

RUNNING HEAD: BIST Office Referrals

The Effects of BIST on Office Referrals

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Abstract

This research was done in order to find if there was a major difference in the amount of time a behavioral management plan takes in order to process administrative office referrals. The studies data came from using a survey that was sent to thirty three different schools, this survey collected data such as time spent with office referrals and time spent with talking with parents after an office referral in order to get an overall view of how much time is spent each month on office referrals. The study showed that there was a sign that the Behavioral Intervention Support Team (BIST) behavioral management style actually took more time per month in order to process their office referrals, in comparison with a similar behavioral management plan (PBIS) and the traditional school/district designed plan. The mean (338 minutes) found showed that with the BIST plan the average time spent a month was actually larger than the other two plans. PBIS had an average of 252.17 minutes dealing with office referrals while the traditional school built discipline plan had an average mean of 236.21 minutes. With that information the t-test showed that there was no significance to the actual numbers meaning that the mean difference could likely not support a true difference between any of the discipline models, but the base information still supports district made being the best way for a district to save time dealing with office referrals.

Introduction

Background, Issues and Concerns

The position of school principal has become complex and pressure packed in the era of accountability and high-stakes testing. (Abu-Nasser 2011, p. 19) Every school is striving to have a discipline model that is successful at dealing with issues that happen on a daily basis. There are many theories on how to most effectively handle the discipline problems that arise in the school, but there is no agreement on which ones are the most effective. Due to this is, there is a need for research to be conducted on different aspects of the various discipline models in order to see how each one affects the discipline of a school. The Behavioral Intervention Support Team (BIST) is a system that has been frequently used by schools to best fulfill their need for a discipline model. While the discipline model has been shown to work in many aspects for the teacher, the effects on the principal seem to be lacking. This study is intended to see what affects the use of BIST has on the administration. To do this I tested how much time administrators use when using the BIST model. These numbers were then compared to other various schools that do not use the BIST model and we saw if the effects of BIST are shown to be positive for the administrative staff.

Practice under Investigation

The practice under investigation is BIST's effect on administrative referrals. In order for a school to run smoothly an administrator cannot have an abundance of referrals. If a discipline program is able to lower the amount time referrals take on an administrator, then the administrator will have more time to do other functions. This is especially important with the new evaluation systems coming out. Administrators will need to have more time to complete these evaluations and if they are taking less time with discipline, they can use that time to complete these new initiatives.

School Policy to be Informed by Study

Every school in Missouri uses some sort of discipline model. If this research can help schools decide what is the most effective discipline model is for their school then the research has been effective.

Conceptual Underpinning

The BIST model is used to help develop a better school environment and establish an effective behavior model. The BIST model establishes four steps that a teacher can use in order to affect behavior. The steps are used to produce a consistent structure that helps protect students. The four steps are early intervention, caring confrontation, protective planning, and outlasting. Our school switched to BIST in order to save time and to better handle behavioral issues. Due to the step by step nature of the plan and the inclusion of BIST specialists in the program it is conceivable that there will be less office referrals overall and would save time for the administrative staff. Compared with a traditional

system which may not have step by step procedures the BIST model would at a glance seem to be better for saving time.

Statement of the Problem

If there is a difference in the amount of administrator referrals between discipline models then administrators need to know. With that information an administrator could be better informed in what discipline model to choose.

Purpose of the Study

The goal of this study is to see if the BIST discipline method allows administrators to free up time that would normally be used to handle discipline problems. If it is found that there is less time spent with discipline issues, then we can find out if the principals are then able to use this extra time in order to better their other assignments.

Research Question(s)

Is there a significant difference in the amount of time spent on office referrals between traditional classroom discipline methods and PBIS compared to the BIST discipline model?

Null Hypothesis(es)

There is no significant difference in the amount of time spent on office referrals between traditional classroom discipline methods and PBIS compared to the BIST discipline model.

Anticipated Benefits of the Study

The benefits of the study will be that it will allow administrators to see how one system could help free up precise time. With many new responsibilities falling upon the administrative staff, it will be important to be able to use discipline plans that are more streamlined and still effective in dealing with discipline issues.

Definition of Terms

BIST – Behavior Intervention Support Team. – A system of behavior management that uses the idea of removing the student from the situation in order to defuse the issue and then using reflection to fix the problem.

PBIS – Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports – A behavioral management style that focus on using positive reinforcement to lead to the desired outcomes

Common Core – A new set of state standards that are being implemented in fall 2014.

Early Intervention- Setting up behavior plans that will stop actions before they happen.

Summary

A study was conducted to see if there was a difference in time spent with office referrals between schools that use the BIST program and those that use a similar method in PBIS and a traditional method in school/district built. The data was then run through a t-test. If the t-test found that there is a significant difference then administrators need to consider using the behavioral management presented. After the research is completed school districts could use the information provided to make better decisions on behavioral plans and future professional development.

Review of Literature

Administrators are always looking for more free time, especially with new mandates coming from the states that would require more of the administrators time. One of the issues that administrators have to spend time on is discipline. If an administrator could find a discipline plan that would help them decrease time spent on discipline then it could be very helpful. The BIST model is one of the discipline models that says it will bring in procedures and models to help with discipline issues. Models such as BIST have helped many schools lessen discipline issues. The BIST model has many procedures that have been heavily researched.

In an article Boulden (2010), takes a look at the theories that BIST uses in order to provide effective intervention. He begins by discussing the use of constant contact with BIST experts in order for all staff to stay well acquainted with the system. He continues on about the multi-tiered intervention used and the thoughts behind it, “The BIST model involves clarifying expectations for faculty members, establishing clear and consistent rules, teaching expectations to all students, enhancing student social and problem solving skills, affording students the opportunity to practice expectations, reinforcing appropriate behavior through an array of progressively intense levels of assessment for students who need more teaching and practice to develop social and behavioral skills, and increasing levels of intervention matched to the types of skill deficits exhibited and needs identified.”(Boulden 2010, p. 18) He also describes the BIST program as a part of the resilience theory. The idea being that a system should engage all aspects of the student. (teacher, administrator, parent, and student) in order to best achieve desired results. Boulden concludes, “The Behavior intervention Support Team (BIST) program is well-

grounded in behavioral theory and combines strength-based and resiliency principles within the context of the ecological, person-in-environment model.” (Boulden 2010, p. 20)

Why is it so important to have standardized behavioral management systems like this in the first place? In an article written by Abu- Nasser (2011), we explore the time management techniques of principals in Saudi Arabia-“Success of any educational institution depends on the type of administration and its capabilities to drive the preplanned goals within the time framework set forth.” (Abu-Nasser 2011, p. 18) The study begins by talking about two different types of administrative styles. The first one is an administrator who focuses on the staff running the institution with their help. The other style is to focus on managerial and organizational items. The study stresses that principals often face time restraints in their day to day. The article also stresses that an administrator must have good time management in order to be an affective administrator, “the literature has suggested that principals need help identifying time management strategies to be successful instructional leaders and managers.” (Abu-Nasser 2011, p. 18) Abu- Nasser is not the only author to focus on time-management for administrators.

Ekundayo (2013) wrote an article about time management skills of Nigerian principals. The study in this article looks at the time management skill of Nigerian principals in secondary schools. The study was showed that successful principals had good time management. It also showed that some things can interfere with good time management. For example, two ways time management can be interfered with is the need to respond to emergency situations or calling other administrative staff. One of the best ways to help a principal with time management is to identifying areas that take a lot of

time and if they are able to put their time in other areas. This is also an issue of importance in the United States.

The Stanford article also shows how important managing your time as an administrator is. “Literature suggests that better time management skills—which include the ability to set achievable goals, identify priorities, monitor one’s own progress, and remain organized can lead to more effective time use and ultimately more positive individual outcomes in some settings.” (Grissom 2010, p. 2) The article is a study of how principals’ time management skills are connected to performance. The research was done on principals in a centralized area in order to see how principal’s time management skills are in a certain area. “Principals with better time management skills allocate more time to managing instruction in their schools. Time management is also associated with increased student test score growth in math. Subjective assessment results for elementary and middle schools are mixed, but both assistant principals and teachers rate high school principals’ performance more positively when principals have better time management skills.” (Grissom 2010, p. 1) Another idea explored in this research is how time management affects a principal’s time use. The problem the research sees is that principals have more things they want to or have to deal with than they have time to do. It concludes that principals with better time management skills do have different time allocations, “Building principals’ time management capacities may be a worthwhile strategy for increasing their focus on instructional leadership and pursuing school improvement.” (Grissom 2010, p. 1) this means that time management can play a role in how principal runs the school.

The research presented shows that the BIST model has many standard procedures that if used correctly should help you save time as an administrator. The research also shows how important time management is to the overall health of a school and its society. With these two things in mind it is important to study what behavioral management styles best support a speedy process so administrators can save precious time. This is important for not only the administrators but also the staff and the students.

Research Methods

Research Design

A quantitative study was conducted to find if there is a difference between the amounts of referrals that the BIST system has versus other systems used. The independent variable is the different behavior systems used. The dependent variable was the amount time spent on office referrals in the schools. If the difference is found to be significant then administrators should be informed and the BIST system should be considered.

Study Group Description

The study group used is administrators from thirty two different schools, five of which use the BIST model. All the schools have only one administrator so as to not have help from another source to deal with discipline issues. All schools are located in Northwest Missouri administrative district. The Schools are all rural schools, with high a % of free and reduced lunch. They also mainly serve a Caucasian demographic, with some representation from Latino and African American cultures.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

Data from the school districts ascertaining the amount of time spent on office referrals they had. The years ascertained were for the years 2013 and 2014. The numbers were acquired by taking the amount of average monthly referrals and multiplying that by the average amount of time taken in a single referral, including extras such as time on phone with parents and filling out paper work. This data was then compiled into an average amount of minutes spent a month dealing with office referrals.

Statistical Analysis Methods

The test used was a t-test in order to find if there was a significant difference in time spent with office referrals, in minutes. The source was broken into three categories, including BIST, PBIS, and district designed. The mean, mean D, t-test, df, and p-value were concluded from this test. The Alpha level was set at 0.25 to test the null hypothesis: There is no difference in office referrals between BIST and other discipline models.

Findings

A t-test was used to find if there was a significant difference in time spent on office referrals between the BIST program and not only the PBIS method but also the traditional school designed discipline model. The following graphs, charts, and information presented below are based off of information gathered from administrators from multiple schools.

A T-Test Analysis Result for BIST Office Referrals:

Is there a difference in time spent with office referrals between administrators who use the BIST model and administrators who use the PBIS or other traditional models?

Table 1 – BIST compared to traditional management plans

Source	Mean	Mean D	t-test	df	p-value
BIST (5)	338				
District/School(14)	236.21	101.79	0.81	10	0.22

Note: significant when $p \leq 0.05$

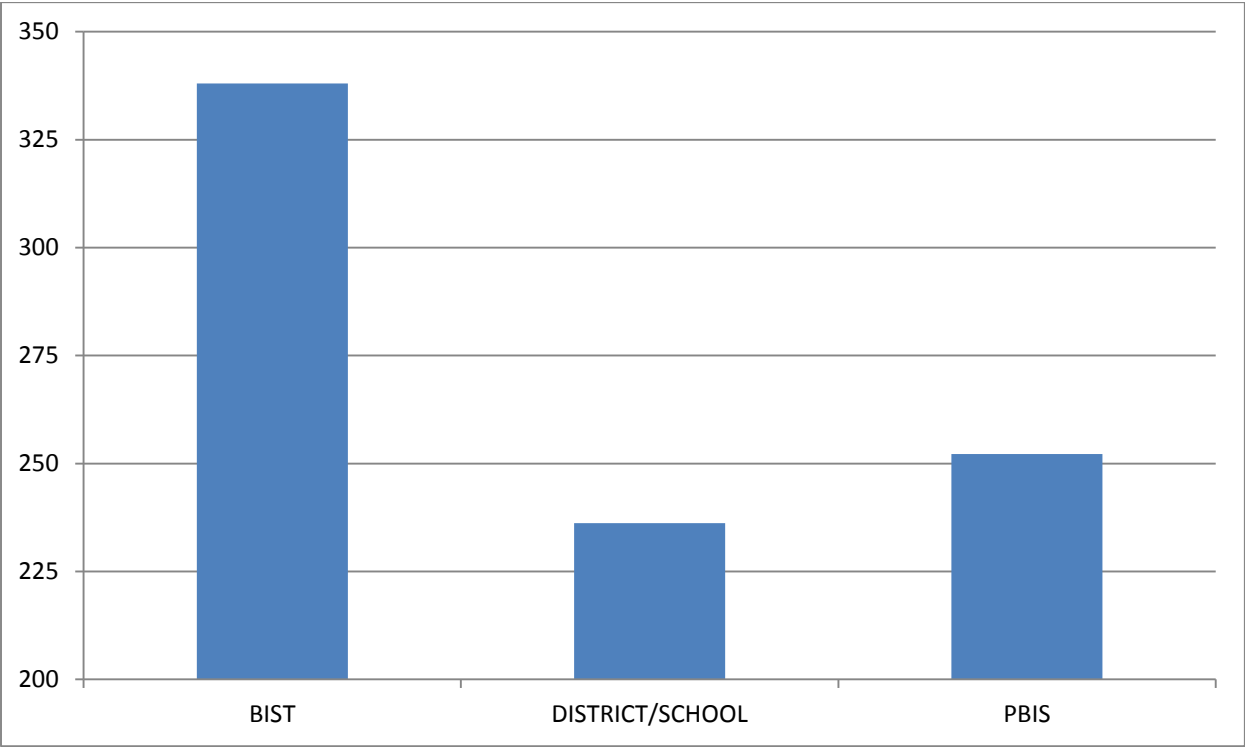
After reviewing the information provided the t-test showed that the BIST model referrals had a mean of 338. The mean score of administrative referrals for district/school created behavioral plans had a mean of 236.21. The Mean D or the difference between BIST and the District created plan was 101.79. The t-test when comparing regular school created was a 0.81 with a df of 10. The p-value for the District/School comparison was 0.22 . The Null hypothesis is not rejected because the p-value is greater than the alpha level of 0.05. There does seem to be a difference but it is not significant enough to disprove the Null hypothesis. The mean for the BIST group was actually higher than the district created discipline plan. The higher mean actually shows that the BIST groups actually take more time in dealing with behavioral problem than do the other two groups.

Table 2 – BIST compared to PBIS

Source	Mean	Mean D	t-test	df	p-value
BIST (5)	338				
PBIS(14)	252.17	85.83	0.78	7	0.23

The t-test comparing BIST to PBIS also showed similar numbers. The mean score for administrative referrals for PBIS was 252.17. The Mean D or the difference between BIST and PBIS was 252.17. The t-test when comparing PBIS was a 0.78 with a df of 7. The p-value for the PBIS comparison was 0.23. The Null hypothesis is not rejected because the p-value is greater than the alpha level of 0.05. There does seem to be a difference but it is not significant enough to disprove the Null hypothesis. The mean for the BIST group was actually higher than the PBIS discipline model. The higher mean actually shows that the BIST groups actually take more time in dealing with behavioral problem than do the other two groups.

Graph 1: Mean Differentiation: BIST, PBIS, SCHOOL/DISTRICT MADE.



The findings in this case actually suggest that the BIST program takes more time for office referrals than do the other two forms of discipline. The higher amount of time would suggest that the BIST program is actually not a better time saver for principles than other disciplinary programs. This would show that certain programs could help save some time for administrators.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study showed that some behavioral management plans do require more time out of the administrator than others. In this case the BIST program did require more time than the other two behavioral plans. The BIST program had a mean of 338 minutes while the other two had a mean of 236.21 (District/School) and 252.17 (PBIS). This shows that there is a difference in the amount of time put into office referrals, but the difference was not significant enough to disprove the Null hypothesis. The P value was 0.22 and 0.23. These are both higher than the alpha level of 0.05.

With recent developments in education pushing administrators to be more active in the evaluation process and curriculum design. This is causing time to become a more valuable asset for administrators. Administrators must ask if they are better able to save time in other areas so as to not be overwhelmed with the amount of new tasks being issued. Without data showing time comparisons, administrators may be missing the opportunity to save time that could be better spent on other duties.

Every school has a discipline model. Those models must be evaluated and discussed in order for administrators to make educated decisions on which model will be chosen for their school district. With time being such an important factor in administrative tasks, the information provided can help a principal make that decision quickly and efficiently. This also allows the principal to compare time against other factors such as demographics of the student body teachers and resources that the school district has in the decision-making process. In this case the school district creating its

own behavioral management plan will best help save time with office referrals. Though as long as the Null hypothesis is confirmed, the difference is not significant enough to completely support that decision.

Schools are continuously looking for ways to better handle discipline in their districts. While standardized behavioral plans give schools a good researched-based plan, it may not be the best course of action. As one of my administrators said, “The BIST model does seem to save me time, but I have come to find that no one plan is best for every student.” My hope is that this information will help school districts to make the decision that is best for them and the students within.

Districts creating their own model may be the best way to serve both the students and administrators. In this study, building your own management plan saved time for the administrator and it also allows for flexibility in meeting the needs of each individual student. In schools it is important to serve the needs of all students and not just a select few. The district designed behavioral management plan will allow for this and will also save administrative staff time. Even though the T test showed no significant difference in time saved, it still was enough to take into consideration when making a choice.

This study ultimately shows that there is no meaningful difference in time saved between the studied discipline plans. I would personally recommend that administrators use my findings to help make their decisions for the choice of behavioral management plans. In so doing, the information provided shows that the best choice to save administrative time is to develop their own behavioral management plan. If this is not an option, this study recommends the use of PBIS as an alternative to creating an individualized plan. Lastly, this study also could be useful in further research of other

behavioral management plans. Some areas of consideration may be the time students are removed from the classroom or the time instructors spend dealing with discipline issues.

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