

A STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF A POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND  
SUPPORTS PROGRAM ON CELL PHONE USAGE IN A HIGH  
SCHOOL SETTING

by

JAMIE DIANNE FINLEY

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty  
of the University of West Georgia in Partial Fulfillment  
of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
of  
Doctor of Education

CARROLLTON, GEORGIA

2017

ProQuest Number: 10265627

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10265627

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

A STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF A POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND  
SUPPORTS PROGRAM ON CELL PHONE USAGE IN A HIGH  
SCHOOL SETTING

by

JAMIE DIANNE FINLEY

APPROVED:

---

Dr. Ryan Bronkema  
Dissertation Chairperson

---

Dr. Twyla Perryman  
Dissertation Committee Member

---

Dr. Lama Farran  
Dissertation Committee Member

Approved:

---

Dr. Dianne Hoff  
Dean, College of Education

---

Date

## **ABSTRACT**

**JAMIE DIANNE FINLEY: A Study of the Effect of a Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports Program on Cell Phone Usage in a High School Setting**  
(Under the direction of Dr. Ryan Bronkema)

A Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) is a proactive program designed to meet the needs of all students through teaching and modeling of appropriate behaviors. The program is intended to reduce the occurrences of unwanted behaviors in the classroom; thus, increasing instructional time and student success. Universal strategies are implemented school wide with additional interventions for students who continue to violate specific rules. The three tiers of the program include interventions based on the needs of the school, targeted for specific students, and intensive for those who need additional support. The purpose of the program evaluation was to determine if PBIS effectively reduced office referrals for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who inappropriately used their cell phones within the classroom for High School H. Archived data from the School-Wide Information System (SWIS) data system included year One and Two of implementation of the program from 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. Results of this program evaluation revealed PBIS had reduced the occurrences of cell phone violations for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. Recommendations include (a) development of culturally sensitive interventions, (b) additional training for teachers for interventions at Tier Two and three, and (c) qualitative data from teachers, students, and administrators.

*Keywords:* positive behavior interventions and supports, high school, cell phones

PREVIEW

© 2017  
Jamie Dianne Finley  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my grandmothers Vivian and Sarah, both of whom passed away in the fall semester. These women taught me the value of education, the strength in being an intelligent and independent woman, and the true meaning of unconditional love. Although my life will never be the same without them, I know they are in Heaven saying, “That is my girl.”

To my mom and dad, Diane and Johnny, who have always loved and supported me through all my adventures. Their presence and love have always been my greatest source of comfort and peace. I would not be the woman I am today without them.

To my husband, Brian, who never let me give up on this dream. He has been my constant source of encouragement and my strength when I thought I had none left. To my boys, Preston and Braxton, I hope I have made you proud to say, “That is my mom.” You both are my heart and words could never explain my love for each of you. My brother, Shannon, and sisters, Christy and Randi, thank you for taking care of my children and always being my best friends. I love you all more than you know. My sweet nieces, Lexie and Lola, I hope you both continue this dream and become strong intelligent women who go out and make this world a better place.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my sincere appreciation to my dissertation chair, Dr. Ryan Bronkema, and committee members Dr. Lama Farren and Dr. Twyla Perryman. Your support and help through this process has been invaluable. Your recommendations made me think clearer, write more thoroughly, and made this evaluation more meaningful.

I would like to extend a special thank you to Dr. Julia Whisenhunt. She has provided a wealth of knowledge, support, and guidance through this doctoral program. She has been a blessing and a continuous source of encouragement throughout my journey. In addition to my professors, a special thank you to Cohort 7. These ladies are a talented, driven, and intelligent group who have continually encouraged each other and provided support throughout our adventure.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Description of the Program**

High Schools across the country are working diligently to produce graduates who are emotionally and career ready for the next phase of their lives. As teachers, administrators, and stakeholders strive for excellence, students can be uninterested, distracted, or lack the motivation to be full participants in their educational experience. An increasingly growing problem in the classroom is the inappropriate use of cell phones. With the unique opportunities that technology and cell phones present in the classroom, they also have unintended consequences by the availability of cell phones in the classroom. Consequences can include office referrals, suspensions, cheating, sexting, and cyberbullying. An effort to proactively deal with cell phones one western high school, High School H, chose to implement a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program for their students. PBIS is a school-wide program that includes “proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create a positive school environment” (Swain-Bradway, Pinkey, & Flannery, 2015, p.245). High Schools chose to focus on cell phone usage due to the high occurrences of office referrals in hopes of keeping students in the classroom for instruction.

### **Purpose of Evaluation and Evaluation Questions**

The purpose of the evaluation of PBIS was to determine if the program was effective in reducing the number of office referrals due to inappropriate use of cell phones specifically for 9<sup>th</sup>



grade students at High School H. The evaluation focused on the following questions as a guide for the evaluation process.

- To what extent has the implementation of PBIS reduced office referrals for the inappropriate uses of cell phones in the classroom for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. Are there statistically significant differences between the frequencies of office referrals for inappropriate use of cell phones based on students' demographic data?
- Are there statistically significant differences between the frequencies of office referrals for inappropriate use of cell phones between students on free and reduced lunch and those who are not?
- Is there a correlation between the drop in office referrals and an increase in a CCRPI score?

### **Methods and Analytical Strategy**

A quantitative method of analysis was chosen to fully understand the processes and mechanisms of the PBIS program at High School H. This specific method used archived data from the school's data system (SWIS) for the two years of implementation of PBIS. The conducting of the data analysis process was done primarily through an EZAnalyze data tool. EZAnalyze is a "Microsoft Excel add-in that is designed to help educators, particularly school counselors, and use data efficiently and effectively" (Poynton, 2007, p.2). The data was categorized based on each of the evaluation questions, and then the extension used a paired t-test for each question. Also, question four required a Pearson correlation to determine if a relationship existed between the schools College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) score and the increasing graduation rate.

## **Summary of Findings**

After the completion of the analysis, a summary for each evaluation question included findings from the data analysis. Specifically, the universal strategies at Tier One were effective in decreasing the overall rate of office referrals. However, due to the lack of interventions at Tier Two, and targeted interventions at Tier Three, repeat offenders continued to violate the rules and lose valuable instructional time in the classroom. Additionally, PBIS did show a significant impact on female students and Caucasian students. Although the universal strategies at Tier One were successful for those students, other populations continued to struggle. Specifically, male and minority students continued to misuse their cell phones in the classroom resulting in repeated office referrals. In addition, students who received either free or reduced lunch in comparison to students who paid full price did not increase nor decrease the occurrences of office referrals. Lastly, the Pearson Correlation test could not establish a direct relationship between the schools increase in their CCRPI score and the decrease in the student office referrals for the two years of the evaluation.

## **Implications for Practice**

Implications for future research include gathering qualitative data from teachers, students, administrators, and stakeholders. These data would prove valuable for the leadership team and the administration when making modifications to the program. Additionally, the leadership team must continue use data to make improvements and design interventions specific for students who need additional support. Interventions should include interventions that are both culturally sensitive and intentional for students at Tier Two and Tier Three. The specific students at these tiers are at-risk for dropping out of high school and repeat offenders. The training and resources require additional funding and time investment from the administration of High School H. A

final implication is a need for data from year three and four from the data system. A limitation of this evaluation was the limited amount of data. By including more data, a clearer understanding of the role of PBIS and in reducing discipline referrals will improve the validity of the program evaluation.

## **Recommendations**

The recommendations from this evaluation are specific to the student population who are not benefiting from PBIS and the stakeholders of the program. Repeat offenders need specific interventions that are culturally sensitive, targeted towards their behaviors, and reinforced on a daily basis. The students who could potentially benefit miss valuable time in the classroom which can lead to a higher likelihood of dropping out of high school. The leadership team needs resources and members who can teach, model, and implement these interventions. To effectively accomplish this task additional training and resource materials are needed for teachers and staff members.

## **VITA**

1999	B.A., Middle Grades Education University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA
1999-2000	Union Elementary Paulding County, GA
2000-2006	Teacher Haralson County Middle School Tallapoosa, GA
2002	M.S., School Counseling and Guidance University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA
2004	Ed.S., School Counseling and Guidance University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA
2006-2009	School Counselor Haralson County Middle School Tallapoosa, GA
2011-present	School Counselor Haralson County High School Tallapoosa, GA
2017	Ed.D., Professional Counseling & Supervision University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA

## **Fields of Study**

School Counseling K-12 (Current)

Middle Grades Education 4-8 (Current)  
Science and Social Studies

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
COPYRIGHT.....	iv
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	vii
VITA.....	xi
LIST OF TABLES.....	xv
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xvi
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND .....	1
Generation Y .....	2
Statement of the Problem .....	3
Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports Program Description .....	3
Purpose of the Evaluation .....	4
Evaluation Context.....	5
Evaluation Questions.....	6
Definition of Terms.....	6
Literature Review.....	8
Importance of 9th Grade .....	12
Implications for a Proactive Prevention Program .....	13
Male and female cell phone usage .....	13
Socioeconomic and ethnicity factors for cell phone usage.....	14
Teacher’s perception of cell phone within the classroom.....	15
Student’s relationship with their cell phone .....	16
Administrative perception and parental rights of a student’s cell phone.....	16
Cheating .....	18
Sexting .....	18
Cyberbullying.....	19
Positive Use of Technology .....	20
Historical Review of PBIS .....	21
Positive Behavior Intervention and Support .....	23

Tier One.....	24
Tier Two.....	24
Tier Three.....	25
Implementation Fidelity .....	26
Mobilizing staff perception.....	26
Managing resources.. .....	28
Identifying meaningful outcomes. ....	29
Establish and invest in schoolwide systems. ....	29
Select and implement contextually appropriate practices.....	30
Collect and use data to make decisions .....	31
Organization of the Study .....	32
II.    METHODOLOGY .....	33
Program Description .....	33
Implementation at high School H .....	33
Program rationale .....	34
Evaluation Design .....	35
Evaluation questions .....	35
Evaluation model. ....	36
Analytic Procedures.....	36
Data Collection Procedures and Instruments .....	37
Participants.....	37
Instruments and data sources. ....	37
Data collection procedures.....	37
Data analysis. ....	38
III.   RESULTS .....	39
High School H Demographics.....	40
Evaluation Question One .....	44
Evaluation Question Two.....	46
Evaluation Question Three.....	50
Evaluation Question Four.....	51
IV.   SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	52
Interpretation of Findings.....	53
Interpretation for Question One .....	53
ISS and OSS.....	54
Interpretation of Question Two .....	55
Students with disabilities .....	55
Ethnicity .....	56
Interpretation of Question Three .....	57
Interpretation of Question Four.....	57
Additional Interpretation from the Data.....	58
Limitations of the Evaluation.....	59
Implications for Practice .....	60
Future Research .....	61

Summary .....	62
REFERENCES .....	64
APPENDICES .....	70
A. Expectations Matrix .....	71

PREVIEW

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. High School H Student Enrollment .....	40
2. High School H Gender Totals.....	41
3. High School H Ethnicity Totals.....	42
4. College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) Scores .....	42
5. High School H Socioeconomic Status Totals .....	42
6. High School H Office Discipline Referrals, 2014-2016.....	44
7. Demographic data for ODRs for Cell Phones and 9th grade Students, 2014-2016.....	44
8. T-test: Number of Occurrences, 2014-2016 .....	45
9. T-test: Number of Days spent In-school Suspension or Out of School Suspension.....	46
10. Males and Females T-test results for High School H .....	47
11. T-test results for High School H for SWD Students and Non-SWD.....	49
12. T-test results for Ethnicity and ODRs for High School H .....	50
13. Number of ODRs: Free/Reduced Pay and Full Pay.....	51
14. High School H Tier Three Summary, 2014-2016.....	59



## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. Three tiered levels for PBIS.....	25

PREVIEW

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Classroom disruptions are a serious cause for concern for administrators in high schools. While behaviors can start as small infractions, they can quickly escalate to serious issues. A significant source of classroom disruptions is students' use of cellphones at school (Thomas & Orthober, 2011). Cell phones are reportedly in the hands of 78% of all teenagers (Madden, Lenhart, Duggan, Cortesi, & Gasser, 2013). Lenhart (2012) found that little difference is found between students who own a cell phone based on their socioeconomic status; however, the difference is found with cell phone usage based on gender and ethnicity. With the ever-growing number of users, the potential for misuse is growing as well. Lenhart (2012) reported 64% of teen's text during class, even though the cell phone policies clearly stated that they were not allowed. According to Humble-Thaden (2011), some administrators and teachers view cell phones as a deterrent to learning rather than an educational tool. A student who is texting, their cell phones ringing, or checking their social media, are common distractions related to inappropriate uses during the school day.

The inability for students to refrain from using their cell phones has forced school officials to implement school policies to address this specific problem. The National Center for Education Statistics (2013) reported that during the 2009-2010 school year "93 percent of public schools had limited the access to social networking websites and 91 percent had prohibited the use of cell phones and text messaging during school hours" (p. 84). The consequence for breaking cell phone rules can have serious effects on student success due to loss of time in the