Barriers and Facilitators for PBIS Tier 2 Implementation

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ABSTRACT

Previous research has examined Tier 2 PBIS intervention implementation quantitatively (Hawken et al., 2014; McDaniel & Bruhn, 2016), but a paucity of research regarding barriers and facilitators to implementation for educators remains. Such information is useful for improving Tier 2 initial training, coaching, implementation, and adaptations that may improve feasibility, usability, and effectiveness. This poster highlights a qualitative study of eight participants recruited from schools that participated in a prior pilot study (McDaniel, Cohen & Bruhn, 2015). Barriers and facilitators to implementation are discussed in the context of four themes, (1) buy-in, (2) failures and misunderstandings, (3) teamwork, and (4) perceptions of Tier 2.

LITERATURE REVIEW

PBIS addresses the social emotional, and behavioral needs within across the three tiers, implemented to fidelity. In addition to student-level outcomes, Tier 1 PBIS, or schoolwide PBIS (SWPBIS) also improves school climate, program efficiency, and equity in schools (Horner et al., 2010; Mitchell et al, 2016). Although SWPBIS implementation has yielded overall positive effects, Tier 2 remains understudied both across quantitative outcomes and qualitative perceptions related to implementation. Given the training and resources required, schools may be hesitant to initiate, install, and implement the Tier 2 beyond individual Tier 2 interventions. Additionally, little is known about the stakeholder perceptions of Tier 2. Issues such as feasibility, acceptability, and perceived effectiveness are important implementation science issues to consider in addition to efficacy trials. Numerous studies have examined individual Tier 2 interventions with adaptations (Hawken, et al., 2008; McDaniel & Bruhn, 2019, 2020). However, a lack of quantitative evaluations of Tier 2 practices within a comprehensive system or framework exists.

PURPOSES & RQS
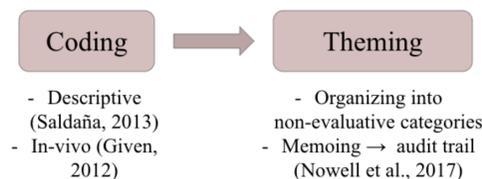
The purposes of this study were to:
- assess stakeholder (e.g., PBIS coach, administrator, teacher) perceptions of Tier 2;
- determine implementation fidelity and efficacy across the eight schools, which had received the same training and coaching on the Tier 2 framework;
- develop understanding of the facilitators and barriers that affected implementation;
- gain insight on the problems and successes of the Tier 2 framework.

The research questions were:
- How do participants describe the Tier 2 implementation process? What facilitators and barriers do they discuss?
- What attitudes to participants convey on the Tier 2 framework and the outcomes of implementation at their school?

METHODOLOGY & METHODS

This study used an instrumental, multiple case study approach (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). Data sources include individual Zoom interviews using a semi-structured format. Interview questions were written according to the phenomenological style of interviewing in order to evoke descriptions and narratives regarding implementation. Interviews lasted between 28 and 54 minutes. Initial transcriptions were produced using Zoom's automatic transcription feature and were subsequently edited by the interviewer while listening to the audio.

Coding	→	Theming
- Descriptive (Saldaña, 2013) - In-vivo (Given, 2012)		- Organizing into non-evaluative categories - Memoing → audit trail (Nowell et al., 2017)

To minimize bias, codes were organized into non-evaluative categories based on topic (e.g., "time" issues rather than into pre-made categories of 'barrier' and 'facilitator'). These subcategories were then organized into larger categories, which were then articulated as four themes and defined.

STUDY CONTEXT

P	Pseudonym	Position	Level
P1	Philip	Teacher	High school
P2	Lindy	Curriculum specialist	Elementary
P3	Brayton	Teacher	Elementary
P4	Ellen	Teacher	Middle school
P5	Amelia	Teacher	Middle school
P6	Becca	Teacher	Middle school
P7	Camille	Teacher	Elementary
P8	Sophia	Principal	Elementary

Participants included six teachers and two administrators/support staff within the same school district. This district was chosen as it had received training in PBIS Tier 2 implementation.

THEMES

Participants discussed both barriers and facilitators to implementation. These were organized around the following themes:

- Buy-in

  "I do really think it boils down to teacher buy in. I definitely felt like like teacher views of things really shaped whether or not the PBIS program is going to work." - Amelia

- Failures and Misunderstandings

  "…if they get sick and then having to have a backup person to meet with that student that day. You know, sometimes the logistics of the different parts can be kind of things you don't think about when you're first starting out." – Lindy

- Teamwork

  "…having a team, especially with a mixed team with, you know, male, female, different nationalities…having different opinions from different people really helped out, not just one person trying to do everything across the board. Because every child is not the same…so you need different, different inputs." - Brayton

- Perceptions of PBIS

  "But PBIS hands down was the main factor in what shifted our numbers. We were in the thou--, like hundreds and possibly even thousands for office discipline referrals the year before I came. And last year we had 66." - Sophia

IMPLICATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Overall, participants found the Tier 2 framework and training to be effective. These perceptions were varied depending on several factors. First, initial Tier 1 implementation, sustaining those practices, and overall perceptions of PBIS as a three-tiered framework impacted how participants felt about Tier 2. This finding makes sense given the nested, multitiered nature of the framework, and that Tier 2 does not stand alone. Second, several failures and misunderstandings about Tier 2 implementation were described. These findings will be used to refine both Tier 2 training and intervention design. The items identified will help make the Tier 2 framework more effective and efficient. Next, just as research has found with Tier 1, the composition and functioning of the Tier 2 team was identified as a critical component to Tier 2 implementation. Teaming issues are typical and easily fixed with with ongoing coaching. Finally, Tier 2 buy-in was also described as an important aspect of Tier 2 implementation. Some schools described easy buy-in, without much implementation hesitation or pushback. Others described a longer, more complex process of requiring educators to implement the 5-step Tier 2 process. At the core of buy-in issues is usually a lack of social acceptability, perceived need, or even school-level burnout and resource deprivation.

SELECTED REFERENCES

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