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# Teachers' Effective Behavior Support Survey Scores and Student Behavior Referrals

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Sadie D. Harris

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

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2019

Abstract

Teachers' Effective Behavior Support Survey Scores and Student Behavior Referrals

by

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MSW, Atlanta University, 1975

BA, Alabama State University, 1973

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Psychology, Educational Psychology

Walden University

May 2019

## Abstract

Urban middle school teachers have experienced the severe challenges of discipline problems, which have contributed to writing more principal's office discipline referrals. The effective behavior support (EBS) program has been found to promote positive behavior in the classroom and change students negative behavior into positive behavior. Guided by the Problem-Behavior Theory (PBT), the purpose of this quantitative nonexperimental study was to examine the relationship between the teachers' effective behavior support and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students. Years of teaching experience was the mediating variable. The researcher used archival data collected from teachers who used the effective behavior support program located at an urban middle school in the Southeast United States, the female and male teachers ranged between the ages of 23 to 66+. For the research question, a simple regression was employed as a means of analyzing the archival data. Results suggested that positive teachers' support was not associated with the frequency of office discipline referrals. However, years of teaching experience was associated with fewer discipline referrals. The results of this study can be used to promote educational professionals to utilize positive teacher support to decrease office referrals, leading to more student contributions in the classroom and more long term success for students.

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## Dedication

This study is dedicated to those who supported me with their caring support, assisting in making this possible and to the memory of my parents Mr. & Mrs. McKinley & Sadie DeRamus who taught me to take one step at a time, and the larger task can be achieved. It is also dedicated to my sister Carol and my brother Kenneth and the memory of my nephew Keith DeRamus who inspired me with their words of encouragement, love, and support.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my church family and many friends who supported me throughout this process. I will always cherish all of their assistance and kindness in helping me develop my skills.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

Educators continue to face student misbehavior and discipline problems. Educational system leaders are looking for school-wide programs that can be implemented to decrease student discipline problems (Sugai & Horner, 2004). There are many programs available to guide student problem behavior by providing school-wide procedures that govern student problem behavior (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Horner, Sugai, Todd, & Lewis-Palmer, 2005; Sugai & Horner, 2006). In the public-school system, educators continue to deal with student behavior problems. Sugai and Horner (2004) reported that disruptive behavior and discipline problems in the classroom disrupt instruction, interfere with learning, and cause academic content to less likely be mastered by students. Furthermore, behavioral and emotional difficulties are factors that educational system leaders may be able to control (Sugai & Horner, 2004). The challenging behavior of students is not always diagnosed with behavioral and emotional problems even though students show aggressive and disruptive behavior that impacts a significant amount of classroom time.

In this nonexperimental quantitative study, I examined the relationship between the independent variable, teachers' EBS, and the dependent variable, office discipline referrals, of urban middle school students. For many years, there have been discipline problems in middle schools. This nonexperimental quantitative study was important to provide validating evidence for school administrators needing to promote and teach

positive behavior to increase classroom management and decrease inappropriate student behavior as well as reduce office discipline referrals.

### **Background**

For years, school administrators and teachers have been forced to find different means to deal with student discipline. Arum (2011) indicated that teachers list disruptive behavior as the biggest factor to tackle because of the disruptions to the learning environment. According to Arum (2011), the United States is dealing with some discipline issues that need to be addressed in schools to ensure student learning. Student misbehavior is a problem because discipline issues can disrupt the learning environment for everyone (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Some of the negative student classroom behavior includes talking during instruction, being too loud, name-calling, using profanity, failing to remain seated during class, refusal to cooperate with the teachers, throwing objects around the classroom, and bullying (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Similar types of behavior have been observed among students on school buses (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

Bohanon et al. (2006) stated that if students are to improve their behavior, early intervention is the key factor. There is limited research on office discipline referrals and a smaller amount that focuses on the middle school level. While research on the subject and the outcomes related to school-wide behavior interventions have been emerging, little has been found about changes occurring in classrooms where interventions are implemented (Bohanon et al., 2006).

School-wide support programs can assist school employees with problem behavior and with discipline issues efficiently. The basis of school-wide support



programs is to focus on a problem-solving model that addresses problem behaviors with the reinforcement and teaching of appropriate behaviors (Sugai & Horner, 2008).

School administrators can help the student exhibiting negative behaviors to learn adaptive assessments to develop the skills needed to successfully interact with others in positive ways (Sugai & Horner, 2008). Teachers and administrators should have a good understanding of exactly what disruptive behavior entails while productively addressing any issues adequately (Losen & Skiba, 2010). Problem behavior is a form of communication with the student that demonstrates boredom, tiredness, or just wanting attention. According to Losen and Skiba (2010), students may still misbehave, not knowing how to communicate because infractions often yield more efficient and effective results than proper communication. Losen and Skiba found that a student with too much energy to adhere to expected classroom behavior can feel misbehaving is a method to escape learning. Some students with developmental disabilities may manifest problem behaviors in repetitive actions, including eye poking, rocking, or causing self-injury (Losen & Skiba, 2010).

Decreasing disruptions improves the educational environment for all students. Some approaches combine values about the rights of individuals (both with and without disabilities) with practical techniques about how behavior and learning change occurs. What teachers view as problematic behavior is quite often students' assessments of difficulties with their interactions (Freeman et al., 2009).

Therefore, when a student is not making progress, teachers should develop a support team to determine whether the correct interventions were put in place as a means

of addressing unique student needs. Freedman et al. (2009) viewed increased support as plans that are changed accordingly to fit the classroom environment and the ability of the teacher to respond to students not socially progressing. Teachers need processes or strategies to help with managing the classroom environment and students with behavior problems.

A process that a teacher can use to promote positive behavior in the classroom is an EBS program. The program is the process of changing a student's negative behavior into positive behavior. Additionally, the program is a national procedure used to help schools implement proper behavior techniques for students. It is a proactive system-level approach that schools use for behavior management. Carr (2009) found that the program employs a method for positively reinforcing and increasing student behavior. The program is linked to functional behavior assessments and is used as a behavior tool to improve personal satisfaction and success in academic environment (Sugai, Sprague, Horner, & Walker, 2000).

The EBS program is used by teachers and administrators to reward students for good behavior and implement interventions to reduce under desirable behavior. The importance of the program for this study is that the use of the program in schools has benefited teachers and students by evaluating and deciding if the resources and funding are worth the effort in implementing the program.

In this nonexperimental quantitative study, I examined the relationship between the independent variable, teachers' EBS, and the dependent variable, office discipline referrals, of urban middle school students. Sugai and Horner (2004) reported that

educational system leaders are looking for school-wide programs that can be implemented to decrease student discipline problems. In this study, I used secondary archival data. The results of this nonexperimental quantitative study validated evidence that schools that promote and teach positive behavior manage classrooms and decrease inappropriate student behavior have a reduction in office discipline referrals.

Some researchers have addressed elementary and high school behavior problems (Lane, Wehby, Robertson, & Rogers, 2007; McIntosh, Bennett, & Price, 2011; Scott, White, Algozzine, & Algozzine, 2009). The focus of this study was office discipline referrals as related to teachers' EBS at the middle school level. Furthermore, the results of this quantitative study encourage future researchers to pursue the topic and conduct further studies on student discipline.

### **Problem Statement**

The purpose of this quantitative nonexperimental study was to examine the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable. Students, despite being educated, in certain conditions, may not behave in acceptable ways and may adopt behaviors that are inappropriate (Day, 2009). Educators face a challenge in establishing and maintaining high standards of education while dealing with student behavior. Failure to address behavioral issues will most likely cause students to either give up on education or indulge in a lifestyle that can become a threat to other people. Day (2009) stated that some of the negative student classroom behaviors that can be considered measurable include students talking while the teacher is teaching, refusal to cooperate with the

teacher, throwing objects around the classroom, and bullying other students. Similar types of behavior among students on school buses were also observed (Dunlap, G. & Fox, L. (2011)

Algozzine, Wang, and Violette (2011) emphasized that intervention before the negative behavior is entrenched could decrease negative behaviors when implemented through a school-wide and classroom-wide positive behavior system. Arum (2011) indicated that educators in the United States continue to deal with the impact office discipline referrals have on student learning. Lohrmann, Forman, Martin, and Palmieri, (2008) stated that if the teacher has limited knowledge in the implementation process, they will not be as successful. The teacher should be willing to utilize the strategies presented in the implementation process to have success in the classroom (Lohrmann et al., 2008).

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this quantitative nonexperimental study was to examine the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable. Teachers' EBS of students' behaviors in an urban middle school determined to what extent there was a relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students. The teachers already completed the survey and office discipline referrals were available from the school system database. In this study, I examined the relationship of the independent variable, teachers' EBS, the dependent variable, and the middle school students' office discipline referrals. A gap exists in the current literature on the

relationship between the teachers' EBS and the office discipline referrals of urban middle school students. The studies reviewed support the concept that effective behavior support may decrease office discipline referrals yet not in a middle school setting.

### **Research Question and Hypotheses**

Is there a significant relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students with years of experience as the mediating variable?

*H<sub>o</sub>*. There is no significant relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable.

*H<sub>a</sub>*. There is a significant relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Problem-Behavior Theory (PBT) is the theoretical framework of Jessor (2008) and it describes behavior problems as undesirable situations that depart from the norms and are disapproved of by those in authority. PBT is related to this study because it explains that the problem behavior of students and student behavior is the consequences of a person-environment interaction (Jessor, 2008). PBT determines that student behavior can be decreased if a concrete intervention plan is consistent to yield a positive behavior change in the student. The PBT guided this research by providing a necessary explanation for teachers viewing negative student behavior, attitudes displayed in the learning

environment, and the causes of the negative behavior. PBT asserts that to decrease problem behavior in schools, an alternative behavior must be put in place with more significant benefits to the student without risks (Bohanon et al., 2006). From past studies, it is evident that effective behavior support and PBT deal with the student problem behavior and establish an effective way of managing the problem behavior (Bohanon et al., 2006).

### **Nature of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative nonexperimental study was to examine the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable. The predictor variable teachers' EBS was measured. Office discipline referrals were measured as the criteria variable. I used a nonexperimental quantitative predictive design to determine whether a relationship existed between the study variables as a means of answering the research question. Data for this quantitative study also included secondary archival data from the school data system. Once the data was collected, SPSS was used for data analysis.

The nonexperimental design was appropriate because random assignment, control groups, and manipulation of an independent variable was not possible. A quantitative design was chosen over a qualitative design because I sought to make inferences based on quantifiable results rather than assess individuals' experiences. This design required more participants than a qualitative design but also required less time commitment than the in-depth interviews required for qualitative studies.

There is limited research on the EBS program systems in middle school. The bulk of the research on the program has addressed elementary and high school office discipline referrals (Sugai & Horner, 2008). Since I aimed to use several variables to predict student behavioral difficulties, the predictive design was most appropriate. The objective of this study was to use variables to predict student behavioral difficulties; therefore, the predictive design was most suitable. The key study variables to be examined were teachers' EBS and student office discipline referrals. Different principles of applied behavior analysis can be used to reduce and prevent negative student behavior and enable students to be successful in middle school (Bohanon et al., 2006).

The bulk of the previous research has addressed the needs that elementary and high schools have for effective behavior support plans, whether they are academic or behavioral. In addition, researchers have determined how program plans are developed and the outcomes of implementing programs (Bohanon et al., 2006). Although research on the subject and the findings related to school-wide behavior interventions have been emerging, there is a small amount of information about changes occurring in classrooms where these interventions are implemented. According to Bohanon et al. (2006), researchers have determined at each school level where the programs are implemented how the program designs begin to support and promote appropriate behavior of all grade level students.

### **Definitions of Key Terms**

*At-risk students:* At-risk students are students less likely to complete formal education because the students are either unable to respond to the demands of school or

because the school is unable to adequately respond to the students' needs (Spaulding et al., 2010).

*Behavior support intervention:* Behavior support intervention is a detailed description of how an individual's environment should be reconfigured to replace the hypothesized antecedents, consequences, and functions of the problem behavior (Beatty-O'Ferrall, Green, & Hanna, 2010).

*Classroom setting:* Classroom setting is the instructional environment in which teachers teach and supervise groups of students (Spaulding et al., 2010).

*Effective behavior support:* Effective behavior support is a proactive system approach that schools use to teach students appropriate behavior and learn adaptive ways to develop skills to interact with others in positive ways successfully (Minke & Anderson, 2005).

*Problem behavior:* Problem behavior is a problem, a source of concern, or an issue by the social and legal norms of conventional society. For this study, problem behavior included suspension rates, expulsion rates, and discipline referrals (Bradshaw, Koth, Thornton, & Leaf, 2009).

*Positive behavior support:* Positive behavior support develops reasons why children engage in problem behavior and strategies to prevent the occurrence of problem behavior while teaching children new skills (Spaulding et al., 2010).

*School-wide:* School-wide involves all staff, all students, and all settings (Spaulding et al., 2010).



*School-wide positive behavior support:* School-wide positive behavior support is a term that is increasingly used to refer to a three-tiered approach or systems of positive interventions, which are carried out in schools (Beaty-O'Ferrall et al., 2010).

*Special education:* Special education is a range of instructional processes created to help students with one or more physical, emotional, or mental handicaps to obtain the maximum amount of education compatible with students' intellectual and physical potential (Spaulding et al., 2010).

### **Assumptions**

I assumed that using archival data for this research was appropriate; therefore; this information is valid. I also considered the best data related to the intervention programs from archival data and that student's behavior would be collected from the literature of this research. All assumptions were thoroughly tested during data collection and the analysis and interpretation of the data were conducted honestly and accurately.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

I examined the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students. The scope of this study was one urban middle school in the southeastern part of the United States. The program was used as the most common model to shape and eliminate challenging behaviors in students at this urban middle school. The independent variable used in this study was teachers' EBS . For this study to show statistical significance, office discipline referrals were analyzed. Success in shaping

problematic behaviors was observed at this urban middle school by the administration.

Therefore, programs were used to change the negative behavior into positive behavior.

Another delimiting factor was that studies in the academic world are being moved to online libraries databases in which numerous past studies and literature can be accessible for the researcher to gain more insight on this topic. Generalizability is whether effective behavior support implementation, if done correctly, could have a large impact on the students' future success.

### **Limitations**

Limitations to this study pertained to dealing with archival data. Missing data limited the number of categories that were analyzed. Therefore, the lack of data for certain students combined with the small sample size limited the number of categories that analyzed. The data was provided from the school office referrals. A concern was insufficient data or the integrity of the data provided. Also, is the study was limited in predicting how the office discipline referrals of urban middle school students were addressed. One of the most significant limitation of the study was time.

### **Significance of the Study**

It was important to review existing literature on EBS programs and research to link the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals in reducing the number of student behavior difficulties to improve student behavior. The results of this study contribute information on whether the program implementation is effective in changing inappropriate student behavior. The program emphasizes understanding a student's problem behaviors and then develops skills with both the student and a support

team to assist with the student's participation in any setting. This study offers opportunities to address behavior problems as well as helps students to transition from middle school to high school without difficulties. Because I aimed to use several variables to predict student behavioral challenges, the predictive design was most appropriate. This research can be useful for schools, teachers, and parents to further understand the significance of implementing a program system to deal with student behavior problems. The program is essential in teaching socially alternative behaviors aimed at improving the quality of life for individuals involved in a variety of settings. This study has implications for positive social change by providing a holistic view that considers all factors that have an impact on a child's behavior.

### **Summary**

Chapter 1 provided a discussion on the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals in reducing the number of student behavior difficulties to improve student behavior. Also, within Chapter 1 was the statement of the problem. The study included one research question designed to examine the survey scores toward shaping student behavior. In addition to the research question, a theoretical framework aided with understanding the problem and providing an argument supporting the teachers' assessments to link the independent and dependent variables. I concluded the chapter with the limitations and significance of the study.

This study offers opportunities to address behavior problems as well as help students to transition from middle school to high school without difficulties. My aim was

to use several variables to predict student behavioral challenges; the predictive design was most appropriate.

Chapter 2 includes a lengthy review of current research and trends of teachers' EBS intervention as it relates to the changing behavior of students. A thorough review of the PBT theory is presented as the theoretical lens that framed the comprehensive review of each variable examined throughout this study. Additionally, the chapter provided an indepth look in the teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of student behavior and provide background information on problems and concerns with school discipline. There are discussions of PBT and the role of the teacher. I end the chapter with the accountability of a healthy learning environment for students toward office discipline referrals.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Researchers have not emphasized the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of an urban middle school (Dunlap & Fox 2011). The purpose of this quantitative nonexperimental study was to examine the relationship between the teachers' effective behavior support and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students. The years of teaching experience was the mediating variable. This literature review contains information on the theoretical framework, which is the PBT. The literature review includes a synopsis of current literature that establishes the relevance of the problem and the significance of the PBT on improving student behavior in middle schools. Students' problematic behavior is a barrier to an effective education system. Problem behavior can have a devastating impact on families, students, teachers, and the community.

The chapter begins with the literature search strategy followed by a thorough discussion of research related to teachers' EBS office discipline referrals of student behavior, including background information on problems and concerns with school discipline. First, I discuss the history of the PBT and the importance of improving student success in schools. Second, I review the program practices for students and teachers. Next, I address the importance of office discipline referrals. Finally, I review the way to address the importance of teaching staff input that is positive as well as important for a healthy learning environment.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

Most searches were conducted through the Ebsco, ProQuest, and Phoenix databases through the following process. The key research terms, variations and combinations of the independent variables included those specifically related to effective behavior support, teachers, and students. A similar search for key terms was also conducted, including terms like *classroom setting, behavior intervention, fair, proactive, and listening*.

The searches were restricted to studies published between the years 1995 and 2017 although some of the research cited here is dated, this is the most up-to-date information on the topic. Teachers and students' experiences were reported during this period. Also, through this search, I discovered the importance of PBT. I retrieved the abstracts of all the relevant papers and reviewed the contents of the articles for additional research. Next, to identify related research, I used the Science Citation Index.

### **Theoretical Framework Problem Behavior Theory**

The theoretical foundation undergirding this study was PBT. Jessor and Jessor (2007) examined the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students using PBT. PBT guided this study by giving a basic explanation for behavior that is considered undesirable and inappropriate whenever students act negatively according to school policies. The theory also may shed light on unusual problem behavior showcased in adolescents attending middle school. In addition, the theory aids with showing students how to make behavior changes using conventional norms.

## **Problem Behavior Theory**

PBT was important for this study because it is a psychological model that considers a network of underlying factors that jointly contribute to adolescent problem behavior. Dunlap and Fox (2011) stated that adolescent problem behavior could be categorized into three important aspects that include the personality system, perceived environment, and the actual social environment. PBT's theoretical proposition is to decrease any negative behavior stemmed from behavior analysis (Dunlap & Fox 2011). A positive atmosphere can ensure that students have well-developed minds and are physically and emotionally well (Dunlap & Fox, 2011). According to Arum (2011), the United States is dealing with some discipline issues that need to be addressed in schools to ensure that students learn effectively. Through PBT, administrators could develop techniques for dealing with and decreasing student problem behavior.

Educators face a challenge in establishing and maintaining high standards of education while meeting new challenges and overcoming obstacles associated with the student difficult behavior. Failure to address those problems will most likely cause students to either give up on continuing their education or indulge in a lifestyle that can become a threat to society (Day, 2009). Hence, establishing the right environment for children is critical for students needing positive outcomes to guide them towards leading better lives (Medley, Little, & Akin-Little, 2008).

PBT is relevant to this study in that a key element of the theory indicates that properly educated students are more self-confident, possess greater leadership skills, volunteer, engage in less criminal activities, have knowledge of government, are less

dependent on government assistance, and have greater economic stability and security (Caldarella, Shatzer, Gray, Young, & Young, 2011). Allen (2007) stated that educated students participate in political activities, take an interest in leisure and artistic activities, and earn degrees or certificates in higher education. Furthermore, education can prevent children from adopting negative behavior and indulging in activities that are harmful; however, to make children understand the importance of education, it is necessary to begin with the right environment that can help them in leading a better life (Akin-Little, 2009).

I chose PBT because Dunlap and Fox (2011) indicated that researchers have become interested in preventing behavior difficulties and promoting healthy social-developmental students in educational programs. Behavior intervention must take place early, expectations must be clear, and positive reinforcement should be early (Dunlap & Fox, 2011). The PBT rationale seeks to determine whether teachers and students will achieve a positive outcome. Caldarella et al., (2011) stated that there is a continuous change occurring in the United States, placing demands and high expectations on all school systems. According to Carr (2009), there is a constant shift in the demographics of students in race and ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Another key finding is that only a meager 66% of American children reside with two parents, a drastic decline from 77% in 1980 (National Center for Education Statistics 2006).

Since 3 million children live without parents, parental involvement in education continues to decline (Couvillon, Bullock, & Gable, 2011; NCFES 2006). Violent crimes are usually committed by juveniles between the ages of 12 and 17 years (Couvillon,



Bullock, & Gable, 2011; NCFES 2006). If students continue to skip school, there is an increased possibility that those children will indulge in crime or other illegal activities like substance abuse (NCFES 2006). When students make improper decisions, this behavior may keep them out of school, and they may adopt behavior that may involve negative activities (Flannery, Fenning, Kato, & Bohanon, 2013). To solve the problem of children dropping out of school, it is necessary to determine the actual extent to which students drop out or get into trouble. Fifty-eight percent of children suffering from emotional or behavioral disorders tend to drop out of school at an early age (Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study, 2008). Among the children who drop out of school, 53% could be arrested within 2 years of dropping out of school. Additionally, 68% of dropouts struggle to find jobs and most remain unemployed 5 years after leaving school (Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study, 2008). Girls who stop attending school and suffer from emotional and behavioral problems are at least eight times more likely to get pregnant during their teenage years (Special Education Elementary Longitudinal, 2008). According to Fowler (2011), children who have associated with the juvenile justice system may not be able to continue their education under any condition. For any country to prosper, it is necessary to provide youth with a quality education that can benefit them and help them live a productive life. Vincent and Tobin (2011) stated that many schools have failed to adopt the required systems needed to change the lifestyles of children, which could help them with coping with their conditions in an effective manner.

Before attending school, a student should know the importance education will play in his/her life (McCart & Sailor, 2003). When students are interested in learning, they can become lifelong learners. People may think that education is necessary just for money or having a career; however, learning provides students with a place in society (Deal & Peterson, 2009).

PBT indicates that education offers an opportunity for students to consider their choices and make the right decisions (Betcher & Lee, 2009). With education, people can increase their skills and gain the knowledge needed for lifelong learning. Education is a lifelong and continuous process. Burden (2006) reported that to succeed in life, people need to obtain the best education to help them improve their lives and provide them with the necessary skills for success.

Sugai and Horner (2008) indicated that a significant theoretical proposition for proper education is essential because this provides methods for students to expand their knowledge and expertise required to assist with expressing their thoughts through writing and speaking. In addition, education helps people understand the world and their community. Education could equip students with the knowledge needed to make progress in this fast-paced world as well as be able to deal with challenges (Special Education Elementary Longitudinal, 2008). Education is important because learning builds self-esteem, confidence, conceptual skills, and interpersonal skills. Education helps students think while providing them with the methods and strategies to move on and develop in society (Special Education Elementary Longitudinal, 2008).

The research question for this study addressed if there was a relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable. Educators should create a safe learning environment to assist children in learning and to ensure that children will remain in school. Educational settings should provide the student with an environment that makes it easy for them to learn in the best possible manner. Colvin and Sugai (2010) reported that many classrooms have disruptive behavior that leads to the insubordination of the teachers, which is being recognized as a major problem in classrooms (Special Education Elementary Longitudinal, 2008). Furthermore, some of the negative student behavior includes students talking while the teacher is teaching, being too loud, name-calling, making noise, using profanity, failure to remain seated during class, refusal to cooperate with the teachers, throwing objects around in class, bullying, and eating in the classroom (Special Education Elementary Longitudinal, 2008). Similar types of behavior were observed among students on school buses as well (Colvin & Sugai, 2010).

Serious problems can be identified in American classrooms, including minor misbehavior. McClure (2009) found that many teachers fail to understand that minor disruptions can have serious harmful effects on students. Poor behavior impacts the flow of the classroom and impacts learning. In this study, I have built upon PBT by showing that teachers need to have competent classroom management skills to help keep the environment within the classrooms positive and encourage learning to promote active learning among students.

### **Literature Review Related Key Variables**

A review of the literature revealed some studies related to the study of schools that have implemented programs with the purpose of addressing school behavior difficulties. According to Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, and Horner (2001), the Positive Behavior Support program was created to provide a positive school environment. Sugai et al. used the school-wide evaluation tool to measure office discipline referrals. Sugai et al. researched several schools to compare the use of the program. In a longitudinal analysis study, they found that schools that implemented EBS observed a significant reduction in office discipline referrals within the first 2 years (Sugai et al., 2001). Horner et al. (2009) reflected on the reduction of office discipline referrals. They found that technical and training assistance are related to improvements in student behavior. Horner et al. (2009) also found that the program has the potential to decrease student misbehavior and the resources and time needed for the improvement of student's behavior.

### **Literature Review Matrix**

The literature review matrix will provide an overview of the authors and the topics in Chapter 2. It is organized in a meaningful way in which the resources relates to the chapter.

<b>Literature Review Matrix</b>	
<b>PBT</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arum 2011</li> <li>• Akin-Little 2009</li> <li>• Betcher &amp; Lee 2009</li> <li>• Burden 2006</li> <li>• Caldarella et al., 2011</li> <li>• Carr 2009</li> <li>• Colvin and Sugai 2010</li> <li>• Couvillon, Bullock, &amp; Gable 2011</li> <li>• David and Sutton 2006</li> <li>• Day 2009</li> <li>• Deal &amp; Peterson 2009</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day 2009</li> <li>• Dunlap &amp; Fox 2011</li> <li>• Fowler 2011</li> <li>• Horner et al., (2009)</li> <li>• Jessor and Jessor 2007</li> <li>• McCart &amp; Sailor 2003</li> <li>• McClure 2009</li> <li>• NCFEC 2006</li> <li>• Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study 2008</li> <li>• Sugai and Horner 2008</li> <li>• Vincent et al., 2011</li> </ul>
<b>Literature Review Related Key Variables</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horner et al., 2009</li> <li>• Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, and Horner 2001</li> <li>• Doodson 2014</li> </ul>	
<b>EBSS Scores</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horner et al., 2005</li> <li>• Lewis et al., 1999</li> <li>• Safran, 2000</li> <li>• Sugai et al., 2000</li> <li>• Moreno 2010</li> </ul>	
<b>School Wide Effective Behavior Support</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belvel 2010</li> <li>• Clark &amp; Dunlap 2008</li> <li>• Handler et al., 2007</li> <li>• McBride 2012</li> <li>• Moreno 2010</li> </ul>	

<b>Office Discipline Referrals</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dwyer 2002</li><li>• Gage, Whitford, &amp; Katsiyannis, 2018</li><li>• Kaufman et al., 2010</li><li>• Lassen, Steele, and Saiilor 2006</li><li>• McIntosh, Frank, and Spaulding 2010</li><li>• PBIS 2012</li><li>• Sugai et al., 2001</li><li>• Todd, Horner, and Tobin 2010</li><li>• Vincent, Horner, and May 2009</li><li>• Ward &amp; Gerston 2013</li></ul>
<b>Teacher Influence</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Akin-Little 2009</li><li>• Brand et al. 2008</li><li>• Dechamps et al., 2010</li><li>• Lassen, Steele, and Sailor 2006</li><li>• Minke &amp; Anderson 2005</li><li>• Moreno 2010</li><li>• Ruus et al., 2008</li><li>• Vincent, Horner, and May 2009</li><li>• Warren, 2006</li></ul>
<b>Middle school students and behavior</b>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McBride 2012</li> </ul>
<b>Thinking proactively</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Akin-Little 2009</li> <li>• Belvel 2010</li> <li>• Durán, Bloom &amp; Samaha 2013</li> <li>• Epstein et al., 2008</li> <li>• McIver et a., 2016</li> <li>• Frey et al., 2008</li> <li>• Kerr &amp; Nelson 2006</li> </ul>
<b>Effective Behavior Support Strategies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burden 2006</li> <li>• Handler et al., 2007</li> <li>• Levin &amp; Nolan 2009</li> <li>• Moreno 2010</li> <li>• NCFES 2006</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment of Student Behavior</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dechamps et al., 2010</li> <li>• Epstein et al., 2008</li> </ul>
<b>Support Plan for Student Behavior</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fallon et al., 2011</li> </ul>

*Figure 1:* Literature Review Matrix.

### **EBSS Scores**

Lewis and Sugai developed the EBS in 1999. The survey is completed by the school staff. A school-wide action plan can be developed from the survey data to assess the progress of the PBS implementation and all school personnel will be aware of the behavior issues at the school. Horner et al. (2005) and Sugai et al. (2000) discussed the office's discipline referral archival data could showcase the behavioral problems in a school. Sugai et al., (2000) did a study with eleven elementary and nine middle schools that were investigated on how many multiple referrals each grade level received in an academic year. There was also two elementary and one middle school in an Ohio school

district studied. All school staff completed the survey to rate the current status and priority improvement.

Safran (2000) examined the effectiveness of the survey. All school staff completed the survey at a meeting at the end of the school year. The survey purpose was to determine the needs of the school required for improving student behavior. The survey consisted of four sections that included school-wide system, individual student system, class, and nonclass setting. Also, school personnel evaluated the need assessment in place, partially in place, or not in place. The results of the research were used for internal decision-making, annual action planning team validation awareness, the building of staff, and assessment of change over time (Safran, 2000).

Administrators use an action plan from the survey summary for sustaining and implementing an survey system for the school year. The results of the survey are to (a) guide the development for an action plan to make improvements and (b) determine the status of the school program. In rating, the behavior of the participants indicated how important the behavior is that might need improvement. In a middle school, 40 participants completed the survey (Lewis et al., 1999). The rating of the individual student level was the highest. However, the school staff could focus their attention on any PBS level. The support staff deemed this critical because the survey results could be linked to the action plan. The middle school nonclassroom setting system and the focus were the hallways with an emphasis on the middle school immediate intervention (Lewis et al., 1999). The survey instrument provided critical information but did not yield a



particular intervention (Lewis et al., 1999). The goal was to have a positive student outcome that supports the validity of the survey (Moreno, 2010).

### **School Wide Effective Behavior Support**

Clark and Dunlap (2008) suggested that many schools have understood the importance of maintaining an active learning environment and an established school-wide behavior management plan. Clark and Dunlap (2008) stated that middle schools determine the precedent for subsequent success in high school; hence, measures need to be taken in the beginning to make a difference and to help the children to remain in school. Clark and Dunlap (2008) also stated that it is necessary to establish a well-planned and structured behavior management plan or social support system that promotes a positive learning environment to effectively guides students. Schools that create a proactive approach are deemed more successful since they have established an effective behavioral system that benefits the students (Clark & Dunlap, 2008).

According to empirical studies behavior difficulties, and classroom management is one of the most important parts of the educational system (Handler et al., 2007). Classroom management also involves developing a set of rules that students are required to follow. LeBlanc (2011) stated the school-wide management programs should assist educational institutions with organizing and focusing on the teacher-student relationship as a means of providing a friendly environment. Handler et al. (2007) found that studies have shown that when students are aware of the expectations they become motivated to achieve goals and objectives for academic success. Additionally, some students are intrinsically motivated and will organize their work to please their teachers.

The school-wide management programs provide incentives to students for improving their behavior. When students react to the program as the year progresses those students tend to work harder (Moreno, 2010). Students are more motivated when they can achieve their goals, objectives, and improve their behavior in school, which is a big deal to children. Moreover, the school-wide management programs can assist teachers and schools in providing feedback to students needing help to develop skills (Moreno, 2010). Studies have shown that feedback can occur in positive and negative situations, but it should be communicated positively to the students (Moreno, 2010). Moreover, the feedback presented to students should always be specific and encouraging.

Students need motivating to become engaged in the learning process. Various kinds of management programs also involve extrinsic factors in motivating students by providing them with various rewards (McBride, 2012). Different types of management programs utilize rewards and praises to motivate and encourage students to behave in positive ways. The rewards should be given in the early stages so that students can continue to work towards their goals (McBride, 2012). These rewards can be in the form of awards, praises, and certificates. In addition, with the help of the school-wide management program, students are given an equal opportunity to earn rewards. In situations where rewards are removed students become unmotivated. Therefore, if rewards are included in the management programs, the incentives should be equally distributed to all students (Minke & Anderson, 2005). Feedback will provide more opportunities for students to understand major issues. Belvel (2010) stated teachers could utilize the opportunity to redirect students positively. Many studies have shown that

school-wide management programs are referred to as an ongoing process (Belvel, 2010). The first days should provide information about the procedures and rewards for students to be aware of expectations and realize the significance of the programs. Some classroom management strategies are available to help the instructor to function better in the classroom.

### **Office Discipline Referrals**

#### **EBS Program and Office Discipline Referrals**

The program is school-wide to decrease office discipline referrals. A predictor of school failure is office discipline referrals (Sugai et al., 2001). Many schools in the United States have implemented programs to reduce disruptive behavior and create better learning environments. Schools often use current discipline information to make improvements in school-wide behavior. Sugai et al. (2000) emphasized office discipline referrals is a required form of data that all schools must collect. Office discipline referrals are administered when a student exhibits negative behavior that may constitute a rule violation such as classroom disruption, fighting, bus transportation problems defiance, and assault or threats towards peers or staff.

Teachers who have witnessed disruptive behavior can take steps to report it to the proper authorities. Teachers and school administrators offer an office discipline referral slip specifying the negative behavior and conditions that produced the referral slip. Sugai et al. (2000) stated the office referral slip should be entered into the school computer database. The program is used to create a school environment that works to improve

positive change in student behavior (PBIS, 2012). Teachers and staff are taught the program strategies to reduce the negative behavior presented by students.

Tobin, Sugai, and Colvin (2000) stated students at risk for behavioral problems can be identified by office discipline referrals. The number of office discipline referrals can improve classroom and student outcomes. Dwyer (2002) indicated the program implementation could reduce behavior difficulties by successfully making positive changes in the school environment. Ward and Gerston (2013) reviewed the issues of “Safe & Civil Schools” a school-wide program implemented in seventeen urban middle schools. These schools were compared with fifteen other schools that were provided with support and training by the staff. Data analysis indicated that improvement in student behavior was due to the teacher and staff training as well as positive attitudes regarding the program (Ward & Gerston 2013). Safe & Civil Schools’ participants were suspended fewer times and classroom misconduct reduced.

Walker et al. (2005) stated that office discipline referrals are useful in measuring the program. Kaufman et al. (2010) agreed that data from office discipline referrals could measure student behavior when they act out over time. Lassen, Steele, and Saiilor (2006) researched a low-income middle school’s program and the impact of the program on the school. The primary factor of problem behavior was office discipline referrals. Office discipline referral data results from year one of implementation to years two and three indicated a significant decrease (Lassen et al., 2006). The literature on the program’s office discipline referrals each year showed a reduction per student which is consistent with other studies of student problem behavior. Lassen et al. (2006) found when students

receive a discipline slip, they must leave the classroom for an extended amount of time.

The administrator's time may better be served when they can involve themselves in other activities rather than deal with office discipline referrals. Improved performance and function will be the results of a reduction in office discipline referrals (Lassen et al., 2006).

Sometimes schools will use a database to see if the student behavior has improved. Vincent, Horner, and May (2009) stated office discipline referrals is a web-based data collection system to record the administrative decisions of the number of behavioral violations occurring in the school. Major and minor office discipline referrals were collected and placed into the database of the school. Todd, Horner, and Tobin (2010) compared major and minor office discipline referrals which both are inappropriate behavior and non-serious. Student behavior described as dangerous is a major office discipline referral. Gage, Whitford, & Katsiyannis (2018). stated office discipline referrals either minor or major occur most times in the classroom, which is minor rather than major. The playground area in elementary school is the second area of problem behavior.

The hallway/breezeway is where problems occur at the middle school and high school levels. Minor office discipline referrals at the middle school level consist of tardiness, disrespect, and disruption. McIntosh, Frank, and Spaulding (2010) reported at the elementary school level more minor offenses than major office discipline referrals occur. The gap at the middle school level is smaller and includes more major rather than

minor office discipline by the end of the school year. Throughout the school year at the high school level there are more major than minor office discipline referrals.

### **Teacher Influence**

Teachers also facilitate student learning by enhancing student skills and abilities. The role and responsibility of teachers can also vary among different cultures. Teachers not only provide instructional learning but also improve attitudes and skills (Moreno, 2010). Teachers help students in shaping their personality so that they can achieve academic and professional success. In many, countries across the globe, education takes place in homes and educational institution. Brand et al. (2008) found that the process of teaching can be conducted formally and informally by family members, which may be referred to as home-schooling. Professionals formal educational skills may be transferred to students.

Moreover, teachers play a significant role in influencing student's behavior on field trips and other extracurricular activities. In various educational systems across the globe, many teachers take responsibility for disciplining children as well as continuing their education by completing courses as a means of teaching ethics to students (Warren, 2006). There is a range of schools that are specifically designed to update the information and improve the knowledge of educators. Various government agencies across the globe were established to serve the public interest and raise the standards of the teaching profession (Moreno, 2010).

The primary function of teachers is to understand the standards of practice and to engage in ongoing education to pursue the process of continuous development (Minke &

Anderson, 2005). In some situations, teachers should be good citizens at school and provide an excellent example of character to students. Lassen et al. (2006) stated educators could impart knowledge and information through other avenues. Teachers also become mentors for their students. Studies have shown that teachers provide knowledge and relevant experiences for students to attain academic and professional success (Minke & Anderson, 2005). Furthermore, the teacher also takes the responsibility of providing adequate values to children to enhance their skills and abilities (Minke & Anderson, 2005).

Teachers should study the individual behaviors of students and take steps to modify the situation. The negative attitudes of students arise from personal action. According to Moreno (2010), getting to the root of the negative behavior helps with transforming negative attitudes into positive attitudes. The strategy of treating negative attitudes as a skill that the child has perfected over the years can create a behavior problem. Negative attitudes may have roots in the inception of a student's family life. Moreno (2010) found there is a real possibility that the negative attitude become incorporated into the system because of a horrific incident. Getting to the negative root of bad attitudes can assist the teacher in dealing effectively with an aggressive child. Moreno (2010) stated that teachers should be aware of their students' behavior, observe, and learn how learners behave. Teachers should listen carefully to each word, noise, and sound made by a student in a challenging way. The teacher should ask questions to find out what has been going on with the student or what they would like or prefer (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

Many times, when a student displays challenging behavior, there is usually some warning that the student might begin to demonstrate problematic behavior. A student may also show some minor signs that he or she is going to present challenging behavior. Furthermore, minor signs that have something to do with the personal environment may be referred to as an antecedent. An antecedent, Ruus et al. (2008) stated is an occurrence that takes place before the challenging behavior is presented. The challenging behavior is considered difficult to perceive and a teacher might not be able to predict challenging behavior (Ruus et al., 2008). Educators should take the example of a student who shows behavior that indicates fear of thunderstorms. When it starts to thunder, the fearful reaction of the student may be the antecedent for the challenging behavior such as hitting others. Antecedents are different for every student (Ruus et al., 2008). There is still a pattern for showing challenging behavior. An antecedent will make it easier for teachers to determine when the challenging behavior will begin.

Ruus et al. (2008) stated another sign the teacher will be able to identify challenging behavior in students is known as a precursor. Challenging behavior is also an indication that occurs before the challenging behavior is being presented. Challenging behavior is the time when minor signs are shown and the person's mood begins to change. Signs might not be displayed as it happens and is, thus, unclear. Dechamps et al. (2010) emphasized an example of a precursor is when a student starts swearing. The swearing is being considered as the precursor to the challenging behavior such as throwing objects at another person. The key here is that when swearing begins, the teacher can start to assist the student and help him or her to calm down before he or she



decides to exhibit challenging behavior. A precursor is different for every student. Some students have the antecedent before they begin to show the challenging behavior (Dechamps et al., 2010).

Adequately educated students are more self-confident, possess greater leadership skills, service others, engage in less criminal activities, have more excellent knowledge of government, are less dependent on government assistance, and have greater economic stability and security (Akin-Little, 2009). Akin-Little (2009) found with education, students participate in political activities, take an interest in leisure and artistic activities, and move toward furthering their studies. Akin-Little (2009) stated positive outcomes might be attributed to education. Hence, the impact of teaching could prevent children from adopting negative behavior and indulging in activities that are harmful; however, to make children understand the importance of education, it is necessary, to begin with, the right environment that can help them in leading a better life (Akin-Little, 2009).

### **Middle School Students and Behavior**

There might be some misconception about the behavior analysis of individuals. Teachers who have witnessed adverse reactions can take steps to report the action to the proper authorities. Instead, educators should study the different behaviors and modify the situation. Most of the negative attitudes arise from the unusual activity. McBride (2012) stated getting to the root of the negative behavior goes a long way in transforming negative attitudes into positive attitudes. The strategy of treating the negative reactions as a skill that the child has perfected over the years can create a behavior problem. This negative attitude might have roots in the inception of a student's family life. McBride

(2012) found there is a real possibility that the negative attitude became incorporated into the system because of a horrific incident. Should an event of negative behavior impact a child resulting in a negative manner? Getting to the root of a negative attitude can assist the teacher in dealing effectively with the aggressive child.

### **Thinking Proactively**

Being proactive can be risky. Being proactive is completed by intervening to change the desired outcome (Akin-Little, 2009). There is a need to promote proactive behavior to change negative behavior. Belvel (2010) stated the theory of self-regulation which most scholars suggested setting proactive goals involves decisions that individuals consider a part of positive student behavior. The belief that one might be successful in the respective domain or higher self-efficacy is likely to be an essential proactive goal because proactive entails quite a high potential risk for the individual (Belvel, 2010). Self-efficacy enhances persistence and increases student willingness to overcome the obstacle suggesting the importance of successful proactive action.

Belvel (2010) indicated theories are important because methods are not dealing with student selection or persisting in proactive goals. Students might be able to improve the practices of work and not have any compelling reason to do so (Moreno, 2010). Individuals want to be proactive and should be proactive to change the target. Goals maybe imposed and there is a reason to carry out the purpose, which is expected and necessary. Proactive behavior plays a crucial role in delicate situations in which the student has a higher level of discretion.

McIver et al., (2016) stated that establishing a more proactive approach in all schools is necessary, since, through a positive environment students will be able to learn. However, McIver et al., (2016) suggested creating a program as an overall systemic approach and a more personalized teaching approach intended to reduce problematic behavior and to enforce and sustain the right conduct. Simonsen, Sugai, and Negrón (2008) stated to establish a system; it is necessary to follow a five-step process that ensures developing the right effective behavior management plan. The five step process includes conducting a needs assessment, organizing representatives for all stakeholders, using the school's mission as a guide to specify proactive and research-based strategies, formulating an action plan, and collecting data on the management plan to be used in order to determine the effectiveness of the strategy devised (Simonsen, Sugai, & Negrón, 2008).

Researchers agree with the overall concept presented by McIver et al., (2016) that classroom management programs should be established to adopt a management plan. However, to determine the effectiveness of classroom management programs, it is necessary to ensure the programs are comprised of the following characteristics: modeling the desired behavior in classrooms, identifying and addressing relevant social skills, and applying to all situations in any setting. There should be an outline of a sequential process for mastering skills and ensuring the use of ordinary language (Kerr & Nelson, 2006). Yet, before an effective behavior management plan is established, it is necessary to understand the behavior in an effective manner. Creating the right behavioral system can aid students in dealing with their emotions more effectively.

Lastly, it is necessary to highlight the fact, through such behavioral systems students can positively deal with their feelings (Kerr & Nelson, 2006). Character building takes place to assist students overall and ensure they are properly developing throughout their lives (Epstein et al., 2008).

### **Challenging Behavior**

Behavior is considered challenging when it negatively affects an individual's life creating problems (Frey et al., 2008). Behavior sometimes is considered more difficult when it causes harm to the person or others. This harm can include damage to property and prevent students from learning new skills. The teacher should determine which behavior is challenging for students. Frey et al. (2008) stated it is necessary for the teacher to observe the student behavior and try to create unique ideas that make the student's behavior less challenging. The teacher should set levels of satisfaction as far as the challenging behavior is concerned (Frey et al., 2008).

Challenging behavior is hard to explain because it is not diagnosed and not a part of special education. Challenging behavior also takes various forms of treatment that can include low and high intensity (Frey et al., 2008). Successful programs rely on the effective style of teaching, which begins with understanding that children are special whereby each child has his/her unique personality. Some children might not have seen student with a disability before (Frey et al., 2008). Without pointing to anyone in the class, teachers should explain that having a disability does not define the person, but it is just a part of the individual. There are several types of disabilities. An individual in

a wheelchair has a visible disability and a person with ADHD has an invisible disability (Durán, Bloom, & Samaha, 2013).

As early as possible, parents should talk with their children regarding people who have a disability (Frey et al., 2008). With their permission and permission from the disabled student, teachers should speak of disabilities with the entire class, trying to understand what they think and know about disabilities (Frey et al., 2008). A child with a disability may also be willing to discuss their experience. One should remember to focus on the strength of the children and allow each child to provide an assessment of his or her capabilities (Belvel, 2010).

### **Effective Behavior Support Strategies**

Levin and Nolan (2009) have identified various kinds of behavioral strategies that are utilized by the program to encourage and motivate students to modify their behavior. Some of these strategies and plans are shared with the instructors to help change the student's negative behavior. It has been observed and proven that the most active part of the functional behavior is that the program supports and enables the interventions and strategies to address the principal aim and purpose of the problem behavior (Levin & Nolan, 2009). For instance, the child who acts out to seek attention can also receive recognition for their alternative behavior. The PBS team often prefers the changes in the environment and surroundings. The reason behind the support is to assist the management team in putting forth more efforts (Moreno, 2010).

Other tactics when dealing with disruptive behavior is to use the knowledge and information from a behavior chain to identify behavioral issues in the early stages

(Handler et al., 2007). Some studies have mentioned that some of the most commonly used approaches by the educational institutions and the teacher may involve modifying the surroundings so that the behavior can be changed (Handler et al., 2007). Moreover, some studies have stated that teachers should also provide an alternative behavior for the student to exhibit a positive attitude and gain academic success (Handler et al., 2007). The teachers can utilize the approach of ignoring the behavior of the student. Many teachers implement positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior (Handler et al., 2007). Educators can teach new and innovative skills to students to reduce disruptive behavior. Teachers and parents can also use modification techniques, which can further involve the graded extinction (Handler et al., 2007).

A healthy world can only be developed when people are educated (Handler et al., 2007). Education gives a proper sense to an individual allowing them to think and make the right decisions (Handler et al., 2007). It is through education that people can gain knowledge that can help them throughout life. Education is a continuous process and to succeed in life; people need to obtain the best education to provide them with knowledge and skills (Burden, 2006). In the United States, there are continuous change occurring, placing demands and higher expectations on all school systems. There is a constant shift in the demographics of students and the emergence of new generations, races, ethnicities, and the increase in the socioeconomic needs (Handler et al., 2007). Another key finding is the fact that presently only a meager 66% of children living in the United States reside with married parents; this has drastically declined from 77% in the year 1980 (NCFES, 2006).

**Assessment of Student Behavior**

A teacher should ask the student how they spend their time on a daily basis (Dechamps et al., 2010). Other members of the team will be invited to do the same. Every individual on the team should take notes about the overall quality of life for the student. The quality of life is a vital issue to remember because it is among the most crucial factors that influence the student's behavior.

Once the information has been gathered and discussed, then it is time to conduct a functional assessment of challenging behavior that the student has been exhibiting. The behavior that the student displays serves a purpose because everyone is unique and there is a reason behind such behavior. During the assessment Epstein et al. (2008) determined the assessor uses a data sheet to record the challenging student behavior is required.

**Support Plan for Student Behavior**

According to Fallon et al., (2011), a support program for students is created to address the changes needed to reduce the time and the extent to which students will display negative behavior. The program should note the present conditions of the student, the conditions before and during the challenging behavior, and what happens after the occurrence of the behavior. It is important to encourage students to practice good behavior and teach the students skills that allow for success and independence (Fallon et al., 2011.) The support plan used by educators could help to educate socially acceptable behavior to replace the challenging behavior. The program also requires knowing when students are having a bad day, which can cause an increase in the challenging behavior.

The teacher should develop a support plan and regularly review and monitor the program to determine effectiveness (Fallon et al., 2011.)

### **Summary**

This chapter provided a discussion on research related to teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of student behavior, providing background information on problems and concerns with school discipline. There is a lack of research showing there is a positive impact on the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of students in an urban middle school. Educators are always looking for ways to improve student discipline in the school. There is minimal research that indicates there is a direct correlation between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals. Because of gaps in the literature regarding the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of students of a middle school additional evidence is needed. Schreiber, L., & Valle, B. (2013) has indicated that literature reveals that the program has produced a wide range of changes in the educational field.

Most literature focuses primarily on elementary and high school, whereby this research will focus on middle school students. Dechamps et al. (2010) indicated educational institutions should also implement and develop a school-wide system to further involve the behavioral support (Minke & Anderson, 2005). The program future should be to implement Intensive Behavior Support. There are two steps in this process. The first step focus is students responding to the teacher's initial intervention strategies. The second step focuses on students with service on a more individualized basis.



Chapter 3 will present the research methods proposed for this study, including research design and approach, which includes data collection, analysis, a demographic survey, the survey, and archival data used to collect data. The sample of this study was drawn from a local school district in the Southeast and used probability sampling threats to statistical validity, protection of the participant's, ethical procedures, and conclusion.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this quantitative nonexperimental study was to examine the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable. Through this study, archival data at a middle school was collected for the academic SY 2014 and SY 2015. The variables examined in this study were the independent variable of teachers' EBS and the dependent variable of office discipline referrals.

This chapter includes a description of the research design and approach approved by the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB approval number: 01-10-18-0145877), the setting, sample, instruments, and procedures. Next, I discuss the data collection and statistical methods. The chapter details a review of the threats to the statistical validity, including the reliability of the instruments and data assumptions and sample size. Finally, I conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of the ethical considerations taken to protect the participants' rights and wellbeing.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

This research study was an archival quantitative nonexperimental design involving secondary data. This research design allowed for qualification of the relationship between the two variables. Quantitative methodologies involve the use of quantitatively measurable variables to make inferences and test hypotheses; conversely, qualitative methods include the use of individual, researcher-interpreted narratives that interpret subjective views of reality, whereas mixed methods involve a synthesis of both

approaches (Almalki, 2016). In this study, I used archival data collected from the school and student office referrals for 1 year.

Almalki (2016) stated that quantitative methodologies involve the use of quantitatively measurable variables to make inferences and test hypotheses. Qualitative methods include the use of individual, researcher-interpreted narratives that provide subjective views of reality. A quantitative design best fit this study instead of a qualitative design because I sought to make inferences based on quantifiable results rather than assess individual experiences. Mixed methods were not appropriate, as a focus on quantifiable and statistically verifiable relationships was desired. This design requires more participants than a qualitative design but also requires less time commitment than the in-depth interviews required for qualitative studies.

I chose this research because it focuses on a statistical relationship between two variables, the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals at an urban middle school. An archival quantitative, nonexperimental study was the most appropriate research method because I relied on the school's database. The school supplied the numerical format of data from their archival database, which I analyzed in a quantifiable manner using the statistical method. Experimental designs involve the use of random assignment to control experimental groups and direct manipulation of an independent variable (Field, 2013). The nonexperimental design was appropriate, as random assignment, control groups, and manipulation of an independent variable could not be employed in this study. Fields (2013) stated that researchers use predictive designs to assess relationships that already exist rather than cause and effect relationships.

Because I aimed to use several variables to predict student behavioral difficulties, a predictive design was most appropriate.

The teachers' EBS were most appropriate because they indicated the proper social behavior of students, monitoring students' behavior in the classroom and working to eliminate disruptive student behavior. The teachers' EBS was appropriate for this study because of its extensive use in the school setting to improve student behavior. This design requires more participants than a qualitative design and requires less time commitment than the in-depth interviews required for qualitative studies. I used archival data consisting of results from an effective behavior support survey and office discipline referrals. Because I aimed to use several variables to predict student behavioral difficulties, the predictive design was most appropriate.

I employed archival data collection methods to collect deidentified data from an urban middle school for the academic SY 2014 and SY 2015. Archival data collection methods are ideal to protect the anonymity of teachers and students (Sugai et al., 2000). Data analysis consisted of a simple linear regression, with an independent variable of the teachers' EBS, a covariate of years of experience, and a dependent variable of student office referrals.

### **Methodology**

In the method section of this study, I cover the population sampling procedure for using archival data from student office discipline referrals. Additionally, secondary archival data accounted for the process of data collection. In the last section of this methods section, I explain the data collection and analysis plan. The secondary data

included teachers' EBS in the middle school. The research method of using secondary data supports a quantitative study (Cohen, 1988). Specifically, I conducted analysis of secondary data stored in computer databases designed for government agencies (i.e., school districts). I drew the sampling identification from a local school district in the southeastern part of the United States using probability sampling.

### **Population**

The middle school studied in this research is located in the southeastern United States in a small city with a population of 28,962. The population at the selected middle school included one principal and two assistants, one teacher support person, and 73 teachers. In the county, the school population includes all three economic classes: upper, middle, and lower class. This middle school is a Title 1 school that employs 73 teachers who serve 830 students.

Many of the students are economically disadvantaged and receive free or reduced breakfast and lunch. This middle school has a diverse population with a mixture of cultures located in the community. Within this middle school population, 80% of the students are African-American, 14% are White, and 8% represent other backgrounds. The school's yearly progress has been on target although most of the students are performing at grade level.

The target population consisted of teachers in a local school district in the southeastern United States. The state school report indicated that during the academic SY of 2014 and SY 2015, the total number of middle school teachers was 46,349. In the

school district, all schools have implemented programs such as the positive behavior support program to improve learning for the students.

### **Sampling and Sampling Procedures**

The sample of this study was drawn from a local school district in the southeastern United States. I used a probability sample of archival data from the local school district. A local school district in the Southeast agreed to allow me to conduct a quantitative, nonexperimental study to examine the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of students. Permission was obtained from the superintendent of the school system and the principal of the middle school to collect the student office referrals. I contacted school administrators and I explained how the office referrals and teachers' effective behavior support data would be used in this study. The teachers' demographic information included gender, age, education level, number of years teaching, and ethnicity. All information remains confidential and I omitted names on all information related to this study.

I used probability sampling, a common sampling method, to conduct this study. The teachers were participants from the middle school within the selected school district who were teaching special education, general education, extra-curricular courses (woodshop, photo, ceramics, home economics, and career courses), or other types of support classes, such as vocational rehabilitation and study skills. The teachers are dedicated to their profession as educators, and they have been recognized for their excellence in teaching. The school maintains a culture and climate for guiding students' academic success. The teachers' EBS and office discipline referral data came from

archived academic SY 2014 and SY 2015 data at the participating middle school, provided by the middle school. This dataset contained a total of 73 teachers' scores as well as some demographic information, such as gender and race. The teachers who completed the archival data ranged in age from 21 to 66 years of age or older. Fifty-two of the participants were female. Probability sampling has many advantages; this sampling technique is inexpensive, fast, and easy. Before conducting the study, I obtained permission from the superintendent and school principal of the participating middle school. Probability sampling was also ideal because the school archival data were easy to access and provided results that were not as complicated as using a randomized sample. The probability sampling was useful in documenting the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals. I specifically obtained archival data for results of the teachers' EBS and student behavioral difficulties in the academic SY 2014 and SY 2015 with permission from the school's superintendent. Therefore, no violations with the FERPA law occurred.

As part of their school requirements, teachers had already completed the survey. The survey is divided into four subscales measuring areas of positive behavior support: school-wide (i.e., "involving all students, all staff, & all settings"), nonclassroom (i.e., "particular times or places where supervision is emphasized"), classroom (i.e., "instructional settings in which teachers supervise & teach groups of students"), and individual student systems (i.e., "specific supports for students who engage in chronic problem behaviors"). These four subscales were combined into a total score for this analysis by creating a composite score of the average of the four subscales.

The appropriate sample size for a study can be calculated before sampling begins.

When little indication exists in the literature regarding what size effect to expect, a medium effect size can be assumed for a power analysis (Cohen, 1988). This analysis demonstrated that with a medium effect size of .15, an alpha of .05, and a power of .80, the minimum number of participants for linear regression was 68 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2008). Table 1 presents a summary of the G\*Power input parameters and sample size estimation.

Table 1

*Summary of Data Analysis, G\*Power Parameters, Sample Size Estimation*

Research question	Analysis	Dependent variable	Independent variable and mediating variable	Alpha	Power	Effect size	Estimated sample size
Is there a relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with a mediating variable of years of experience?	Linear regression	Office discipline referrals	Teachers' EBS and years of experience	.05	.80	Medium (0.15)	$n = 73$



### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

Before data collection, I obtained permission to conduct the study from Walden University IRB. The principal and the superintendent of the participating middle school granted permission to perform the study and gain access to student referral data and effective behavior support. Because deidentified archival data were collected with no actual participants, informed consent was not applicable to this study. After receiving all permissions, school administrators sent deidentified archival data through electronic security measures for this research study.

The school's office discipline referral data included information related to all types of disciplinary referrals made to the school office for the academic SY 2014 and SY 2015. In addition, included on the referrals were the total number of student office referrals and the reason the teacher wrote the referrals. Lastly, the teachers' EBS were taken from the school archival data from the academic SY 2014 and SY 2015.

I maintained confidentiality of the participants and students throughout the research process. I downloaded all data onto a flash drive and placed it in a locked fireproof filing cabinet in my home office. The data will remain for a minimum of five years.

As part of their school requirements, teachers had already completed the survey. The deidentified archival dataset contained SY 2014 and SY 2015, teachers' gender and years of experience, as well as office discipline referral data matched to each teacher. I maintained the anonymity of the students and teachers throughout the process through deidentification of the dataset prior to access.

### **Instrumentation**

I carefully selected the instruments used in this research and the research question that guided the study. Archival data were from the student office discipline referrals. I retrieved the archival data from the student information system of the middle school for results of the teachers' scores and office discipline referrals from the academic SY 2014 and SY 2015. The teachers always complete the surveys at the end of each academic year. Therefore, this information provided insight regarding the implementation of the program. The survey has been shown to be a valid, reliable, efficient, and useful instrument to measure a school implementation of the program (Horner et al., 2005). I obtained the teachers' EBS, gender, years of experience, and office discipline referrals matched to each teacher from the official record system of the participating middle school. The archival data were from the student information system. The survey is used for schools to evaluate the program practices and to develop programs to change student behavior. Lewis and Sugai (1999) from the University of Oregon developed the survey to evaluate a school's role in supporting positive student behavior. Because I used archival data and thus did not use the survey, no permission to use the instrument was needed. The school district under study implements the survey as part of their yearly teacher evaluation. However, I obtained a Data Release Agreement from the Walden University IRB website. The four subscales are evaluated using descriptive statistics and then combined into a total score for further analysis by creating a composite score of the four subscales. Researchers have proven the tool to be reliable: Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for each subscale (Safran, 2006). The alpha coefficient for the total scale

of the status of implementation—i.e., how much the system is in place—was  $\alpha = .85$  and priority for improvement was  $\alpha = .94$ , indicating strong internal consistency for the total scales. More variability existed in the alpha coefficients of the subscales, indicating unacceptable to moderate to high reliability ( $\alpha = .60$  to  $\alpha = .85$ ) for each subscale of current status of implementation. The results also indicated moderate to high reliability ( $\alpha = .81$  to  $\alpha = .94$ ) for each subscale of improvement priority (Safran, 2006). Schools at all levels widely use this survey. Safran (2006) stated that further instrument validation is required; however, no significant differences existed in patterns of ratings across schools examined.

Within each of the four sections of the survey, participants responded in two categories: (a) “status” for what is the current status of that item in your school, and (b) “priority for improvement” for how the teacher feels this item is prioritized in their school. For the status section, respondents answer questions on a Likert-type scale in which the participant responds either in place, partially in place, or not in place. For the priority for improvement section, respondents answer questions on a Likert-type scale in which the participant responds either high, medium, or low. There are 43 items, each of which can be rated from 1–3, with higher numerical values corresponding to items being rated as in place and high priority. As such, for the total scale, scores can range from 43 to 129 for either section. The subscales measured on a 1–3 response scale was used for descriptive statistics. I only used the total status scale (i.e., the sum of the status responses for each of the subscales) in the regression analysis to answer the research question.

## Data Analysis Plan

### Data Collection

I accessed school archives to obtain data that represent the dependent variable of student behavior difficulties, which I operationalized as the number of office discipline referrals. Office discipline referrals are widely used as a measure of the behavioral challenges of students (Clonan et al., 2007; McIntosh et al., 2006). Office discipline referrals for this study included all types of disciplinary referrals to the office for the academic SY 2014 and SY 2015.

To measure the dependent variable, I collected office discipline referral data from the student information system of the participating middle school. The study specifically involved the teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals in the academic SY 2014 and SY 2015. This data information is recorded for every 6 weeks in the school data system. I collected all data, handled it confidentially and will keep it for a minimum of five years after the study. Before data collection, permission to conduct this nonexperimental quantitative study was obtained from Walden University IRB.

Permission to perform the study and gain access to student referral data and EBS survey data was requested from the principal and superintendent in a letter. Permission was not required to use the survey, as I did not administer the survey. The school provided the results from the teachers' EBS from the archival data. Archival data allowed me to obtain data that represent the dependent variable of student behavior difficulties, which were operationalized as the number of office discipline referrals.

## **Data Analysis**

The analysis plan for this study was conducted using nonexperimental quantitative secondary data. I entered the collected data in an excel spreadsheet, which I imported into IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for data manipulation and analysis. Yin (2003) indicated data analysis is a process of investigating, categorizing, and tabulating information to address the study proposition. It is a systematic approach to evaluation, and it provides an easy way to understand the results. Through data analysis, I discovered how many and what questions about the study were described. Data analysis did not support a hypothesis.

All data analysis occurred using SPSS. Before performing a regression analysis of the data, descriptive statistics will be performed. Numbers of male and female teachers, their ethnicities, ages, and years of teaching were identified with frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, as appropriate. The variables for this study were teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals. I measured these variables using the demographics surveys and school archival data. The following section includes an analysis of the research question.

## **Operationalization**

### **Independent Variable**

The teachers' EBS were the continuous independent variable for this study. I measured the teachers' EBS by the total status scale (i.e., the sum of the status responses for the entire survey). This score could have ranged from 43 to 129, where a higher score indicates that teachers believe the program is more in place. An example item is a small

number (e.g., 3–5) of positively and clearly stated student expectations or rules that are defined.

### **Covariate**

A continuous covariate of this study was years of experience. This continuous covariate was defined as a teacher's years of teaching experience at the middle school and was measured by the school's office records. Higher values indicate more years of teaching experience.

### **Dependent Variable**

The continuous dependent variable for this study was office discipline referrals. This continuous dependent variable was defined as the number of office discipline referrals the teacher gave out during the school year and was measured by the school's office records. Higher values indicate more office discipline referrals given.

### **Restatement of Research Question and Hypothesis**

The dataset used in this quantitative nonexperimental study was archival data. I measured the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable. As conveyed in Chapter 1, this is the restatement of the research question and hypothesis:

Research Question: Is there a relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable?

*H*<sub>0</sub>. There is no significant relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable.

*H*<sub>a</sub>. There is a significant relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable.

I performed a simple linear regression to address this research question. This is the appropriate analysis to perform when the researcher aims to assess the predictive relationship between two or more categorical or continuous independent variables and a continuous dependent variable (Nathans, Oswald, & Nimon, 2012). The continuous independent variable was teachers' EBS. The continuous dependent variable was office discipline referrals. The continuous covariate was years of experience. This covariate was included to reduce possible confounding effects that may have accounted for increases or decreases in office discipline referrals. For example, less experienced teachers may have simply given more office discipline referrals.

Prior to assessing the results of the regression, I evaluated the assumptions of the absence of outliers, normality, homoscedasticity, and absence of multicollinearity as recommended by Nathans et al. (2012). I used standard deviations to evaluate outliers. An outlier was defined as any value that falls outside the range of +/- 3.29 standard deviations from the mean (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). I removed any outliers present. I evaluated normality using a quantile-quantile (Q-Q) scatterplot. The assumption of normality was determined depending if the data followed the diagonal normality line

(Nathans et al., 2012). I evaluated homoscedasticity using a scatterplot of the residuals. The assumption is met if the points are randomly distributed with no apparent curvature (Nathans et al., 2012). Variance inflation factors (VIF) allowed me to assess multicollinearity. According to Field (2009), VIFs should ideally be less than 5, with a maximum upper limit of 10. The predictor variables had VIFs of 1.00, indicating the assumption was met.

### **Threats to Validity**

In quantitative studies, researchers should have validity in the instrument and measurements in order to conduct research. This process involves collecting and analyzing data to ensure the accuracy of the instrument. The evaluation of the content to determine if it measures what it is supposed to measure should coincide with the research question.

#### **External Validity**

The external validity issues in this study were that more female teachers are working at the school than males. According to Mitchell and Jolly (2007), external validity is the extent to which the factors of a study can be generalized to other populations. As data were only collected from one urban middle school in the southern United States, the results may not be generalizable to all urban middle schools. The instrument involved in this included student office discipline referrals. The survey is annually administered to teachers. There were minimal risks to external validity for other population and setting. Threats to validity involved in experimental research—such as maturation—are not applicable to this nonexperimental quantitative study.



**Internal Validity**

This nonexperimental quantitative study validity relied on the appropriate process created for the theoretical framework for this research. To explain the student behavior, a relationship may have existed between the teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals. The study school location may have offered a threat because of the number of students enrolled at this school. In this nonexperimental quantitative study, the internal validity may have reflected the conclusion of the relationship between the teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals. The internal validity of this study did show a causal relationship between the independent and dependent variables. I assumed the independent variable would lead to a decrease in the dependent variable in this study. Therefore, the variable should reduce the number of office discipline referrals because of the evidence presented.

**Reliability of Instruments**

Fisher, Brown, Aron, Strong, & Mashek (2010) found that in any study, an instrument is reliable if it shows consistent results and produces stability. The survey scores used in this study exhibited good reliability. Primary concerns of threats to internal validity included a lack of a comparison or control group. Because I was not involved in the collection of archival data, I assumed the data were accurately and consistently reported.

**Data Assumptions**

One threat to validity is making incorrect data assumption. To perform this study and have a correct conclusion, significant time and effort went into collecting and

analyzing data. I tested all assumptions thoroughly during data collection and conducted the analysis and interpretation of the data honestly and accurately. I assumed teachers' responses to the survey questions were honest and correct.

### **Sample Size**

If the sample size was insignificant, it would create a threat to validity. All teachers' surveys were a part of the sample size. The simple regression design has one independent variable and one dependent variable. The criterion was met in this study.

### **Ethical Procedures**

Ethical behaviors and protection of study participants are a serious matter for psychological studies. I performed every action in this study with careful consideration of the participants' well-being and privacy. The handling of the sensitive responses of the effective behavior support was one of the most important ethical procedures. I did not share any of the individual's information with others who were not a part of this study. Agreements were made to gain access to middle school archival data from the school office discipline referrals.

### **Ethical Issues in the Research Problem**

In this study, I employed ethical considerations for the protection of the participants. Professional standards governed my behavior to mitigate any harm to participants. All information was stored in a lockbox at my home office. I will not share any confidential information to anyone not associated with the research study. All personal information will remain private. I did not demonstrate incompetent, unethical, or illegal practices. I did not share information with anyone not associated with this study.

### **Ethical Issues Pertaining to Research Questions and Purpose**

I informed the superintendent and school principal of the purpose of this study and that information would not be falsified in any manner. There were no negative repercussions for participants because the information stemmed from archival data and there were no participants.

### **Ethical Issues in Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Agreements were made to gain access to middle school archival data from the school office discipline referrals. The superintendent of the school system and the principal of the middle school granted permission to obtain information from the official school database. I obtained approval from Walden University IRB before collecting data for the research study. I coded the names, personal details, and school name and kept this information confidential on a flash drive in a locked fireproof safe in my home office to maintain privacy.

### **Ethical Issues in Writing and Disseminating Research**

The collected data were from a demographic survey, the survey scores, and other archival data. I only used the data for this research and related data analysis. The following steps were taken to ensure conformity with ethical standards: research permission (a special application form) and privacy maintenance (confidentiality). I will destroy the data used in this research study after 5 years.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I presented the research methods used for this nonexperimental quantitative study to examine the relationship between teachers' EBS and office

discipline referrals. The chapter included a detailed account of the research design, setting, sample, and instrumentation. The variables examined in this proposal were survey scores and office discipline referrals, which were operationalized in a subsequent section. A demographic questionnaire collected information about each teacher's demographic characteristics and teachers' informal assessment at the school (see Appendix A). Also, the present study involved a nonexperimental quantitative convenient design. Before data collection, I received permission to conduct the study from the Walden University IRB. I received permission to perform the study and gain access to student referral data and EBS survey data from the principal and superintendent in a letter.

This study implemented a nonexperimental quantitative design. This chapter also included threats to validity. In quantitative research, internal validity accurately reflects the conclusion of the relationship between the teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals. The next chapter presents the results of this data analysis.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this quantitative nonexperimental study was to examine the relationship between teachers' EBS (independent variable) and office discipline referrals (dependent variable) of urban middle school students. The mediating variable was years of teaching experience.

I collected archival data on teachers at a middle school in the southeastern United States for variables of the teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals. Archival data for academic SY 2014 and SY 2015 were collected on the three variables. The aim of the data collection was to respond to the research question and null hypothesis. The question was, is there a significant relationship between the teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable? The alternate hypothesis was, there is a significant relationship between the teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals, with years of experience as the mediating variable. The null hypothesis was, there is no significant relationship between the EBS and office discipline referrals, with years of experience as the mediating variable? Simple linear regression was the statistical model used to guide data analysis for the research question and hypotheses, tested at an alpha level of .05.

In this chapter, I discuss the accuracy of data collection on the primary variables (the teachers' EBS, office discipline referrals, and years of teaching experience) used in the simple linear regression equation in the study. I also present the demographics for the 73 teachers. Descriptive statistics on items in the teacher survey were computed, inserted

in a table, and explained relative to the construct (teacher support) measured by the items on the teacher survey. Next, the chapter includes the primary findings from the simple linear regression equation used to answer the research question and null hypothesis. I end the chapter with a summary.

## **Data Collection**

### **Time Frame and Recruitment**

To adhere to federal and institutional guidelines, I sent an application to the Walden IRB on December 20, 2017 to request permission to conduct this study. This permission was granted in January 2018. I also sent a letter to the superintendent and principal of the school to grant me permission to obtain information from the official school database. I collected archival data from the academic SY 2014 and SY 2015 in February 2018, which contained data for 73 teachers from the participating middle school. The teachers who completed the survey ranged in age from 21 to 66 years of age or older. Fifty-two of the participants were female. Most of the participants were African-American (78%), followed by Whites (20%) and Asians (2%). In using archival data for this study, no additional participant recruitment was needed to collect data.

### **Accuracy of the Data**

In this data collection process, I conducted a visual examination of the data to detect for discrepancies or errors. A careful inspection allowed me to detect any human errors in typing the data in the electronic spreadsheet in the computer database. The range for the teachers' EBS was 43 to 129. All scores were inspected to ensure no scores were outside of the range. Results of the examination revealed that all scores were in the range

of 43 to 129. Similarly, I conducted a visual inspection on the counts of office discipline referrals. The count of office discipline referrals was visually inspected to detect any unusually high or questionable number of office discipline referrals (i.e., 20, 50, etc.) that may be the result of human error. No questionable errors were detected.

The archival teacher survey data had interval-level scores on middle school teachers at the school. In addition, the electronic spreadsheet emailed from the school board contained counts of middle school office discipline referrals for the 73 teachers at the middle school. The teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals on the spreadsheet were for the academic SY 2014 and SY 2015.

The district had a procedure for schools to ensure the accuracy of data in the database. To facilitate the accuracy of data entries, the district procedure was that the data clerk inputs all data in Excel spreadsheets in the database and the assistant principal or some other designated person at the middle school verifies all data entries were correctly entered by the data clerk. This two-person control procedure was designed to ensure accuracy of data in the database. Further, I visually cross-checked the teachers' EBS with the office discipline referrals. The examination revealed 73 survey scores and 73 counts of office discipline referrals. There was no missing data.

### **Response Rate**

In using archival data for this study, no additional participant recruitment was needed to collect data. After I received approval from Walden University IRB, the school board sent the archival data electronically to me on December 17, 2018. The archival data contained the teachers' EBS for the academic SY 2014 to SY 2015.

### **Demographic of Teachers**

A total of 73 cases were available from teachers in one southeastern urban middle school in the United States for the academic SY 2014 and SY 2015. Of these teachers, most were female ( $n = 52$ , 71.23%;  $n = 21$ , 28.77% males). These teachers had, on average, 10.77 years of experience and were awarded an average of 9.29 referrals. Respectively, the standard deviations are 7.27 and 2.90 for the two averages. This middle school had a large percentage of teachers with a master's degree. The student-teacher ratio at the middle school was 18.2 to .1.

### **Descriptive Statistics for the Teachers' EBS**

Because positive behavior support in the middle school, as measured by the teacher survey, was one of the most important of the three variables (i.e., the teachers' EBS, office discipline referrals, and years of experience) relating to the research question, I computed descriptive statistics on the survey items to obtain a description of the level of perceived positive support provided by the teachers. The teacher survey was organized into four sections, and each of the four sections had survey items that represented a specific area of positive behavior support, as perceived by teachers. One section was schoolwide support or support throughout the entire middle school setting by teachers. The second section (nonclassroom support) had items representative of support behaviors by teachers in the cafeteria, on the bus, on the playground, and in the hallways. The third section, classroom support, indicated support in the form of teachers providing instructions to students. The last section, individual student support, had items reflective



of teacher support in situations with individual students who exhibited chronic problem behaviors.

The teacher survey had two columns. One column was named *status* and the second column was named *priority* (priority order for improvement at the middle school). A teacher read the survey items and circled 1, 2, or 3 in the status column. Status reflected the degree that the support concept, represented by the survey item, was in place at the middle school (1 = *not in place* to 3 = *in place*). The second column, priority indicated how the teacher felt the support concept was prioritized in the middle school. Teachers read a support item and circled 1, 2, or 3 (1 = *low priority* to 3 = *high priority*).

Table 3 presents the average or mean for each of the four subscales or sections (school-wide, nonclassroom, classroom, student). There is a total average status mean score from the four subscales and a total average priority mean score from the four subscales. Table 3 presents the averages and standard deviations. An examination of perceptual data (means;  $M = 2.32$ ;  $SD = 0.16$ ) for the degree that the positive supports were in place indicated that teachers perceived schoolwide, nonclassroom, classroom, and individual supports to be mostly in place at the middle school. An inspection of perceptual data ( $M = 1.26$ ;  $SD = 0.12$ ) for the perceived priority order of the supports suggested that teachers perceived all the supports represented by the four subscales had a low priority for additional improvement at the middle school.

Table 2

*Means and Standard Deviations on Survey for Teacher Support (N = 73)*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Years of teachers experience	10.77	7.27
Referrals	9.29	2.90
Teacher EBS	106.60	7.15
Total status (average**)	2.32	0.16
Schoolwide status	2.33	0.31
Nonclassroom status	2.27	0.35
Classroom status	2.33	0.58
Student status	2.34	0.32
Total priority (average)	1.26	0.12
Schoolwide priority	1.29	0.20
Nonclassroom priority	1.28	0.25
Classroom priority	1.28	0.28
Student priority	1.15	0.18

*Note.* \*\*This variable and subscales are calculated as the average of the individual Status survey questions for descriptive purposes. *M* represents sample means and *SD* represents sample standard deviation.

### **Primary Findings**

The research question asked if there was a statistically significant relationship between the EBS and office discipline referrals on urban middle school students, with years of teaching experience as the mediating variable. The alternate hypothesis was that there is a statistically significant relationship between the teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals on urban middle school students, with years of teaching experience as the mediating variable. The null hypothesis was that there is not a statistically significant relationship teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals on urban middle school students.

I used SPSS version 24.0 for Windows to conduct a simple linear regression and answered the research question and null hypotheses. This is the appropriate analysis to perform when the research aim is to determine the relationship between one continuous predictor variable (the teachers' EBS) and a single continuous dependent variable office discipline referrals (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The mediating variable was years of teaching experience.

Before interpreting the results of the regression, I examined the assumptions of the simple linear regression. The assumptions were the absence of outliers, normality, homoscedasticity, and absence of multicollinearity. Standard deviations were used to evaluate outliers. An outlier is defined as any value that falls outside the range of  $\pm 3.29$  standard deviations from the mean (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The teachers' EBS had two outliers, and office discipline referrals had one outlier; I removed these outliers before running the regression, thus meeting the assumption.

I evaluated normality using a Q-Q scatterplot. The assumption of normality was met because the data closely followed the trend line (see Figure 2; Field, 2009). I evaluated homoscedasticity using a scatterplot of the residuals. The assumption was met because the points were randomly distributed with no apparent curvature (see Figure 3; Field, 2009). I used VIFs to assess multicollinearity. According to Menard (2009), VIFs should ideally be less than 5, with a maximum upper limit of 10. The predictor variables had VIFs of 1.00, indicating the assumption was met.

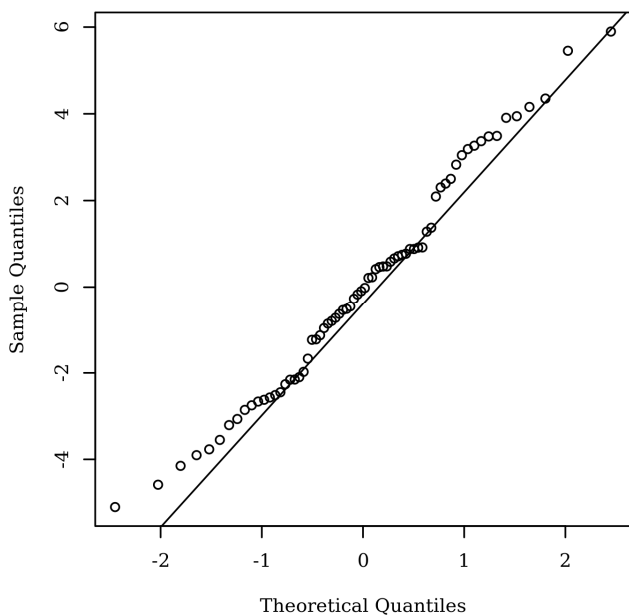


Figure 2. Q-Q scatterplot testing normality.

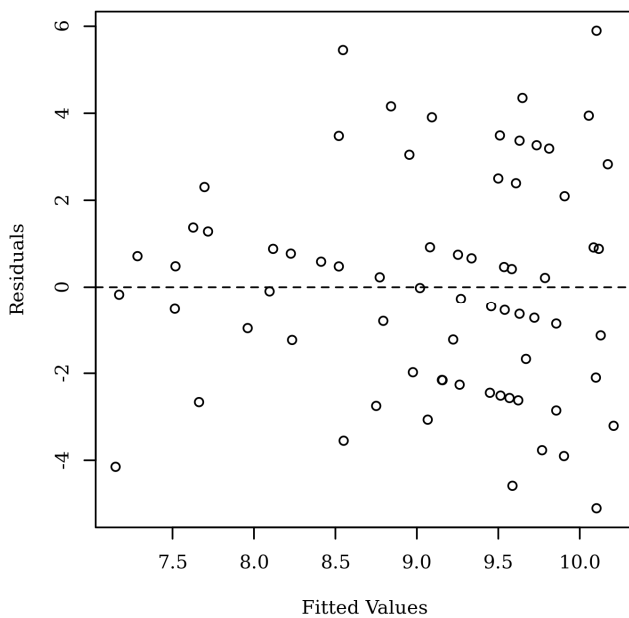


Figure 3. Residuals scatterplot testing homoscedasticity.

The results of the overall regression model were significant,  $F(2,67) = 3.66$ ,  $p = .031$ ,  $R^2 = 0.10$ , indicating that approximately 10% of the variance in office discipline

referrals was explainable by the combination of years of experience and teachers' EBS. I then assessed the significance of the individual predictors. The survey scores did not significantly predict referrals,  $p = .727$ , however, years of experiences showed statistical significance and was a good predictor of referrals ( $p < .001$ ). As such, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis accepted. Table 3 presents the full results of the regression model.

Table 3

*Linear Regression With Survey Scores and Years of Experience (Mediating Variable) Predicting Office Discipline Referrals*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI	$\beta$	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	12.64	6.60	[-0.53, 25.80]	0.00	1.92	.060
Experience	-0.11	0.04	[-0.20, -0.03]	-0.31	-2.68	.009
Survey Scores (Total status [Sum])	-0.02	0.06	[-0.15, 0.10]	-0.04	-0.35	.727

*Note.* Overall regression:  $F(2,67) = 3.66$ ,  $p = .031$ ,  $R^2 = 0.10$ .

### Summary

Based on the results of this study, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted. The conclusion was there is no significant evidence to support a statistically significant relationship between the teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals. There was sufficient evidence to support a statistically significant relationship between years of experience and office discipline referrals.

The teachers' EBS (independent variable) did not predict the office discipline referrals (dependent variable) written by teachers on urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable.

The purpose of this quantitative nonexperimental study was to examine the relationship between the teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle

school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable. In Chapter 5, I will include a summary of my findings discovered in Chapter 4. The interpretation of the results will be discussed. Furthermore, recommendations based on the study's limitations will be summarized. Implications for social change will be discussed.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this quantitative nonexperimental study was to examine the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable. In this study, I sought to examine the research question and hypotheses regarding the teachers' EBS and the office discipline referrals of urban middle school students. I conducted this study to provide validating evidence that school administrators who promoted and taught positive behaviors improved classroom management and decreased the incidence of inappropriate student behavior as well as a reduction in office discipline referrals.

The study involved use of archival the teachers' EBS and office discipline referral data for the urban middle school teachers who participated in the survey. The survey and office discipline referral data came from archived academic SY 2014 and SY 2015 data at the participating middle school. The dataset contained a total of 73 survey scores, as well as some demographic information. The teachers who completed the survey ranged in age from 21 to 66 years of age or older. More than 50% of the participants were female. Most of the participants were African-American, followed by Whites. I developed the research question (Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students with years of experience as the mediating variable) to guide this study. I used a quantitative nonexperimental design and the simple linear regression model. The results of this study indicated no significant

relationship between the teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals, with years of experience as the mediating variable.

This chapter includes a description and a review of the research question with the interpretation of the findings for this study. I include a discussion and explanation of the interpretation of the findings from peer-reviewed literature and the PBT presented in Chapter 1 and 2 of this study. Additionally, I discuss the limitation to the generalizability of the study and recommendations for future research in this chapter. I also present potential implications for social change regarding methodological, theoretical, and empirical practice. This chapter will end with a summary and conclusion.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

#### **Literature Review and Research Findings**

The analysis resulted in evidence showing that no statistically significant relationship existed between office discipline referrals and the teachers' EBS for academic SY 2014 and SY 2015 survey scores. The teachers' EBS did not predict the number of office discipline referrals; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Data indicated that during academic SY 2014 and SY 2015, student office referrals slightly decreased, and the decrease probably occurred because of chance factors. A factor that may have impacted the outcome of this study is that mastering the skills of effective behavior support before benefits are realized may take time.

Another interesting and expected finding is the analysis resulted in evidence showing that there was a statistically significant relationship between office discipline referrals and years of teaching experience for academic SY 2014 and SY 2015. Years of



teaching experience did predict the number of office discipline referrals. This could be because veteran teachers with more years of experience often participate in more in-service classroom management workshops and professional education conferences on classroom management. Likewise, veteran teachers typically possess more advanced degrees and more hours of college course work related to effective teaching and classroom management strategies. In working with students, veteran teachers, at all grade levels, tend to have more self-confidence, proactiveness, and self-efficacy than teachers who are not veteran teachers.

Findings from empirical studies of behavior difficulties and classroom management provide a significant contribution to the education system (Handler et al., 2007). Classroom management involves developing a set of rules that students are required to follow. LeBlanc (2011) stated school-wide management programs should assist educational institutions with organizing and focusing on the teacher-student relationship as a means of providing a friendly environment. Handler et al. (2007) found that when students were aware of the expectations, they became motivated to achieve goals and objectives for academic success. Additionally, some teachers were aware that they were able to handle situations in the classroom and did not refer students with behavioral problems to the office for discipline resolution.

### **Theoretical Framework and Research Findings**

The framework that guided this research was Jessor and Jessor's (2007) research on PBT. These researchers contended that positive supports implemented by teachers in the schools could decrease problem behaviors (Jessor & Jessor, 2007). The theoretical

framework evidenced how teachers view negative student behavior and attitudes displayed in the learning environment and the causes of the negative behavior (Backman, 2017). The PBT provided a useful lens through which a concrete intervention plan was consistent to yield a positive behavior change in the student. According to Karaman (2013), the possibility of behavior increased when students had problems complying with school rules. The more middle school students acted out this behavior, the more it placed them at risk to be referred for office discipline.

Office discipline actions increased when students exhibited more problem behavior. The theory also stated that unusual problem behavior is showcased in adolescents attending middle school (Dunlap & Fox, 2011). In addition, the theory aided with showing students how to make behavior changes using conventional norms. The PBT theoretical proposition was to decrease any negative behavior through analysis (Dunlap & Fox, 2011). The evidence of this study indicated teachers relied on years of experience to development their classroom style. Researchers have collected archival data on the number of years it may take a teacher to develop her or his behavior style and share that with colleagues (Dunlap & Fox, 2011). As a result, of the interpretation of the results, I hypothesized that teachers' EBS did significantly predict office discipline referrals of the sixth- to eighth-grade urban middle school students. The null hypothesis stated teachers' EBS did not significantly predict office discipline referrals urban middle school students, with years of experience as a mediating variable and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected.

A simple linear regression was used to assess the relationship between teachers' EBS and students' behaviors in an urban middle school, with years of experience as a mediating variable. There was not a significant relationship between the survey scores and the counts of office discipline referrals. There was a statistically significant relationship between the teachers' EBS and years of teaching experience. As teachers' years of experience increased, the teachers' EBS increased or became more favorable, reflecting better classroom management skills of the experienced teachers. This suggested that teachers probably became experienced and accustomed to dealing with behavioral problems themselves, without having to resort to referrals. A better approach may of experience include a more teacher-centered or individual approach based on teaching experience and experience dealing with negative behavior.

### **Limitations of the Study**

#### **Generalizability**

This study included results of teachers' EBS from one middle school in the southeastern United States. Future researchers may want to include middle school teachers from other states. There is limited research on teachers' EBS in middle school. The bulk of the research on effective behavior supported addressing elementary and high school office discipline referrals (Sugai & Horner, 2008).

The study had several limitations. A primary limitation of this study related to generalizability in that data from a single middle school were used for this study. I only investigated middle school teachers. Future researchers may want to include teachers' EBS at the elementary or high school levels. In addition, I measured only public-school

middle school teachers' EBS. Future researchers may want to analyze the survey scores of private school middle school teachers. Future researchers may also consider incorporating various types of schools (e.g., charter or alternative schools) in their research.

Another limitation by teachers working and collaborating together is that collegiality may have contributed to the outcome of the null hypothesis, whereby teachers' experiences influenced student office discipline referrals for this middle school. The next limitation was that I focused on the implementation of the teachers' EBS for 1 year. Archival data studies are usually conducted as longitudinal studies of 3 to 5 years. An additional limitation may be other underlying causes for students' office discipline referrals because it has been 5 months since I completed the analysis. Because I did not examine any other factors in this study, some preexisting behaviors, such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, or lack of discipline at home, may have contributed to the disruptions in the classrooms at the middle school.

### **Trustworthiness**

I found trustworthiness to be methodologically adequate for this study. The information obtained from the school is believed to be true and trustworthy. The results appeared to be foundational knowledge helpful to better understand the relationship of teachers' EBS on positive support and student office discipline referrals. All data will remain stored for 5 years in a locked file cabinet in my home office. The trustworthiness of the findings were dependent on the school earnestness and commitment of the data provided.

## **Validity**

**Internal validity.** One limitation of this study was that data were collected from one local public middle school. I used archival data at a middle school collected for the academic SY 2014 and SY 2015. Obtaining information from other middle schools may be helpful to examine whether teachers share similar ideas regarding office discipline referrals practices. I chose the internal validity of this quantitative study design instead of a qualitative design because I sought to make inferences based on quantifiable results rather than assess individual experiences.

**External validity.** The external validity of this study relates to the potential impacts regarding the generalizability of a single middle school used for this study. This study included an archival dataset from one southeastern middle school, representing teachers residing in the United States. The study also included individuals from diverse backgrounds in terms of race, age, national origin, and sex. This study included both males and females, with the majority from the archival data identifying as females.. The teachers in this school were all trained at the same time in learning how to implement PBS. The teachers' efforts were combined to implement PBS effectively.

## **Reliability**

The reliability of this study was based on the assumption that because I was not involved in the collection of archival data, the data were accurately and consistently reported.

## **Recommendations for Action**

### **Methodological Guidance**

My recommendation may offer insight to expand knowledge and provoke others to conduct further research to strengthen the findings that no relationship exists between teachers' EBS and students' behaviors in an urban middle school. For the present study, I used a nonexperimental quantitative approach. Future researchers could expand on this study by using qualitative methodology and a qualitative research design (e.g., phenomenological or ethnography) to examine the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of sixth- to eighth-grade urban middle school students. A qualitative study may offer theoretical insight into findings related to emerging school-wide behavior interventions, as well as information about changes occurring in classrooms where these interventions are implemented.

Much of the research concerns the needs for elementary and high schools to have effective behavior support plans, whether academic or behavioral. Concerns also exist regarding how effective behavior support plans are developed and the current outcomes of implementing programs. According to Bohanon et al. (2006), researchers discovered that at each school level where the programs were implemented, effective behavior support designs begin to support and promote appropriate behaviors of all grade level students.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Future research is always needed on ways to address behavior issues in education. This study pertained to the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline

referrals of urban middle school students. The first recommendation for further research stems from the first limitation. For the research question, the sample size of 73 teachers was lower than desired. Increasing the sample size would increase the statistical power for this question, helping to ensure a different statistical result.

Based on the research findings and limitations within this study, I recommend subsequent future studies to review different positive behavior plans and then determine which plan being implemented is the most effective in decreasing office discipline referrals. A study of this type may determine the success in examining if middle schools using tickets, tokens, or other means to decrease office discipline referral. Researchers should also consider studying teacher-centered ways to address behavior issues in the classroom to support teachers. With the additional research, newer teachers can learn from other teachers with years of experience and develop proactive strategies as well as determine what the school expects of teachers to manage their classrooms and to reduce the number office discipline referrals.

Teachers should have the ability to manage the classroom and achieve proficiency in effective behavior skills (Marquez et al., 2016). I did not account for teachers' inclusion in teacher-centered training and challenging behaviors in the school or classrooms. Further research may include qualitative approaches, such as mixed-methods designs, on teachers' EBS . Exploratory qualitative research also may be valuable to support or refute previous findings and identify factors specific to middle school students because of the lack of research in this area.

Longitudinal research may also help future researchers to understand how teachers' EBS reflective of challenging behaviors change over time. Additional research may help validate findings in the literature as demonstrated in Chapter 2 Through this study, I highlighted literature on the PBT because Dunlap and Fox (2011) indicated that, researchers became interested in preventing behavior difficulties and promoting healthy social-developmental students in educational programs. The results of this study demonstrated no significant correlation between teachers and their experience in reducing office discipline referrals. As with many studies, important questions are raised in the results that can be explained in further research.

### **Recommendation for Practice**

More research is needed on the relationship between effective behavior support and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediatin variable. The results of this nonexperimental quantitative study have practical implications for middle school educators on the potential roadblocks middle schools may face in the future. Additionally, teachers can use this study to assist in future and current practices in developing and implementing an intervention towards a vulnerable student population. This study offers a resource for teachers when seeking survey scores to improve educational instructions and achieve academic success to find the most effective programs to assist in their student office discipline referrals.

Kelm et al. (2014) demonstrated survey scores lead to a decrease in office discipline referrals by teachers. Educators are always seeking highly effective means that will have a positive influence on their effectiveness and students' performance. To



enhance the awareness as a growing program, educational policies should be in place to help teachers effectively improve student performance in middle school (Backman, 2017).

## **Implications**

### **Implications for Social Change (Individual)**

The social implications for positive social change at the individual student level are effective behavior supports to reduce student office discipline referrals. Implications for social change are if the student behavior improves, office referrals decrease, which can lead to improved student behavior and increase educational opportunities. I conducted this study to examine a relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students. The key finding in this study provided information about the teachers' EBS and that the years of experience may not change the count of student office discipline referrals. As noted in Chapter 4, the null hypothesis stated that the teachers' EBS (perceptions on teachers' positive supports) did not significantly predict office discipline referrals of urban middle school students.

### **Family Implications**

The family is the catalysts for positive social change (Backman, 2017). The family has the responsibility to mold thinking, the attitude, and views of all children (Backman, 2017). The family reshapes the lives of children, which is a part of growth and development in society. The family can potentially reduce the number of student office discipline referrals by creating a positive social change in the home environment.

Likewise, office discipline referrals have a negative effect on family and society (Backman, 2017).

### **Organizational, Societal, and Policy Implications**

Educators widely recognize the potential impact for positive social change in education. According to Thompson and Jocius (2017), all stakeholders play a key role in positive social change for educating students. The results of this study give further implications for additional studies. This study is essential to bring about social change in students' office discipline referrals at the middle school level. Most prior research solely pertained to elementary and high school levels; therefore, research is lacking at the middle school level. Positive social change may be effective when the educational system fails to meet the needs of the student, and the effective behavior supports may suggest positive ways of assisting student needs (Marquez et al., 2016). This study contributed to the literature by indicating a social change in middle school can improve student behavior through social and academic learning in school.

### **Methodological and Theoretical Implication**

The potential impact for positive social change, at this level, stems from this study's simple linear regression research design. I chose this design because it focused on a statistical relationship between two variables—the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of sixth- to eighth-graders at an urban middle school, with years of experience as the mediating variable. The theoretical implication for this study was the PBT, which guided this research by providing a necessary explanation for

teachers viewing negative student behaviors and attitudes displayed in the learning environment and the causes of the negative reactions.

Jessor, Donovan, and Costa (2007) examined the relationship of psychosocial and behavioral variables, conventionally or unconventionally, of the related behavior of sixth-eighth grade students. PBT is related to this study because it explains that the problem behaviors of students and student behaviors are the consequences of person-environmental interactions (Jessor & Jessor, 2007). This theory was relevant to this study because it indicated adequately educated students are more self-confident, possess greater leadership skills, contribute more in voluntary work, engage in less criminal activities, have a higher understanding of government, are less dependent on government assistance, and have higher economic stability and security. PBT determines that student behaviors can be decreased if a concrete intervention plan is consistent to yield a positive behavior change in the student.

### **Conclusion**

Educators face many difficulties on a daily basis. The purpose of this quantitative nonexperimental study was to examine the relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable. The research question asked if there was a relationship between teachers' EBS and office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable. The null hypothesis was rejected and stated that teachers' EBS did not significantly predict office discipline referrals of urban middle school students, with years of experience as the mediating variable. Students in certain

conditions, despite being educated, may not behave in acceptable ways and may adopt inappropriate behavior (Day, 2009).

At the elementary school level, an abundance of research exists on the relationship between teachers and the behaviors of their students; however, minimal research exists at the middle school level. The findings from this urban middle school are not generalizable to other middle schools. Specifically, the findings indicated teachers' years of experience do not play a major role in teachers managing their classroom in the SY 2014 and SY2015.

In this urban school, evidence showed that consideration should be taken to continue the program implementation. It is a challenge to generalize the results to all middle schools because this study only involved one middle school. Implementing positive behavior plans costs educators time at the expense of academic instruction to attempt to manage the students' disruptive behaviors. Educators face the common challenge to maintain and establish an orderly classroom system to teach students (Scott et al., 2009; Sugai, 2013). Therefore, more research is needed in this area.

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## Appendix A: Demographic Survey

Please complete this demographic survey. Your opinion is very important to this research. Complete confidentiality is assured and no personal information will be revealed in this study results. Circle the correct assessment.

1. Gender:

Female \_\_\_\_\_

Male \_\_\_\_\_

2. Choose one of the age groups.

A. 21-32

B. 33-43

C. 44-54

D. 55-65

E. 66 & Above

3. Ethnicity

A. African American

B. Asian

C. Caucasian

D. Hispanic

E. Other

4. Years of experience teaching

A. 1 year of teaching

B. 2-5 yrs

C. 6-10 yrs

D. 11-15 yrs

E. 16-20 yrs

F. 21-25 yrs

G. 25 or more yrs of teaching

5. Grade level

A. 6th

B. 7th

C. 8th

6. Has the number of complaints been reduced since the implementation of Positive Behavior Support Program?

A. Yes

B- No

7. Has EBS been effective in the school?

A- Yes

B- No

8. Has EBS program met the goal of the school in changing student behavior?

A- Yes

B- No

9. Has EBS changed a number of student's negative behavior positive?

A- Yes

B- No

10. Are you positive toward EBS?

A- Yes

B- No

Comments

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## Appendix B: Permission to Use Effective Behavior Support Survey

Robert Horner

Jun 6 (3 days  
ago)

Sadie

Good luck with your dissertation. We hope you will share your results with us.

Please accept this email as formal approval to use the Effective Behavior Support Survey... also identified as the Self-Assessment Survey.

We ask that you follow APA guidelines by (a) citing your sources, and (b) not selling any portion of the instrument.

Thank you

Rob Horner