan et al., 2011). When students reported having perceptions of a positive school climate, there was a decrease in their substance use, a decrease in incidents of bullying and peer victimization, as well as a decrease in general issues with negative student behaviors (Gage et al., 2016).

Teacher and Student Perceptions of School Climate. There are several factors that have been associated with having a positive school climate (Conderman, Walker, Neto, & Kackar-Cam, 2013). Teachers identified job satisfaction, success of students, a supportive low discipline environment, and job security as factors that they associate with a positive school climate. Along with these things, it is important to have effective leadership and a supportive administrator (Conderman et al., 2013). This will help to enable a climate that enables faculty and students to have a healthy and productive relationship (Conderman et al., 2013).

A teacher can have a huge effect on the success or failure of the students in their class. Students' individual personalities and characteristics also play a large role in classroom climate, which is an important element of school climate (Cavrini, Chianese, Bocch, & Dozza, 2015). Classroom climate consists of the interactions the teacher and students have within the classroom. This can include positive interactions, as well as negative interactions such as

discipline. This, in turn, also affects the relationship between teacher and student, helping or hindering the classroom environment (Cavrini et al., 2015).

In their study looking at both student and teacher perceptions of school climate, Conderman et al. (2013) found that teachers rated the school's overall quality of education higher than students. They also found that when teachers challenge and have reasonable expectations of their students, students tend to have a more positive view of school climate. Also, teachers had a multidimensional view on school climate, while students had a one-dimensional view. Teachers' views were affected by social, educational, and developmental factors, and were not just positive or negative. Students, on the other hand, either liked or disliked the school climate (Conderman et al., 2013).

In another study on teacher and student perceptions of school climate, researchers also found that teachers tended to have a different view on school climate than students (Mitchell et al., 2010). Teachers' perceptions were significantly more positive than students. Teachers reported that students were more involved in class, and that their classrooms had more order and rule clarity, which was a different view than their students. This might be a result of the teacher being in control of the activities and tasks on a daily basis. Students could feel less control, which, in turn, would change their perceptions of school climate (Mitchell et al., 2010).

Teacher Perceptions of School Discipline. An important element of school climate is school discipline. One definition of discipline in the research is “the individual’s withdrawal from undesired behaviours to perform the desired behaviours” (Ugurlu et al., 2015, p. 121). Irwin, Mensah, Aboagye, and Addison (2005) define discipline as “maintaining order to reduce the need for teacher intervention over time by helping students become self-disciplined, thus able to control their behavior appropriately” (p. 46). While these are two different definitions of

discipline, it is important for teachers to have the education on theories and terms associated with discipline. Teachers need to be able to develop different strategies to deal with problem behaviors from their students (Ugurlu et al., 2015).

Each teacher has certain values that can have a huge influence on the philosophy and environment of their classroom (Tulley & Chiu, 2005). Along with their personal values, the amount of versatility the teacher exhibits also plays a role in how effective their classroom practices are at regulating classroom disruptions (Tulley & Chiu, 2005). In order for an intervention to be effective, teachers need to be able to identify and intervene when students exhibit negative behaviors (Irwin et al., 2005). This must be done in a constructive way and must not be intrusive on the tasks being done by other students.

Teachers must have a knowledge of the potential sources of behavior, as these can affect what intervention strategies are considered in their school (Irwin et al., 2005). There are two different sources of motivation that affect behavior in the classroom, intrinsic and extrinsic (Irwin et al., 2005). Intrinsically motivated students tend to see events in the classroom as resulting from their actions and have an understanding that their actions are under their control (Irwin et al., 2005). Students who are extrinsically motivated tend to view their actions as being linked to external factors, and therefore don't have control over their actions (Irwin et al., 2005). If the teacher is unable to identify the correct source of misbehavior, the teacher can interpret this as being a matter of disrespect (Irwin et al., 2005). Until the actual source of misbehavior is discovered, it is likely that the misbehavior will continue (Irwin et al., 2005).

In their study about teacher perceptions of classroom discipline, Tulley and Chiu (1995) found that positive reinforcement was the most effective way to deal with classroom discipline. These researchers found that there was a 92% success rate when using positive reinforcement in

response to classroom disruptions (Tulley & Chiu, 1995). Second to positive reinforcement was explanation, which involves talking to the student or the whole class to describe what the appropriate behavior is in the situation in which the student exhibited a negative behavior. Explanation worked 78% percent of the time, and was most effective when used in response to aggression. The next most effective method was changing the strategy that the teacher uses in response to disruptions. This may involve implementing a change in teaching approach, changing voice inflection, and even changing distance between themselves and the student who is causing problems in the classroom. This was found to be effective 65% of the time that it was used. Finally, the fourth most effective method for dealing with negative behaviors in classrooms was punishment. This includes methods like removing student privileges, isolating the student within the classroom, or dealing out detention. This method was found to be effective 53% of the time. These results show that teachers should fundamentally agree with the concept of positive reinforcement (Tulley & Chiu, 1995).

Teachers believe that to manage their classroom effectively, there needs to be an emphasis on being able to control how students behave, and this needs to be done before focusing on academic work (Haroun & O'Hanlon, 1997). Researchers found that teachers believed that true school discipline existed when the students understood their own personal responsibilities within the school (Haroun & O'Hanlon, 1997). Teachers also believed that each student's first responsibility was to know and understand the expectations the school puts on them (Haroun & O'Hanlon, 1997). They believed that students need to know their rights and duties, then perform the responsibilities put forth by the school. Teachers also believed that students should always follow and respect their teachers. Teachers also were shown to be only interested in what effect school discipline can have on how they communicate and teach their

students (Haroun & O'Hanlon, 1997).

Student Perceptions of Teachers and Discipline. Some schools have started implementing strict discipline practices, believing that students should be held accountable for their actions (Way, 2011). Academic researchers though, have been critical of the repercussions of harsh discipline (Way, 2011). It has also been shown that these practices are inconsistent and are applied to minority students more frequently than majority students. Even though there has been an increase in criticism towards zero tolerance policies, school districts are still drawn to harsher, punitive consequences for negative behaviors (Way, 2011). The results from Way (2011) provide support for the concept that get-tough disciplinary practices are not effective at decreasing negative behaviors. It was found that to understand the effect that discipline has on student behavior, one must understand how students perceive discipline and the authorities implementing the disciplinary practices (Way, 2011).

It is also important to understand the commitment that students have toward their school, as this could affect student behavior (Way, 2010). Studies have shown that when policies were implemented that students considered fair, there was a lessening of delinquent behavior and bullying, along with suspensions and expulsions. It was also found that when students viewed their school faculty as operating fairly, there was a significant reduction in truancy (Way, 2010).

Classroom discipline in most schools is performed by teachers and administrators, like the principal, and at the district level by the superintendent. However, teachers are the ones who are interacting directly with the students in the classroom. It is important to understand how the student-teacher interaction influences resistance and confrontation in the classroom, as the discipline referral process is initiated in the classroom. Research has shown that when students believe that there is a positive student-teacher relationship, primarily in the form of teacher

caring and interest in the success of students, students feel safer and are less likely to be suspended (Way, 2011). Research has also shown that there is an inverse relationship between negative school conduct and positive student relationships with teachers (Way, 2011). Along the same lines, if students believe that their teachers positively reinforce good behaviors and have respect towards the students, there will be a decrease in negative behaviors (Way, 2011). It was also found that students felt a higher sense of connection to their schools when students perceived that teachers cared about them and when students believed that their school's discipline was tolerant (Wald & Kurlaender, 2003). Lower levels of connectedness were found when students thought that their schools relied too heavily on suspension as a disciplinary practice.

In a study done by Kiptala, Okero, and Kipruto (2011) that looked at student perceptions of discipline and authority, researchers found that a majority of students didn't like a specific teacher if that teacher had to delegate the responsibility of resolving a case of discipline to another teacher or administrator. Students appreciated when a teacher could handle their own disciplinary actions. A majority of students also did not like it when a teacher consistently accused a particular student of being the instigator in most discipline problems in the classroom. In addition, the students in this study appreciated having a disciplinarian that did a good job of explaining the reasoning behind disciplinary actions, through the use of rational guidance (Kiptala et al., 2011).

With the research summarized above, new methods of changing the disciplinary practices of classrooms and schools are being looked at to change the negative and ineffective effects of harsh discipline. Changing these negative effects is a way to improve the efficiency of schools and improve teacher perceptions of school climate and discipline, which in turn creates a more

positive environment for students to achieve.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

In the 1960s, President Lyndon B. Johnson and his cabinet developed an education initiative called the Gardner Commission (Thomas & Brady, 2005). This initiative was aimed at developing different ways to think about federal funding for education. The Gardner Commission attempted to change past practices with federal education funding and have it be based on educating children with special needs, as well as on whether the children's families had financial difficulties. In 1965, the United States Congress acknowledged the workings of the Gardner Commission and passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The tenet of this original legislation was "to provide financial assistance to local educational agencies serving areas with high concentrations of children from low-income families to expand and improve their educational programs by various means" (Thomas & Brady, 2005, p. 52). While this legislation was based primarily on poverty level, it was also based on the educational needs of the child (Thomas & Brady, 2005). This legislation would later use federal funding to develop ways to reduce behavior issues in schools.

In the 1980s, there was a need to find ways to treat behavior disorders (BDs) in school-aged children (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). During this time period, there was an increase in diagnoses of BDs, but limited options for treatment (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). This in turn brought about a need for professionals to assess and document new interventions, and implement these types of interventions to help children who have BDs (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). To address this need, researchers at the University of Oregon began evaluating new ways to combat behavior disorders (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). This involved developing research-based methods using data-based decisions, school-wide implementation, instruction in social skills, and

assessment of student outcomes. In the decade of the 1990s, the authorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act facilitated a grant to build the National Center on PBIS (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). This agency looked to provide support services to schools to help them with students who had behavior disorders. As a result of its research in the methods used to help with behavior disorders, the University of Oregon developed the PBIS Center. Eventually the PBIS Center developed partnerships with universities in five different states. These universities helped develop the PBIS framework, which has been implemented in many states and school districts to work with all students, whether they have behavior disorders or not (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

In 2001, President George W. Bush implemented a program along the same lines as the ESEA that President Lyndon B. Johnson started in 1965 (Marin & Filce, 2013). The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) program is used to determine which schools are performing well enough to justify financial support from the U.S. Government (Marin & Filce, 2013). This program is intended to increase the accountability of both teachers and administrators regarding the academic performance of students in their schools (Marin & Filce, 2013). The NCLB program is also used to find the influences that support and hinder classroom learning (Marin & Filce, 2013).

As a result of the implementation of NCLB, school administrators began to look for ways to increase effective instruction time in the classroom (Marin & Filce, 2013). In part, this entails reducing undesirable behaviors and in turn, increasing beneficial conditions for learning. Research-based practices became an important aspect when looking at intervention programs to combat negative behaviors. The PBIS system was designed to address these needs (Marin & Filce, 2013). The practices, principles, and systems of PBIS have been studied, described and implemented since 1965 in places other than the University of Oregon. It uses behavioral theory,

behavior analysis, positive behavioral supports, and prevention and implementation science to improve the school environment for all students (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

Elements of PBIS and the Implementation Process. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is an approach used in school systems that looks to encourage a change in the behavior of school staff in an attempt to provide a positive impact in student punishment, conduct, and educational outcomes (Pas & Bradshaw, 2012). Another aim of PBIS is to change the environment of schools by improving the school's system of discipline and reinforcement, as well as their procedures on office referrals, leadership, and training (Bradshaw et al, 2010). This is done to positively promote change in both staff and student behaviors. This framework uses principles from behavioral and social learning, as well as organizational behavioral principles. These principles have been used in the past with individual students. However, until recent years, they had not been applied to all the students and faculty in schools and school districts. Pas and Bradshaw (2012) stated that the important components of PBIS are:

a statement of purpose, school-wide expectations, procedures for teaching school-wide expectations, a continuum of procedures for encouraging school-wide expectations, a continuum of procedures for discouraging problem behaviors, and procedures for using data to monitor the impact of school-wide PBIS implementation. (p. 410)

Special attention is given to making sure that students understand appropriate behaviors (Coffey & Horner, 2012). Students also receive both social and tangible rewards if they use the appropriate behavior, which in turn positively reinforces their desirable behaviors (Coffey & Horner, 2012). Implementation of these components may play a large role in changing student and teacher perceptions of school climate. The proposed study could provide support for a relationship between teacher perceptions of PBIS and teacher perceptions of PBIS, showing that

implementation of PBIS can create a positive change in school climate.

According to Scheuermann et al. (2013), the main goals of PBIS are: prevention of cases of negative behaviors by creating clear and defined environments; early intervention of emerging behavior issues; and more intensive interventions for students who have chronic behavior problems. Another important goal of PBIS is to create an encouraging, comprehensive, and safe learning environment for students (Pas & Bradshaw, 2012). By providing this positive school environment, students should feel more connected to the school, which in turn may increase educational success and should create a more positive school climate (Pas & Bradshaw, 2012). The PBIS is designed to apply several different principles (i.e., behavioral, social learning, and organizational) to the entire student body and sets standardized expectations for every student in that school (Bradshaw, Wassdorp, & Leaf, 2012).

Bradshaw et al., (2010) describe the seven steps of implementing PBIS. The first step is the formation of the PBIS team. The team is comprised of six to ten staff members, as well as one administrator (Bradshaw et al., 2010). The team goes to trainings, establishes action plans, develops support materials, trains other staff, and meets twice a month. The second step is finding an external behavioral support coach. This coach is usually a school psychologist or school counselor, and provides consultation and technical assistance on implementation. The coach is an important member of the team, who attends at least one team meeting a month. The third step is defining school expectations, including expectations on positive student behavior (Bradshaw et al., 2010). The PBIS team develops 3-5 positive expectations for the behavior of students. These expectations are taught to students and staff, and are posted in every classroom and non-classroom setting. Step four is the teaching of the behavioral expectations to every student (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Lesson plans are established by staff on teaching students about

these expectations. Trainings with students happen at the beginning of the school year and are reinforced through additional assemblies or in class trainings, at least once a month. The fifth step is when the team develops a school-wide system for rewarding students when they exhibit positive behaviors (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Faculty and staff adopt their own system of reward and reinforcement that is consistently upheld in every setting. Step six is when the team develops a school-wide system for behavioral violations (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Faculty and staff develop operational definitions of classroom-managed and office-managed discipline problems. Consistent disciplinary consequences are enforced for all students. The final step develops a system for collecting, analyzing, and using data on discipline to facilitate data-based decision making (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Discipline data is regularly collected, analyzed, and reported. Every staff member gets trained on documenting procedures for ensuring effective data collection (Bradshaw et al., 2010). The final three steps are the most likely to have a direct effect on student perceptions of school climate.

Once these steps have been put into practice, fidelity is measured. Fidelity is defined as “the extent to which the delivery of an intervention adheres to the protocol or program model originally developed” (Mowbray, Holter, Teague, & Bybee, 2003, p. 215). Fidelity of PBIS is an important concept to both researchers and schools (Childs, Kincaid, & George, 2015). Fidelity is primarily measured using the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET). The SET measures initial implementation methods and is administered by someone outside of the school. Fidelity is important because it not only shows that implementation was done correctly, but it also affects the amount of funding schools will get from the government (Childs et al., 2015).

Teacher Perceptions of PBIS. One of the reasons for researching teacher perceptions of PBIS is to figure out what is hindering the teachers and the school from properly implementing

PBIS (Hansen, 2014). When a teacher has a negative perception towards the system, it can be transferred to other teachers, students, and school administration. During implementation, it is important to measure how aware the teachers are of the process and how their attitudes toward administrators affect the goals of implementation (Hansen, 2014).

There are several factors that can affect how much teachers believe in the PBIS system. These include teachers not believing in the need for PBIS, as well as their perception of infringement by administrators on their classroom autonomy and behavior management systems (Hansen, 2014). As a result of continued attempts by administrators to change the education process, teachers have become resistant to new interventions and systems being implemented in their schools. Some direct reasons for a lack of teacher support of PBIS are the immense requirements of time needed to implement PBIS, as well as a general lack of training in the system. In her dissertation on the relationship between teacher perceptions of PBIS and the implementation process, Hansen (2014) created her own survey on this topic. She surveyed 116 certified teachers from four public schools in Harrison County, Mississippi. All teachers were from elementary and middle schools that had implemented PBIS at varying levels of implementation. Hansen (2014) found that teachers perceived PBIS to be positive and believed that it met the behavioral needs of the students as well as reducing occurrences of negative classroom behaviors. In their study looking at teacher perceptions of behavior management strategies, Tillery, Varjas, Meyers, and Collins (2009) found that, for the most part, teachers agreed that PBIS was a beneficial system. However, they also found that even though they had a full year of PBIS training, teachers did not have a working knowledge of the PBIS system. They were unable to effectively implement the elements of PBIS. Analyzing the perspective of teachers about behavior should be a critical step in behavior modification guidelines (Hansen,

2014). The researcher found that rather than focusing on school-wide policies, teachers tend to focus on the individual behaviors of their students. Hansen (2014) also found that teachers had a positive view on the impact they have on student behaviors.

When implementing PBIS, schools must be able to change their disciplinary practices. The PBIS system uses proactive discipline, while most schools before PBIS implementation use reactive discipline. Reactive discipline happens when the teacher or other school faculty member deals out discipline as an immediate response to negative behavior (Swick, 1985). Proactive discipline happens when the teachers, administrators, and other faculty make a plan prior to the presentation of problem behaviors (Swick, 1985). Schools can struggle trying to make this change from reactive discipline to proactive discipline, but PBIS is a system that can help bridge that gap. Challenges in implementation have been shown to be a result of schools lacking support from teachers (Hansen, 2014). Research has shown that only 33% of PBIS implementation teams had the required 80% of staff support (Hansen, 2014). This may be a result of the teacher not feeling that their needs and concerns are being considered by the implementation team (Hansen, 2014). The implementation team could benefit from identifying teacher needs and concerns in an effort to curb any problems during implementation. This needs to be identified before implementation for the system to succeed, and is performed by the implementation team. It is done by surveying teachers.

Feuerborn, Wallace, and Tyre (2016) performed a qualitative study looking at teacher perceptions of PBIS. They surveyed 69 participants from seven school districts across the United States. They found that the needs and concerns of teachers were very similar between high-fidelity and low-fidelity schools. Fidelity is the level that schools have consistently implemented the procedures of PBIS. This is assessed by the United States Department of

Education. However, there were some differences between high- and low-fidelity schools. Around 22% of the teachers in low-fidelity schools had more concern for school climate, compared to 13% of teachers in high-fidelity schools. This shows that there may be a positive relationship when it comes to teacher support towards PBIS implementation and a positive school climate (Feuerborn et al. 2016). It is very important that schools that are implementing PBIS include their teachers in the process of implementation. The teachers should be able to voice their needs and concerns to the PBIS implementation team, giving them a sense of ownership towards the PBIS system within their schools.

Hansen (2014) found that following PBIS implementation, teachers perceived their school as having a more positive and healthy school climate. The teachers also felt that they were more committed to their students, as well as feeling that they had more positive interactions with their students. Hansen (2014) also found that teachers who were in PBIS schools had more self-efficacy. Teachers may have felt this way as a result of being more effective at dealing with negative behaviors. These results show that PBIS schools have increased academic achievement along with a decrease in negative student behaviors. This then leads to increased time for teachers to focus on preparing their instructional material. This in turn can lead to a more positive school climate, increasing student success and engagement in their academics. Hansen (2014) found that teachers perceived PBIS to be positive and believed that it met the behavioral needs of the students as well as reducing occurrences of negative classroom behaviors.

Social validity is defined as the “assessment of the social significance of the goals of intervention procedures, the social acceptability of intervention procedures to attain those goals, and the evaluation of the social importance of the effects produced by intervention procedures” (Vancel, Missall, & Bruhn, 2016, p. 321). Data on social validity is very useful for interventions

like PBIS as this kind of data delivers important information concerning teacher and administrator perceptions on the value of PBIS, along with information on what sort of problems or difficulties might be associated with the implementation process (Vancel et al., 2016). This study looked at the possibility of the influence of within-teacher factors, such as gender or length of experience, on teacher perceptions of PBIS. Research prior to the study done by Vancel et al. (2016) found that there was an inverse relationship between level of treatment acceptability and teacher years of experience (Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997). As the number of years of experience of the teacher increased, their acceptance of PBIS decreased. Vancel et al. (2016) found that more than half of teachers and administrators believed that PBIS significantly improved their school. They also believed that PBIS was worth their time and effort. Vancel et al. (2016) also found that within-teacher factors were not predictors of teacher ratings of social validity.

Positive Outcomes of PBIS. Pas and Bradshaw (2012) investigated a hypothesized association between the implementation of PBIS and positive outcomes in the classroom. They hypothesized that with higher levels of PBIS fidelity, there would be higher levels of academic achievement and lower rates of negative behaviors (e.g., trancies, suspensions, etc.). The researchers found that, in fact, a greater fidelity of PBIS implementation resulted in a significantly higher student achievement in reading and math and a lower rate of truancy (Bradshaw et al., 2012; Pas & Bradshaw, 2012). These results provide evidence that PBIS is an effective way to decrease negative behaviors, while at the same time increasing academic success. Other studies have also shown implementation of PBIS to be correlated with significant improvements in student prosocial behavior, teacher self-efficacy, and school organizational health (Bradshaw et al., 2012). Bradshaw et al. (2012) found evidence that PBIS is also effective in helping with a range of student behavioral issues such as concentration problems, aggressive

behaviors, and emotional regulation.

Muscott et al. (2008) looked to see if the PBIS model would help lower total infractions, both minor and major, that resulted in Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs). Minor ODRs are described as behaviors which are low in intensity, and are not looked at as serious in nature or as a serious distraction (Gion, McIntosh, & Horner, 2013). Major ODRs are intense and dangerous behaviors that cause a large distraction in the classroom. Minor violations are usually handled immediately by staff, while major violations are handled by administrators (Gion et al., 2013). Research has shown that students who have received major ODRs also have issues with persistent problem behavior in the future (Muscott et al., 2008). They also have a higher chance of exhibiting more violent behaviors, as well as a higher chance of failing academically (Muscott et al., 2008). The researchers also looked to see if implementing PBIS would increase time spent on instruction as well as decreasing the time that teachers, faculty, and administrators spend on dealing with the ODRs (Muscott et al., 2008). The researchers analyzed data for 22 schools: 13 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, 2 high schools, and 2 multilevel schools. Muscott et al. (2008) found that, overall, there was a reduction of ODRs. Between all schools, there was reduction of 6,010 ODRs, or about 28%.

Bradshaw et al. (2010) performed a study to look at the effects of SWPBIS on student outcomes. The outcomes being measured were ODRs and fidelity. The researchers in this study found that there was a significant decrease in the percentage of students that committed major or minor ODRs (from 18.8 % to 18.1%). While this is statistically significant, it is most likely not practically significant. The researchers also found that there was a significant decrease in the total number of ODRs, both minor and major. When it comes to fidelity, results from the SET measure, designed to assess fidelity, showed that they had implemented PBIS with fidelity with

an overall fidelity score of over 85% (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

There has been limited research on teacher perceptions of both school climate and PBIS. The author of this thesis only found two research articles on teacher perceptions of school climate. There are almost no data on this topic. The author also only found one research study, a dissertation, that was done specifically on teacher perceptions of PBIS. The purpose of this thesis was to expand the literature on two topics, teacher perceptions of school climate and teacher perceptions of PBIS. This thesis looked to see if there is a relationship between teachers' perceptions of school climate and their perceptions of PBIS. This has only been done in one other study within the literature found for this thesis. As a result of conflicting findings in the literature, this thesis looked to see if there is a relationship between years of teacher service and teacher perceptions of both school climate and perceptions of PBIS. The hypothesis of this study is that at least one of the predictor variables (i.e. Years of Teaching Experience or Scores on TPPBIS) will be useful in predicting scores on the EDSCLS. This hypothesis was revised from the original two hypotheses. This was done because this study used a multiple regression analysis, not two simple regression analyses. Multiple regression studies examine the effects that all variables, predictor and outcome, have on each other, factoring in how the three variables affect the regression equation ("Multiple Regression Analysis", n.d.). Simple regression only looks at the effect one predictor variable has on the criterion variable, without looking at the effect that the second predictor variable has on the relationship between the first predictor variable and the criterion variable.

CHAPTER III

Methods

This chapter focuses on the design and method of this research study by examining how teachers' perceptions of PBIS are related to teacher perceptions of school climate. The design of the study is described, including a detailed report of the scales that will be used as well as a characterization of the participants.

Design

This study uses a correlational research design. The variables were scores for the PBIS survey, scores on the school climate survey, and years of service as teacher.

Participants

The participants of this study were 68 certified teachers in the state of Washington. Teachers taught in classrooms, ranging from Kindergarten to 12th grade. Participants came from schools that have implemented PBIS and schools that had not implemented PBIS. There were eight participants from schools that had not implemented PBIS, so they were not included in the data analysis. There were 68 participants from schools that had implemented PBIS. There were 308 school districts that were recruited for this study, and 19 school districts chose to participate in this research. There were 2728 teachers that were prospective respondents from the 19 school districts (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, n.d.). There were 109 respondents that started the survey, while only 68 teachers fully completed the survey. That leaves 41 respondents that did not answer at least one item on the survey.

Instrumentation

Demographics Questionnaire. The survey used in this study started with 14 demographic questions (See Appendix A). These questions were used to identify if a teacher

was certified, the number of years of certified teaching experience each teacher had, number of years at current school, grade levels taught, race, gender, specifics about whether PBIS was implemented in their school, if they were on the PBIS team, years since implementation, and consistency of PBIS implementation in their school.

Teacher Perceptions of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (TPPBIS). The researcher utilized an instrument titled Teacher Perceptions of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (See Appendix B). This survey was created by Hansen (2014) for her dissertation at the University of Southern Mississippi. Permission was obtained to use this survey (see Appendix C). The demographic questions from the original TPPBIS were folded into a separate demographic survey (see Appendix A), except for the question about number of years of education. That question was omitted from the study. The question about whether the teacher was licensed in the state of Mississippi, was changed to ask them if they were licensed in the state of Washington. This survey begins with eight questions about the implementation of PBIS in their school. The implementation questions were designed so that the participants could answer according to how they viewed the training they received as well as their participation in their school's PBIS implementation process. This subscale addressing implementation was scored by summing together the values assigned to the participant's answer. The norm sample of the implementation subscale had an overall score mean of 3.96, and an average standard deviation of .89. The next 19 questions address teacher perceptions of PBIS. These questions were designed to allow the participant to answer the questions according to their viewpoint on the different parts of PBIS, and how implementing PBIS has changed their classroom. The subscale on perceptions of PBIS was scored by summing together responses to the items. Items 11, 16, 17, and 18 were negatively-valenced questions, so the values for those items were reverse

scored to account for this difference. The norm sample for the perception subscale had an overall mean score of 3.44, and an average standard deviation of .99. The last five questions allowed participants to respond to questions addressing their perception of the role of their administrators in managing and implementing PBIS. This subscale was scored in the same way as the implementation subscale. Scores from responses were summed together to get a summary score for the subscale. The norm sample for the administration subscale had an overall mean score of 3.89, and an average standard deviation of .68. Hansen (2014) performed a pilot study prior to performing her actual study to obtain reliability results on her survey. Each section of the survey (e.g. implementation, teacher perception, administrator's role) met the minimum standard of Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .7 to .8 (Oswald & Waters, 2002). The implementation subscale had an alpha level of .76, the teacher perception subscale had an alpha level of .77, and the administrator's role had an alpha level of .89. The Teacher Perceptions of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (TPPBIS) survey was scored by finding the summary score for each subscale, then summing the three subscales together to get an overall summary score for the survey. A higher score on the TPPBIS survey means that the participant has a more positive perception on the PBIS system in their school.

United States Department of Education School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS). The second instrument that was used in this study was the EDSCLS (See Appendix D). Demographic questions from this survey were folded into the separate demographics survey, except for the question about Hispanic origin, and the question about the participant's main assignment. The EDSCLS is a measure developed by the United States Department of Education in response to two different initiatives put forth by President Obama and his administration. These two initiatives are Now is the Time Plan and My Brother's Keeper

Taskforce. Both initiatives called upon the Department of Education to assess and work on the issue of school safety and school climate. Permission to use this survey was obtained (See Appendix E). The EDSCLS has three different domains: engagement, safety, and environment. There were no means and standard deviations available from the norm sample. The engagement domain is made up of three topics: cultural and linguistic competence, relationships, and school participation. The engagement domain has 17 questions, and it measures teacher perceptions of the connections between teachers, the community, and schools. It also measures how teachers perceive the relationship between teachers and students, as well as relationships between teachers and their administrators. The engagement domain is scored by summing together the values assigned to each of the participant's answer. The safety domain is made up of five topics: emotional safety, physical safety, bullying/cyberbullying, substance abuse, and emergency readiness/management. The safety domain has 33 questions and it measures how teachers view the safety of both the school and their students. This domain was scored in the same way as the engagement domain, however questions 30 through 43 are negatively-valenced. These questions were reverse scored to account for this difference. The environment domain is made up of five topics: physical environment, instructional environment, physical health, mental health, and discipline. The environment domain has 27 questions, and it measures the teacher's view on their school's facilities, as well as their discipline strategies. This domain was scored in the same way as the other two domains, but items 58 through are negatively valenced. This required that these items were reverse scored. There are a total of 77 statements that participants had to rate how much they agreed with that statement. After a pilot study was performed (NCES, 2015), it was found that all the domains and topics met the minimum standard of Cronbach's alpha level of .7 to .8 (Oswald & Waters, 2002). The engagement domain had an alpha level of .92, the

safety domain had an alpha level of .92, and the environment domain had an alpha level of .95. Each subscale was scored in the same way as the TPPBIS, as was the EDSCLS as a whole. Each summary score was interpreted so that a higher score indicated a more positive perception of school climate.

Procedure

After obtaining clearance from the Central Washington University Human Subjects Review Council, the researcher created an online survey that combined the two surveys described above along with a demographic questionnaire using Qualtrics (See Appendix A), an automated online survey system. These surveys were not counterbalanced when the online survey was created. The combined demographics survey was ordered first in the combined online survey, the TPPBIS was second, with the EDSCLS following. After creating the survey, the researcher sent a recruitment letter (See Appendix E) to each superintendent in every school district in Washington State. The researcher then sent links to the survey on Qualtrics to the superintendents in school districts that agreed to participate in this study. The superintendents then sent the links to their teachers. Data from the first 4 weeks of data collection were messed up, so a follow-up email was sent to participating school districts to extend the time for collecting data (see Appendix G). Details about the messed up data are described in the limitations section of Chapter V. After leaving the survey open for a total of 8 weeks, the data were compiled and analyzed.

Statistical Analysis

This study used a simultaneous multiple regression data analysis. The criterion variable was school climate, measured by the EDSCLS, while the predictor variables were teacher scores on the PBIS survey and years of experience. Summary scores were found for each completed

survey. The scores for both surveys, along with the number of years of teaching experience of each participant, were then analyzed, in an attempt to find a relationship between all variables.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Data analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between teacher perceptions of school climate and two potential predictors, teacher perceptions of PBIS and years of certified teaching experience. The statistical software SPSS Version 23 (2015), created by IBM, was used to run a simultaneous multiple regression analysis.

A simultaneous multiple linear regression analysis was calculated to predict scores on the EDSCLS based on the number of years of certified teaching experience the participant has and their score on the TPPBIS. This study attempted to recruit participants from schools that had not implemented PBIS. There were eight participants that responded from non-implementing schools. There were not enough responses to include any hypotheses about non-PBIS schools. Of the eight participants from non-PBIS schools, 5 were male and 3 were female. There were 6 participants who identified as White, 1 American Indian, and 1 who identified as Other. When it comes to the participants from PBIS schools, there were 18 (26.5%) males, 44 (64.7%) females, 1 (1.5%) identified as other, and 5 (7.4%) who did not answer the question. Regarding ethnicity, there were 62 participants (91.2%) who identified as White, 2 participants (2.9%) who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, and 4 participants (5.9%) identified as Other. Out of the 68 participants, 17 (25%) were on the PBIS team at their school, 50 (73.5%) were not on the PBIS team, and 1 (1.5%) participant was unsure. Table 1 summarizes three demographic questions about years of experience, years at present school, and years since PBIS was implemented. Table 2 summarizes frequency information from participants regarding being at the school before, during, and after PBIS implementation. Table 3 summarizes number of staff and mean number of years of teaching experience for each school district that participated in this

study (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. n.d.). Table 4 summarizes the mean scores and standard deviations on the EDSCLS and the TPPBIS for all the participants. For the demographic question about number of years of certified teaching experience, the mean was 2.1 and the standard deviation was 1.9. This question did not have any anchors stating what the top and bottom responses on the scale represented, so the resulting statistics from this question should be interpreted with this error in mind.

The first assumption necessary for performing a multiple regression analysis, that variables are normally distributed, was assessed through examining a histogram plot of standardized residuals for the dependent variable (Osborne & Waters, 2002). Residuals for the dependent variable were normally distributed. The second assumption, that there were enough participants to accurately run the multiple regression analysis, was met with a case-to-predictor variable ratio of 68:2 Green (1991). The third assumption, a linear relationship between variables, was assessed by examining a scatterplot of residuals (Osborne & Waters, 2002). The relationship between variables was linear, as all data points were close to the line of best fit. The fourth assumption, the assumption of homoscedasticity, was assessed by examining a scatter plot of residuals. The assumption of homoscedasticity was met. A scatterplot of residuals was analyzed and all residuals were scattered around the horizontal line at 0 on the plot. This demonstrates an even distribution of residuals, showing that the variance of errors for the study was homoscedastic (Osborne & Waters, 2002). The fifth assumption, that variables are measured reliably, was examined by calculating Cronbach's alpha statistics for both surveys used in this study. The TPPBIS had an overall alpha level of .94. The implementation subscale had an alpha level of .89, compared to the original alpha level of .76. The perception subscale had an alpha level of .84, compared to the original alpha level of .77. The administration

subscale had an alpha level of .88, compared to the original alpha level of .89. The EDSCLS had an overall alpha level of .97. The engagement subscale had an alpha level of .94, the safety subscale had an alpha level of .90, and the environment subscale had an alpha level of .94. This shows that all subscales of both surveys as employed in the current study met the minimum level for reliability of .7 to .8 (Osborne & Waters, 2002). The final assumption, the assumption of multicollinearity, was assessed by interpreting the variance inflation factor (VIF) statistic (Osborne & Waters, 2002). Both independent variables had a VIF of 1.027. This is well below the critical level of 10, and below the level requiring further investigation, a VIF of above four.

A significant regression equation was found ($F(2, 65) = 37.562, p < .05$) with an R equal to .732, and an R^2 of .536. Teachers' perceptions of School Climate were equal to $117.614 + 1.342(\text{Years of Teaching}) + .383(\text{Score on PBIS Survey})$. Standardized values on the TPPBIS were significant ($B = .742$), while standardized values on the number of years of certified teaching experience was not significant ($B = .116$). The model accounted for 53.6% of the variance of EDSCLS scores ($R^2 = .536, \text{Adjusted } R^2 = .522$). R^2 looks at the variation of the dependent variable that is affected by the independent variable. Adjusted R^2 is modified based upon how many independent variables there are in the data analysis. Only teacher perceptions of PBIS were significant predictors of teacher perceptions of school climate. The significance threshold was at $p = .05$. Results of this analysis are provided in Table 5.

Although there were not enough participants to include subscales of either survey into the multiple regression analysis, a correlation matrix was performed to see if there were any correlations between the subscale scores of the TPPBIS and the subscale scores on the EDSCLS. Means and standard deviations from this correlation analysis are presented in Table 6. Intercorrelations between subscales of both the TPPBIS and EDSCLS are presented in Table 7.

The significance threshold of this analysis was adjusted using Bonferroni's correction. It was adjusted to $p < .005$. Intercorrelations between the subscales of the TPPBIS are presented in Table 8. Intercorrelations between the subscales of the EDSCLS are presented in Table 9.

Table 1

Participant Years of Employment

Category	Mean	Standard Deviation	State Average
Years of Certified Teaching Experience	15.5	9.4	13.3
Years at Current School	7.9	7.2	NA

Table 2

Number of Participants Present at School During Time Periods Throughout Implementation

	Yes	No	I Don't Know
Before PBIS Implementation	44	23	1
During PBIS Implementation	61	6	1
After PBIS Implementation	58	8	2

Table 3

Descriptive Data for School Districts

School District	Number of Teachers	Average Years of Teaching Experience
Sunnyside	396	12.5
Ephrata	138	13.9
Reardan-Edwall	33	16.5
West Valley	259	14.9
White Pass	27	14.9
Goldendale	55	16.4
Winlock	39	17.3
Brinnon	6	11.7
South Bend	39	11.7
Rochester	128	13.4
Kittitas	39	13.3
Burlington-Edison	220	13.8
Darrington	30	16.4
East Valley	176	14.8
Royal	88	13.1
Kennewick	947	13.7
South Whidbey	86	19.3
Mt. Adams	67	10.1

Note. Adapted from Washington State Report Card, by Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/summary.aspx>

Table 4

Descriptive Data for TPPBIS and EDSCLS

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Scores on EDSCLS	238.2	30.6
Years of Teaching Experience	15.8	9.3
Scores on TPPBIS	85.3	16.9

Table 5

Regression Analysis Summary for Teacher Perceptions of PBIS and School Climate

Variable	<i>B</i>	95% CI	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Years of Teaching Experience	.383	[-.181, .947]	.116	1.356	.180
Scores on TPPBIS	1.342	[1.033, 1.651]	.742	8.667	.000

Table 6

Descriptive Data for Subscales of Surveys

Subscale	Mean	Range	Standard Deviation
EDSCLS Engagement Subscale	52.1	17-68	8.8
EDSCLS Safety Subscale	105.7	33-132	12.2
EDSCLS Environment Subscale	80.4	27-108	13.1
TPPBIS Implementation Subscale	27.5	8-32	6.3
TPPBIS Perception Subscale	36.6	11-44	7.5
TPPBIS Administration Subscale	21.2	6-24	4.8

Table 7

Intercorrelations Between Subscales of TPPBIS and EDSCLS

Subscale	TPPBIS Implementation	TPPBIS Perception	TPPBIS Administration
EDSCLS Engagement	$r = .459, p < .005$	$r = .412, p < .005$	$r = .345, p < .005$
EDSCLS Safety	$r = .591, p < .005$	$r = .604, p < .005$	$r = .563, p < .005$
EDSCLS Environment	$r = .738, p < .005$	$r = .665, p < .005$	$r = .703, p < .005$

Table 8

Intercorrelations Between Subscales of TPPBIS

Subscale	TPPBIS Implementation	TPPBIS Perception	TPPBIS Administration
TPPBIS Implementation	-	$r = .646, p < .005$	$r = .814, p < .005$
TPPBIS Perception	-	-	$r = .739, p < .005$

Table 9

Intercorrelations Between Subscales of EDSCLS

Subscale	EDSCLS Engagement	EDSCLS Safety	EDSCLS Environment
EDSCLS Engagement	-	$r = .644, p < .005$	$r = .617, p < .005$
EDSCLS Safety	-	-	$r = .799, p < .005$

CHAPTER V

Discussion

School climate is an important element of children's experience during their education. Many different aspects of the school have an effect on school climate (Mitchell et al., 2010; Gage et al., 2016; Fan et al., 2011). Previous research has shown that a positive school climate increases student attendance, enhances students' attitudes toward school and teachers, and increases their motives for academic success (Fan et al., 2011). A positive school climate has also been shown to decrease substance use, as well as bullying and overall negative behaviors by students (Gage et al. 2016). What is less known is the effect that programs and systems within schools have on school climate. It is important to understand these effects in order to more effectively guide school administrator's decision making.

It is also important to understand teacher perceptions of different elements of their schools. This study chose to look at teacher perceptions of the PBIS system, a system that is growing in popularity across the United States. Previous research has shown that the implementation of PBIS creates a more positive school climate (Hansen, 2014). As a result, this current study wanted to evaluate if there was a relationship between perceptions of PBIS and perceptions of school climate, as well as between perceptions of PBIS and the number of years of certified teaching experience of the participants. The results of this study found a moderately strong predictive relationship between teacher perceptions of PBIS and teacher perceptions of school climate, with scores on the TPPBIS accounting for 53.6% of the variance in scores on the EDSCLS. These results strongly support implementation of PBIS as a way to create a more positive school climate.

When looking at the possible range of scores for the EDSCLS, the lowest possible score on this survey was 77, while the highest was 308, with the median being a score of 192.5. The teachers in this study had a mean score of 238.2, showing that these teachers had an overall positive perception of their school climate. When it comes to the possible range of scores for the TPPBIS, the lowest possible score was 25, the maximum score was 125, while the median was 75. The mean score for the teachers in this study was 85.3, showing that these teachers had an overall positive perception of the PBIS system in their schools.

The researcher in this study also wanted to explore a possible relationship between years of teacher experience and perceptions of school climate. This study sought to determine if there was a significant correlation between teacher perceptions of school climate and how long they have been a certified teacher. The results of this study showed that there was not a significant relationship between number of years of certified teaching experience and perceptions of school climate. This finding does not lend support to previous research on the topic.

Although subscales were not included in the multiple regression, there were still correlations found between subscales in both instruments used in this study. There was a moderate relationship between the implementation subscale on the TPPBIS and the engagement subscale on the EDSCLS, a moderately strong relationship between the implementation subscale of the TPPBIS and the safety subscale on the EDSCLS, and a strong relationship between the implementation subscale on the TPPBIS, and the environment subscale of the EDSCLS. In the correlation between the implementation and safety subscales, the correlation could be a result of the support that teachers feel they get from students, administrators and other staff in the implementation subscale on the TPPBIS. This could be related to how comfortable and safe they feel within their school, which is measured in the safety subscale on the EDSCLS. In the

correlation between the implementation and environment subscales, there could be a relationship between the feelings that staff had towards their inclusion in decisions in the PBIS system from the TPPBIS, and the support they feel their school has in learning programs from the EDSCLS. There was a moderate relationship between the perception subscale of the TPPBIS and the engagement subscale, a strong relationship between the perception subscale of the TPPBIS and the safety subscale of the EDSCLS, and a strong relationship between the perception subscale of the TPPBIS and the environment subscale of the EDSCLS. In the correlation between the perception and safety subscales, there could be a relationship between how much the teacher feels involved with the PBIS system from the TPPBIS, and how much the teacher feels safe from the EDSCLS. In the correlation between the perception and environment subscales, there could be a relationship between the teacher's perceptions of disruptive kids and ODRs from the TPPBIS, and the perceptions that their school's discipline is fair from the EDSCLS. There was a moderate relationship between the administration subscale and the engagement subscale, a moderately strong relationship between the administration subscale and the safety subscale, and a strong relationship between the administration subscale and the environment subscale. All subscales had at least a moderate relationship with all the other subscales. In the correlation between the administration and engagement subscales, there could be a relationship between the concept that leadership in the school has executed necessary components from the TPPBIS, and the concept of the teacher feeling inspired and cared about by the school from the EDSCLS. In the correlation between the administration and environment subscales, there could be a relationship between the concept that the administration is active within the PBIS system, and the concept that the teachers feel that the facilities and programs support student learning. These findings provide support for the results that were found with the multiple regression analysis, as

the multiple regression analysis results showed a moderately strong relationship between the two surveys.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. The first limitation is that the sample size is small. While the sample size met the requirements for multiple regression set forth by Green (1991), a larger sample would make the results more generalizable to other populations. In this study, there were 109 respondents who started the survey while only 68 finished the survey. This puts the response rate at 62%. As a result of sample attrition, truncation of range was influenced by the number of respondents that did and did not complete the survey. The topic for this study was very specific, and the respondents who completed the survey were representative of only a small number of eligible respondents. This could mean that only the teachers that were personally invested or had great interest in PBIS completed this survey. This would truncate the range of scores on the survey, leading to a Pearson's r that indicates a smaller relationship than is actually present (Elvers, n.d.). The small sample size also limited the statistical analysis of the subscales of each of the two instruments. This study recruited superintendents of school districts in Washington, in an effort to reach teachers who met the requirements of this study. For future studies to achieve a larger sample size, it may be advantageous to get approval from school districts to make contact in person with potential participants. It would also be advantageous to expand data collection to schools outside of Washington State. This could ensure a higher survey return rate.

A second limitation was the size of the survey. When the two surveys were combined, there were 102 items. This number is excluding the demographics items included with the survey. This could have played a role in the limited number of responses, as educators already

have a limited amount of time during their day, as well as having other survey requirements by state and federal governments agencies.

A third limitation in this study was a failed initial data collection effort. The researcher of this study began collecting data, and kept the survey open for four weeks. After closing the survey and examining the data, it was learned that a mistake had been made when inputting item text into Qualtrics. The items were inputted as exclusive answer items. This means that the respondent can only select one response (strongly agree, agree, etc.) once for the entire survey. This mistake rendered all data useless, so data collection began again from scratch.

A fourth limitation was a lack of anchors for two of the demographic items (Q16 and Q32). These two items did not have anchors stating what the top and bottom responses on the scale represented (i.e. consistently or inconsistently, enthusiastic or unenthusiastic). While these items were not a part of the actual multiple regression analysis, the mistake renders these data meaningless.

A fifth limitation is inherent in correlational research. Correlational research can imply that there might be a relationship between variables, however, results from correlational analyses cannot prove that one variable has caused an effect on another variable.

Future Research

One area of research that would be useful on the topic of this study would be to survey students on their perceptions of PBIS and school climate. While there is limited research on teacher perceptions of PBIS and school climate, there is even less research regarding the students who are taking part in PBIS. This research would be a good method to evaluate the effects that PBIS has on children and their experience of school climate, leading to a more effective way of developing the PBIS system, as well as a more positive school climate.

It would also be beneficial to gather data on teacher perceptions of school climate from teachers who are from schools that have not implemented PBIS. This would be useful data to compare against school climate data collected from PBIS schools. This was a goal of this study, however, there were not enough teachers that responded from non-PBIS schools to be able to include them in a similar data analysis.

Another area of research that could be explored would be to analyze more predictor variables that were included in the demographic items on the survey used in this study. This study was limited to only including overall survey scores of the two surveys and years of certified teaching experience in the multiple regression analysis. Future research should focus on including more variables, such as subscale scores on the surveys, in the multiple regression analysis.

Summary

This study was designed in the hopes of gaining a better understanding of what factors affect teacher perceptions of school climate. It was hypothesized that there would be a relationship between teacher perceptions of PBIS, along with years of certified teaching experience, and teacher perceptions of school climate. After data was collected from 68 certified teachers from schools that implemented PBIS in Washington State, a multiple regression analysis was conducted using scores on the EDSCLS as the criterion variable, scores on the PBIS survey, and years of certified teaching experience as predictor variables. Results from the multiple regression analysis showed that scores on the TPPBIS had a positive, as well as statistically significant, relationship with scores on the EDSCLS, and that they predicted 53.6% of the variance in scores on the EDSCLS. The analysis did not find a relationship between years of certified experience and scores on the EDSCLS. All results from this study should be

considered within the limitations identified in the discussion section, and future research should focus on expanding the data analysis to include more predictor variables.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Demographics Questionnaire

Are you a certified teacher licensed in Washington State?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

How many years of certificated teaching experience do you have?

How many years have you been teaching at your current school?

What grade(s) do you teach?

What is your race? (Optional)

- White (1)
- Black or African American (2)
- American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
- Asian (4)
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
- Other (6)

What gender do you identify with the most? (Optional)

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Transgendered (3)
- Other (4)
- No answer (5)

Does your school employ a "Zero Tolerance" policy? (Optional)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Maybe (3)
- I don't know (4)

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a system that is put into place in schools and looks to encourage a change in the behavior of school staff in an attempt to provide a positive impact in student conduct, discipline and educational outcomes. PBIS is a way for schools and their staff to measure and organize evidence-based interventions, as well as increase positive behavior outcomes. The main goals of PBIS are: to prevent negative behaviors by developing clear and defined proper environments within school, use early intervention of emerging issues, use more intensive interventions for students who have chronic behavior

problems, and to create an encouraging, comprehensive, and safe learning environment for students.

Is PBIS implemented in your school?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't know (3)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To How strongly do you agree or disagree...

Is there a PBIS team at your school?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't know (3)

Are you on the PBIS team at your school?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't know (3)

How many years has PBIS been implemented in your school?

Were you at your current school before PBIS was implemented?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't know (3)

Were you at your current school during PBIS implementation?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't know (3)

Were you at your current school after PBIS implementation?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't know (3)

How consistently has PBIS been implemented in your school?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Appendix B

Teacher Perceptions of Positive Behavior Intervention Support

Are you a certified teacher licensed in the state of Mississippi? Yes No

Number of years of education 0-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20+

Number of years at present school 0-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20+

Are you on the PBIS team on your campus? Yes No

How many years has PBIS been implemented in your school?

Planning stage 0-1 2-3 4-5 more than 5

For each of the following questions, please put a mark in the box that best reflects your answer.

Implementation

		Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1	A behavioral curriculum has been established that teaches positive expectations and rules based on data.	1	2	3	4	5
2	As a staff, we have been provided with an outline for teaching behavioral expectations that align with PBIS.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I have been taught a procedure that will allow me to be objective in the analysis of student behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
4	My PBIS team leaders keep me updated on data summaries.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I am included in decision making based on the data.	1	2	3	4	5

6	Based on the data collected, my students' expectations and goals are adjusted.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I am provided with training and ongoing professional development and support to fully understand PBIS.	1	2	3	4	5
8	We have ongoing professional development sessions to review PBIS framework and discuss areas of concern.	1	2	3	4	5

Teacher Perception

		Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
9	PBIS has increased student engagement, thereby reducing disruptions within the classroom and daily routine.	1	2	3	4	5
10	PBIS is an effective tool in promoting positive behaviors in students.	1	2	3	4	5
11	The framework of PBIS needs to be analyzed and restructured at my school; the goals and objectives are not increasing positive behaviors by my students.	1	2	3	4	5
12	The positive behavior support program is an effective tool for handling disruptive students in my school.	1	2	3	4	5

13	PBIS has reduced the number of major discipline issues in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
14	PBIS is necessary as the behavior management system.	1	2	3	4	5
15	I give positive reinforcement to all students who follow the rules and meet the expectations as taught.	1	2	3	4	5
16	My students who misbehave are still misbehaving; they are not motivated by the reward system in place.	1	2	3	4	5
17	PBIS has created an environment where inappropriate behaviors are not punished.	1	2	3	4	5
18	PBIS is targeting the students who normally behave without any intrinsic motivation.	1	2	3	4	5
19	The teachers were included in developing a behavior matrix to align with PBIS standards.	1	2	3	4	5

Administration

20	The leadership at my school takes an active role in the development and implementation of PBIS.	1	2	3	4	5
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21	My administrators have provided tools and strategies for behavior interventions to improve behavior management techniques.	1	2	3	4	5
22	The PBIS leadership team at my school has executed the required components to meet the goals of the school's vision.	1	2	3	4	5
23	The leadership team has differentiated between classroom-managed behavior and office-managed behaviors.	1	2	3	4	5
24	The PBIS team has established criteria to determine the need for additional training and support.	1	2	3	4	5
25	The leadership team was included in developing a behavior matrix to align with PBIS standards.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix C

U.S. Department of Education Instructional Staff School Climate Survey

1. Are you male or female? Mark one response.

- Male
- Female

2. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin? Mark one response.

- Yes
- No

3. What is your race? You may mark one or more races.

- White
- Black or African-American
- Asian
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

4. Is your **main assignment/responsibility** at this school to provide instruction or other support services to any of these types of students - Special Education, English Language Learners, Gifted and Talented Education Students, and Migrant Education? Mark one response

- Yes
- No

5. How many years have you been working at this school? Mark one response.

- 1-3 years
- 4-9 years
- 10-19 years
- 20 or more years

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this school?
Mark One Response**

Throughout the survey, "This school" means activities happening in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. Unless otherwise specified, this refers to normal school hours or to times when school activities/events were in session.

6. At this school, all students are treated equally, regardless of whether their parents are rich or poor.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this school?
Mark One Response**

7. This school encourages students to take challenging classes no matter their race, ethnicity, nationality, and/or cultural background (e.g., honor level courses, gifted courses, AP or IB courses).

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

8. This school provides instructional materials (e.g., textbooks, handouts) that reflect students' cultural background, ethnicity and identity.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

9. This school emphasizes showing respect for all students' cultural beliefs and practices.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. This school provides effective resources and training for teaching students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) across different languages and cultures.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

11. This school provides effective supports for students needing alternative modes of communication (e.g., manual signs, communication boards, computer-based devices, picture exchange systems, Braille).

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

12. Staff do a good job helping parents to support their children's learning at home.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

13. Staff do a good job helping parents understand when their child needs to learn social, emotional, and character skills.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

14. If a student has done something well or makes improvement, staff contact his/her parents.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

15. This school asks families to volunteer at the school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

16. This school communicates with parents in a timely and ongoing basis.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

17. My level of involvement in decision making at this school is fine with me.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this school?

Mark One Response

18. Staff at this school have many informal opportunities to influence what happens within the school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

19. At this school, students are given the opportunity to take part in decision making.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

20. Administrators involve staff in decision-making.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

21. This school provides students with opportunities to take a lead role in organizing programs and activities.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

22. Students are encouraged to get involved in extra-curricular activities.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

23. I feel like I belong.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

24. I feel satisfied with the recognition I get for doing a good job.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this school?

Mark One Response

25. I feel comfortable discussing feelings, worries, and frustrations with my supervisor.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

26. This school inspires me to do the very best at my job.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

27. People at this school care about me as a person.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

28. I can manage almost any student behavior problem.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

29. I feel safe at this school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

30. The following types of problems occur at this school often: physical conflicts among students.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

31. The following types of problems occur at this school often: robbery or theft.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this school?

Mark One Response

32. The following types of problems occur at this school often: vandalism.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

33. The following types of problems occur at this school often: student possession of weapons.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

34. The following types of problems occur at this school often: physical abuse of teachers.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

35. The following types of problems occur at this school often: student verbal abuse of teachers.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this school?

Mark One Response

This question is about bullying. Bullying happens when one or more students tease, threaten, spread rumors about, hit, shove or hurt another student. It is not bullying when students of about the same strength or power argue or fight or tease each other in a friendly way. Bullies are usually stronger, or have more friends or more money, or some other power over the student being bullied. Usually, bullying happens over and over, or the student being bullied thinks it might happen over and over.

36. I think that bullying is a frequent problem at this school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

This question is about cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Examples of cyberbullying include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

37. I think that cyberbullying is a frequent problem among students at this school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

38. Students at this school would feel comfortable reporting a bullying incident to a teacher or other staff.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

39. Staff at this school always stop bullying when they see it.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this school?
Mark One Response**

40. Staff at this school are teased or picked on about their race or ethnicity.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

41. Staff at this school are teased or picked on about their cultural background or religion.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

42. Staff at this school are teased or picked on about their physical or mental disability.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

43. Staff at this school are teased or picked on about their sexuality.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

How much of a problem are the following at this school? Mark One Response

Drugs means any substance, including those used to get “high” or increase performance in school or sports. Examples of drugs include marijuana, illegal drugs, inhalants, synthetic drugs used to get high (K-2, bath salts, white lightning), or over-the-counter medicine. This does not include medications prescribed by doctor or nurse for the person, but includes prescription drugs that are NOT prescribed to the person by his/her doctor.

44. At this school, how much of a problem is student drug use?

- Not a Problem
- Small Problem
- Somewhat a Problem
- Large Problem

How much of a problem are the following at this school? Mark One Response

45. At this school, how much of a problem is student use of electronic cigarettes?

- Not a Problem
- Small Problem
- Somewhat a Problem
- Large Problem

46. At this school, how much of a problem is student use of tobacco (e.g., cigarettes, chew, cigars)?

- Not a Problem
- Small Problem
- Somewhat a Problem
- Large Problem

“Alcohol” means a full or part of a drink of alcohol. Examples include beer, wine, mixed drink, shot of liquor, or any combination of these alcoholic drinks. This does not include alcohol that you may drink for religious purposes.

47. At this school, how much of a problem is student alcohol use? Isafsub85

- Not a Problem
- Small Problem
- Somewhat a Problem
- Large Problem

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this school?

Mark One Response

48. This school collaborates well with community organizations to help address youth substance use problems.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

49. This school has adequate resources to address substance use prevention.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this school?**Mark One Response**

50. This school provides effective confidential support and referral services for students needing help because of substance abuse (e.g., a Student Assistance Program).

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

51. This school has programs that address substance use among students.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

52. I know what to do if there is an emergency, natural disaster (tornado, flood) or a dangerous situation (e.g., violent person on campus) during the school day.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

53. This school has a written plan that describes procedures to be performed in shootings.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

54. This school has a written plan that clearly describes procedures to be performed in natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes or tornadoes).

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

55. This school or school district provides effective training in safety procedures to staff (e.g., lockdown training or fire drills).

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this school?
Mark One Response**

56. This school looks clean and pleasant.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

57. This school is an inviting work environment.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

58. My teaching is hindered by poor heating, cooling, and/or lighting systems at this school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

59. My teaching is hindered by a lack of instructional space (e.g., classrooms) at this school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

60. My teaching is hindered by a lack of textbooks and basic supplies at this school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

61. My teaching is hindered by inadequate or outdated equipment or facilities at this school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this school?
Mark One Response**

62. The students in my class(es) come to class prepared with the appropriate supplies and books.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

63. Once we start a new program at this school, we follow up to make sure that it's working.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

64. The programs and resources at this school are adequate to support student's learning.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

65. Teachers at this school feel responsible to help each other do their best.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

66. Teachers at this school feel that it is a part of their job to prepare students to succeed in college.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

67. The programs and resources at this school are adequate to support students with special needs or disabilities.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this school?
Mark One Response**

68. This school provides the materials, resources, and training necessary for me to support students' physical health and nutrition.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

69. This school places a priority on making healthy food choices.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

70. This school places a priority on students' health needs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

71. This school places a priority on students' physical activity.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

72. This school provides quality counseling or other services to help students with social or emotional needs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

73. This school provides the materials, resources, and training necessary for me to support students' social or emotional needs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

74. This school places a priority on addressing students' mental health needs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this school?
Mark One Response**

75. This school places a priority on teaching students strategies to manage their stress levels.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

76. This school places a priority on helping students with their social, emotional, and behavioral problems.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

77. Staff at this school are clearly informed about school policies and procedures.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

78. Staff at this school recognize students for positive behavior.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

79. School rules are applied equally to all students.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this school?
Mark One Response**

80. Discipline is fair.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

81. This school effectively handles student discipline and behavior problems.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

82. Staff at this school work together to ensure an orderly environment.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Appendix D

School Recruitment Email

Superintendent _____:

I am a Mental Health Counseling Graduate student at Central Washington University, where I am specializing in child counseling. I am contacting you in regard to possibly performing research in your school. I am researching Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports for my thesis. I am specifically looking at teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of PBIS and their association with school climate. I am also looking to expand the research on how effective PBIS is at achieving various disciplinary outcomes.

I am looking for teachers who have been employed in your district before, during, and after PBIS implementation. I do not want any information that would specifically identify school districts, schools, or school staff. In return for providing this data and information, I would be able to provide you with a summary of data for all districts or schools involved in this research.

I will be working closely with my thesis chair, Dr. Terrence Schwartz. He will ensure that I am proceeding in the correct direction. In addition, all CWU human subjects research must be approved by a graduate thesis committee and the university Human Subjects' Review Council to insure appropriate professional and ethical behavior.

My study will use 2 surveys. One will be looking at teacher perceptions of school climate, while the other one looks at teacher perceptions of PBIS. These surveys will use a 5-point rating scale, measuring the teacher's level of agreement with each statement. I do not have the exact survey that I will be using, because my study has not been approved yet. The intent of this letter is simply to find out if you might be open to participate in my research. As soon as my study is approved I will be able to provide you with the actual surveys I will be using. You will have an opportunity to decline participation in the study at that point if you so choose.

I look forward to hearing from you soon. You can contact me through email at perimand@cwu.edu, or by phone at 509-863-3885. You can also contact Dr. Schwartz at Terrence.Schwartz@cwu.edu, or by phone at 509-963-3661.

Thanks

Douglas Periman

Appendix E

Follow-Up Email Extending Data Collection

Principal/Superintendent _____,

Due to unforeseen issues with my survey, I am having to extend my data collection for a while. I am in a bind as far as the number of respondents that have actually completed my survey. It appears that a significant amount of the teachers that have completed my survey did not complete every section, which has rendered a lot of my data to be useless. Would you be willing to send an email out to let your teachers know that my survey will be open for 3-4 weeks longer? I would appreciate any help you can give me.

Thanks
Doug