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## School-Based Positive Behavior Support for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Problems: Implementation and Teachers' Experiences

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**Abstract.** Schools often need to implement the school-based positive behavior support (PBS) framework, especially if the school has students with emotional and behavioral problems. Teacher experiences in PBS provide precious information for the formulation of fidelity and sustainability in PBS. This case study research explored inclusive school-based PBS implementation, challenges, and needs regarding teachers' experiences. A focus group discussion was used as the data collection method. Eight teachers from five different inclusive schools that provide behavior support programs and who have students with emotional and behavioral problems were involved as participants. Data analysis procedures included open coding with Microsoft Word assistance, and then conducting in-depth analysis on each subtheme identified. Data analysis resulted in four findings. 1) Teachers can identify the behavioral, emotional, and learning behavior problems of students as part of their routine activities. 2) Teachers provide behavior support to students with emotional and behavioral problems in accordance with school policies or, if necessary, based on their own initiatives. 3) Tasks that pose a challenge for teachers include accurately assessing emotional and behavioral problems of students, dealing with severe behavioral problems, and collaborating with colleagues and parents. 4) Teachers need to develop their assessment skills to understand students' emotional and behavioral problems, come up with behavior support strategies, and collaborate with parents. The research results can serve as both theoretical and practical guidelines for determining how teachers' skills and school resources align with the successful implementation of PBS.

**Keywords:** inclusive schools; positive behavior support; students' emotional and behavioral problems; teachers' experiences

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## 1. Introduction

Emotional and behavioral issues are persistent issues that make it hard for an individual to live a normal life (Ogundele, 2018; Vaughn & Bos, 2014). Research has shown that Indonesia has cases of students with emotional and behavioral problems (Kumara et al., 2017; Saputra et al., 2017; Umami & Turnip, 2019). Emotional problems present as anxiety, feelings of sadness and hopelessness, high levels of fear, low self-esteem, and difficulty controlling emotions. Observed behavioral issues include hyperactivity, conflict, theft, rule-breaking, and lying. Social problems include being lonely, not having friends, having difficulty being accepted in a friendship, and other serious interaction issues.

Emotional and behavioral problems can harm individuals. These problems impact cognitive distortions, such as self-harm, anxious thoughts, and self-regulation difficulties (Kumara et al., 2017). It also affects language abilities, inattention, memory, learning commitment, and mood disorders (Marsh et al., 2019). Social problems can be seen among children in poor communication and social skills, a lack of concern for their surroundings, and making friends with other children with similar problems (Marsh et al., 2019). Frequent absences, rule-breaking (Finning et al., 2020), low learning engagement, and low commitment are repercussions of learning behavior issues (Mattison, 2015). Furthermore, research in Indonesian inclusive primary schools has shown that emotional and behavioral issues among students affect their school connectedness (Mahabbati et al., 2022).

Teaching emotionally and behaviorally disturbed students is challenging. Teachers struggle to use appropriate behavior interventions, involve students in learning, collaborate with colleagues, undertake professional development, and communicate with parents (Raudeliūnaitė & Steponėnienė, 2020). These students also increase teachers' anxiety (Mason & Matas, 2015), disrupt their well-being, and make them feel unqualified to handle difficult situations (Breeman et al., 2014). Because it is hard to understand the characteristics of these students, Indonesian teachers have used trial and error to address issues (Hapsari et al., 2020). The presence of these students has been linked to teachers and schools' struggles to maintain a good school climate and is positively correlated with school connectedness problems (Mahabbati et al., 2022).

Based on these issues, behavior support is needed in schools. Behavior support, a framework which is referred to as positive behavior support (PBS), is an important part of education for students with emotional and behavioral problems (George et al., 2013). PBS can transform a troubled school into a place where all students develop healthy social relationships and enjoy learning (George et al., 2013). The multi-tiered PBS system manages behavioral problems from prevention to cure (Mitchell et al., 2019; Swoszowski et al., 2013). PBS reduces behavior interventions and conduct issues (Gage et al., 2018; George et al., 2013; Lewis et al., 2017), school discipline violations, and poor academic performance at all levels (Lee & Gage, 2019). Multi-tiered PBS increases student proactiveness and obedience in learning, reduces disruptive behavior, and increases school belongingness (Allen et al., 2021).

Several studies in Indonesia have examined the experiences of schools that utilized PBS with programs involving living-values education (Apriani & Ariyani, 2017), class activities that provide emotional support for students (Anafiah & Andini, 2018), natural support for learning (Sartono, 2018), and anti-bullying (Prastowo, 2017). Positive behaviors learned include regard for diversity and social care (Sartono, 2018), respect for others and friendship (Anafiah & Andini, 2018), and anti-bullying conduct (Prastowo, 2017). School leaders who follow these programs provide an opportunity for teachers and staff to improve professionally (Sholikhah & Purwanta, 2020). Unfortunately, however, teachers still struggle to comprehend the emotional and behavioral problems of their students and how to intervene (Kartikawati et al., 2018). The studies discussed here explored service programs and teacher difficulties, but few examined teachers' PBS experiences.

The purpose of this study was to obtain comprehensive information about how behavior support is used in inclusive elementary schools in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and what teachers' experiences are of providing the service. This research explores several aspects. These include the characteristics of behavioral and emotional problems in students that can be identified by teachers, the implementation of school-based PBS regarding students' needs, teachers' experiences and challenges in providing daily behavior support to students with emotional and behavioral problems, as well as teachers' needs in implementing behavior support.

The study's findings can be used as a reference for future research and practice in developing behavioral support services, especially for schools with students who have behavioral and emotional problems. This is particularly relevant when considering the requirements for services that are in accordance with the characteristics and severity of the students' behavioral and emotional problems, improvement of procedures and strategies, teacher competencies, school support capabilities, and collaborative efforts.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Emotional and Behavioral Problems**

Emotional and behavioral problems persist in children with excessive intensity, frequency, and/or duration for at least six months (Ogundele, 2018). This disorder is characterized by a pattern of severe emotional and behavioral problems that interfere with intrapersonal, interpersonal, and social interactions (Ogundele, 2018) and can impair the academic and personal performance of children (Mitchell et al., 2019).

Internalizing and externalizing problems, as types of emotional and behavioral problems, are classified by how they affect others (Ogundele, 2018). Internalizing-problem behaviors, such as stress, worry, and social phobia, impact the individual. Externalizing-problem behaviors, such as aggressive behavior, fighting, and rule violating, can influence others.

## 2.2 Positive Behavior Support

PBS is an integrated school system with individually tailored intervention levels for behavior and social-emotional intervention (Horner & Sugai, 2018; Sugai & Horner, 2020). PBS is not a curriculum, technique, or program; rather, it is a framework that guides the implementation of a service so that it is accurate, sustainable, and evidence based (Sugai & Horner, 2020).

The implementation of school-based PBS involves a multi-tiered support system. This system can provide preventive and curative interventions and address behavioral treatment needs (Mitchell et al., 2019; Swoszowski et al., 2013). The primary level is for all students, the secondary level is for those at risk of emotional and behavioral issues or with mild disturbances, and the tertiary level is for those with moderate to severe disorders (Mitchell et al., 2019).

PBS procedures incorporate data-driven decision-making and principles of continuous service implementation (Sink et al., 2016). The procedures consist of: 1) identifying and assessing individual behavior; 2) developing clear and measurable behavior expectations; 3) implementing continuous services; and 4) enhancing behavior through monitoring and evaluation (Sink, 2016; Weist et al., 2018; Zaheer et al., 2019).

## 2.3 Teachers' Roles in Positive Behavior Support Implementation

Teachers play crucial roles in the implementation of PBS, from identifying and evaluating needs to planning, implementing, and evaluating services. PBS features that are systematic, procedural, and data-driven can assist educators in providing services. PBS is defined by outcome, process, and service content (Lane et al., 2014).

Teachers act as teacher-mediated interveners in PBS services (Vaughn & Boss, 2014). The teacher directs implementation services that employ multiple behavior-based approaches to learning, including direct instruction, modeling, role-playing, social storytelling, and others.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This qualitative study used an exploratory case study to investigate the research phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), and facts were explored to determine fascinating dynamics that answered the "how" question (Yin, 2018). As a dynamic phenomenon, the implementation of inclusive school-based PBS for students with emotional and behavioral problems and teachers' experiences thereof is an interesting topic to explore. This research describes the occurrence and cannot be generalized (Crowe et al., 2011).

### 3.2 Participants

This research took place in five inclusive schools (one public school and four private schools). The five schools were selected based on previous research and initial interviews with the school principals, who confirmed that the schools have students with emotional and behavioral problems and that they provide behavior support for them.

Criteria listed in an application to the principals to recruit participants included that participants had to be teachers at inclusive elementary schools with students with emotional and behavioral problems and who offer a behavior support program for them. Based on this, this research involved five support teachers and three classroom teachers as participants.

To ensure anonymity, the names of participating schools and teachers were coded as part of the informed consent for the research. The school codes are School A, School B, School C, School D, and School E. Participants' names were coded based on their position and their school's name (e.g., CA is the classroom teacher from School A, SA is the support teacher from School A etc.). The demographic details of the participants are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the participants**

School code	School status	Participant code	Participant position	Male/female	Age	Teaching experience (years)
School A	Public	CA	Classroom teacher	Female	25	2
		SA	Support teacher	Female	25	3
School B	Private	SB	Support teacher	Male	27	4
School C	Private	CC	Classroom teacher	Male	28	5
		SC	Support teacher	Male	34	11
School D	Private	SD	Support teacher	Female	33	10
School E	Private	CE	Classroom teacher	Female	41	15
		SE	Support teacher	Female	23	1

### 3.3 Data Source and Data Collection

In September 2022, all participants participated in WhatsApp group focus group discussions (FGDs) for two days that lasted four hours each. The FGD procedures included: 1) an introduction explaining the rules, research objective, and informed consent; 2) participant completion of the attendance list and demographic information; 3) questioning participants in accordance with the research theme; and 4) providing participants with a choice of responses via text or voice note. Procedure no. 2 was repeated on day two of the FGDs, and unanswered guiding questions were discussed.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

As a qualitative data analysis method, open coding was used to examine the data (Blair, 2015). The FGD data that were transcribed were coded. Direct participant data were used to avoid bias from presumptions or the researchers' prior knowledge of the research theme (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Multiple data sources, improved references, and research team discussions increased research reliability. Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis in Microsoft Word and Excel was used for coding. This method categorizes raw data in multiple ways and codes all selected data (Ose, 2016). The coding process involved six steps. 1) FGD audio and text were transcribed using Microsoft Word. 2) Data were read carefully to identify important sentences and remove unnecessary information. This reduction focused the study, increased data precision, sorted the data, and arranged it to support the findings (Blair, 2015). 3) The new "Comment" function

of Microsoft Word in "Review" was used to highlight and code important statements. 4) The coding results were put into a table in Microsoft Word with columns for "Page", "Code", "Text", and "Date" using the "View" → "Macros" → "View Macros" → "Extract Comments To New Document" → "Run" commands. Indonesian to English translation followed. 5) Researcher-created Excel tables were imported, with "School", "Page", "Code", "Text", and "Subtheme" used as column headings. 6) Microsoft Word was used to analyze the subthemes in more depth after sorting them into topics.

Table 2 shows an example of the Microsoft Word tabulation as used for the data coding.

**Table 2: Sample of data tabulation from coding**

School	Theme	Code /subtheme	Text (researcher translation)	Keywords
A	Characteristics of students with emotional and behavioral problems	Behavioral problems	<i>"child displayed aggressive behavior like yelling, striking, or pulling their teachers or friends"</i>	Hyperactive and aggressive
B	School-based PBS implementation	Multi-tiered system of school-based PBS	<i>"teachers have a duty to emphasize agreements established for activities in class and outside of class"</i>	Primary-level PBS
C	Teachers' experiences in implementing school-based PBS	Teachers' challenges	<i>"Parents are tough to work with, so the behavior program only works at school"</i>	Collaboration with parents

#### 4. Findings

This study explored how teachers implement school-based behavior support for students with emotional and behavioral problems. Table 3 presents the themes and subthemes yielded from data coding and analysis.

**Table 3: Themes and subthemes resulting from data coding and analysis**

No	Theme	Subthemes
1.	Characteristics of students' emotional and behavioral problems	Behavioral problems
		Emotional problems
		Learning behavior problems
2.	School-based PBS implementation	Identification and assessment of students' emotional and behavioral problems
		Multi-tiered system of school-based PBS
		Program monitoring and evaluation
3.	Teachers' experiences in implementing school-based PBS	Direct support from teachers provided to students
		Teachers' challenges
		Teachers' needs

#### 4.1 Characteristics of Students' Emotional and Behavioral Problems

Participants from all five schools reported that their schools had students with emotional and behavioral problems, which can be categorized into three categories: behavioral problems, emotional problems, and learning behavior problems.

##### 4.1.1 Behavioral problems

Participants reported on the following behavioral problems:

1. Hyperactive and aggressive behavior: *"The child exhibits behavior problems like hyperactivity, aggression ... He spends about two to five minutes walking around the study area during the lesson. At times, the child displayed aggressive behaviors like yelling, striking, or pulling their teachers or friends" (SA); "The child occasionally enjoys hitting their peers without cause" (SB).*
2. Destructive behavior: *"Even at the library, the kid disobeyed the rules by scribbling on tables, messing around on the teacher's computer, throwing books into the trash, failing to return books that had been taken, and spilling markers" (SB); "When he doesn't receive what he wants, he may easily erupt, screaming and throwing things at those nearby" (SC).*
3. Disruptive behavior: *"Child with initials A has behavior disorders such as being ignorant to their friends" (CC); "The child also liked to go to other classes during class time" (SB); "The child showed curiosity about the other sex, which made some friends – particularly male friends – uncomfortable. The child enjoys peering out the window during some lessons to visit her classmates in other classes" (CE).*
4. Forcing others to do what they want: *"If he wants to see a friend's toy, he snatches it, which damages the toy" (SD); "The child would ask the teacher for permission, and then shout after a friend was given permission to drink or use the restroom. If she were denied, she would scream until her request was granted" (SE).*

##### 4.1.2 Emotional problems

Emotional problems also appeared in behaviors, as indicated by participants:

1. Angry and irritable mood: *"Problem behavior experienced by the child includes unstable emotions, hyperactivity, social disturbances, mood swings ... Sometimes children show aggressive attitudes such as screaming, hitting, or pulling friends or teachers" (SA); "... they frequently miscommunicate, the kid is emotional, and he acts out frequently at school" (SC); "Kid (K) with emotional and behavioral problems. If something does not go according to his wishes, he will frequently and excessively yell and wail" (SD); "One of the child's unstable emotions was shown by an angry expression, shouting at friends, and asking for a fight" (SE).*
2. Feeling of anxiety: *"Student K had a severe fear of failing. The kid always adds, 'I lived in pain,' when he doesn't complete the homework precisely" (SD).*

3. Self-blame and hopelessness: *"When faced with challenges on assignments, Student K becomes very worried and constantly refers to himself as 'dumb, idiot, and suicidal' if he doesn't complete the task perfectly"* (SD).

#### 4.1.3 Learning behavior problems

Meanwhile, some students in each of the schools struggled with learning behavior problems, as explained by participants:

1. Breaking the rules: *"[Student] did not follow the rules, difficult to adapt to the situation ..."* (SA); *"In academic pursuits, the child did not want to follow directions, and they frequently disobeyed teacher instructions"* (SB); *"We hope the child will not be ignorant and will focus, but he always misbehaves"* (CC).
2. Off-task behavior: *"Child often ignores teacher directions and instead does what he wants, including playing by himself, painting, writing on surfaces, disturbing other students during sports and other class activities, and playing in the library"* (SB); *"The kid walked around the study room for two to five minutes while learning ..."* (SA).
3. Inattention: *"Student has trouble focusing and paying attention during classroom learning activities; he is frequently distracted"* (SC); *"The child was not focused on participating in learning"* (CE).

## 4.2 School-Based Positive Behavior Support Implementation

### 4.2.1 Identification and assessment of emotional and behavioral problems

According to participants, identification and assessment of students' emotional and behavioral problems in school start at the beginning of the school year: *"[Identification] was accomplished by observing students' behavior at school. By coincidence, Yogyakarta's psychological service has assessed our students having emotional problems"* (SA). Similarly, a teacher from School C stated: *"[Identification is carried out] when students start enrolling in school as new students or transfer students"* (CC). According to CE, the initial assessment is conducted by asking parents if they have received the student's psychological diagnostic results.

Furthermore, some participants made it clear that ongoing identification and assessment would take place in school. According to SA, they are already using *"observation to see the progress of the student's behavior"*. SD said: *"[We] discuss with the class educator or parents the development of children's behavior."* This process was described by the teacher from School B as *"reassessment"*.

Many participants described the identification and assessment processes, although their descriptions lacked sufficient clarity and specificity. For instance, SB explained that *"the steps are identifying the child's problems, observing sufficiently to see the progress of the child's behavior"*. Furthermore, CC stated: *"[In identification and assessment,] student data, parent readiness, and psychological diagnostic data are a few of the requirements that must be satisfied. The potential of each child's abilities is then explored through interviews and observations of all students."*

Psychologists' assessments of emotional and behavioral problems are used by some schools (Schools A, C, and E). Furthermore, Schools C and A investigate



students' data through parent interviews and observations of students' behavior in class (CC, SA).

#### 4.2.2 Multi-tiered system of school-based positive behavior support

PBS is often implemented in all participating schools using a multi-tiered support framework. The primary-level programs were expressly mentioned by participants from all schools, such as: promoting school-based programs in daily activities (Schools A and C), implementing positive behavior in daily activities (Schools A, C, and E), and implementing learning accommodations (Schools A and E).

The anti-bullying, kid-friendly, and culturally based activities are among the school-based programs offered by School A. SA said: *"Child-friendly schools promote acceptance of individual diversity in order to foster a friendly atmosphere free of bullying. Smiles, hellos, civility, and manners [are school attributes]. Students are instructed in good behavior and mutual respect."* Self-protection education is taught in School C as a school-based curriculum combining moral and ethical learning (CC, SC). Teachers from School E also mentioned that School E promotes self-protection education, literacy day, living values, and multicultural events programs.

Regular school events such as morning meetings and weekly assemblies serve to remind all students about the school-based program (Schools A, C, and E). Concerning this, participants stated: *"Principal and teachers are promoting many topics, such as anti-bullying behavior, in the classroom and during morning assemblies"* (SA); *"[The program is reminded on] the morning carpet and day carpet by discussing class dynamics related to rules and positive attitudes"* (CC); *"[The program is reminded by] focusing children's attention on the morning and day carpets"* (SE); *"[The program is reminded during] assembly, which include instruction on a particular contextual subject"* (SC).

Participants mentioned employing simple behavior modification techniques, including behavior contract (CA, CC, SC, CE, SE) and class rewards (SE). Behavior contract is given to students during regular activities on the morning and day carpets (CC, SC, CE, SE) and at the weekly assembly (CE, SE).

Schools A and E adopt learning accommodations. Examples of accommodations offered include groupwork in project-based learning (SE, CA); and favorable learning habits and chances for all students to share their ideas and work are provided at School A.

Teacher-led positive behavior at primary-level PBS is carried out at School A: *"Every morning the teachers are on duty to welcome students, [direct students to] practice the habit of shaking hands with teachers during daily assembly"* (SA). It is likewise practiced in School B: *"teachers have a duty to emphasize agreements established for activities in class and outside of class"* (SB). Schools B, C, D, and E implemented the primary level of PBS that involves peer-mediated behavior promotion, such as selecting "angel" friends who help to remind them of positive

behavior (School D), peer tutoring and developing cooperative learning activities in the classroom (Schools B and C), as well as student-led conferences (School E).

All participants said their schools use secondary or tertiary PBS without a system to differentiate. All schools provide tailored interventions for serious behavioral and emotional problems, but few identify tertiary or secondary intervention processes. Secondary/tertiary PBS begins with identification and assessment (Schools C and E). School C supports teachers assessing students through initial observation, document analysis, and discussions with classroom teachers, the vice-principal for student affairs, and the principal. Assessing and identifying students' problem behavior were stressed by School E's classroom teacher and support teacher.

All participating schools offer PBS individually for moderate and severe problems. Special class services are provided to students who need intensive behavior and emotional support (SA, CC, SC, SD). SD explained: "[School] provides clear boundaries of things that [students] are allowed and not allowed to do." "Any violations relating to bullying will be immediately followed up by the vice-principal for student affairs in the counseling room" (SA). According to the participating teachers from School E, serious cases are handled individually.

School psychologists (Schools B and E) and family psychologists (Schools A and C) assist students who need more services. School psychologists start with a teacher's report, a clinical assessment, and psychological intervention for serious behavior issues. School B has intensive psychological services for students, as stated by SB: "The school psychologist team accepts reports or complaints about students with serious behavioral issues."

All schools encourage teamwork. Participants from Schools A, C, D, and E emphasized parents' involvement in tertiary services. Parent-school collaboration includes sharing student psychological information, agreeing on program implementation, and discussing student development. All schools encourage special and general teachers to collaborate on assessments, case conferences, interventions, and student progress.

#### 4.2.3 Program monitoring and evaluation

FGD data show that PBS monitors student performance and program use. Many participants mentioned student development evaluation: "Psychologists come to speak with classroom teachers and special teachers about child development at school" (SA); "The teacher conducts assessments, making adequate observations to see how children's behavior develops. If a child needs additional help, the school team can provide reassessments, intervene, and provide evaluations" (SB); "The principal supervises teachers monthly and discusses student development in each class with classroom teachers. (?); Teachers especially discuss children's behavior development with classroom educators or parents" (CC). The stakeholders involved in monitoring and evaluating are school principals (School C), classroom teachers (all schools), special education teachers (all schools), professionals (all schools), and parents (Schools D and E).

To ensure that interventions are effective, monitoring and evaluation of program implementation-related areas are carried out, as stated by participant SA: *“monitoring and evaluation is carried out by the teachers involved, ensuring that the interventions that have been carried out are”*. Moreover, program monitoring and evaluation are conducted to reflect on and improve services: *“evaluation and training are also given to classroom teachers in enriching learning approaches that promote positive behavior”* (SC); *“The school makes attempts to supervise programs that focus on developing students’ positive behavior”* (CE).

Only the School C classroom teacher mentioned monitoring and evaluation. School C’s principal monitors PBS implementation monthly. Student behavior and learning dynamics are discussed weekly. They discuss student achievement and programs with all teachers and staff once a semester. School B monitors student behavior development using an assessment.

### **4.3 Teachers’ Experiences in Implementing School-Based Positive Behavior Support**

Participants shared their experiences with students’ behavior support needs. Experiences in this regard include how they support students, and what their own challenges and needs are.

#### *4.3.1 Direct support from teachers*

Emotional, cognitive, and social support help students with emotional and behavioral problems. School A teachers helped students express and communicate their emotions. School C teachers supported emotional and anxious students by acknowledging their feelings, listening to their concerns, and giving them time to calm down. SA explained that they help students to think about their behavior by teaching rules and proper behavior.

School B teachers let students choose activities and accompanied them when they are down. School C teachers encouraged students to express their ideas or needs, take initiative, be aware of their emotional state, focus and develop life skills based on their interests and talents (SC); assisted them in social activities (CC); and instilled social values in learning and social interaction (SC).

#### *4.3.2 Teachers’ challenges*

Identifying and helping students with emotional and behavioral problems, working with other teachers and parents, and managing psychological discomfort are some of the challenges participants have experienced. School A’s teachers said that it is hard to understand students’ feelings. School E’s teachers faced difficulties with behavior assessment tools and clinical data. *“We still haven’t found the right way to accompany and facilitate teaching and learning activities,”* said School B’s teacher. *“Difficulties are felt when a child cannot be controlled using the techniques we have taught for emotional regulation,”* said the School D teacher about implementing intervention techniques when students have emotional outbursts. Participants also experienced difficulties with intervention consistency (SE).

The next challenge experienced by participants is collaboration with classroom teachers or other teachers. In this regard, SB said: *“Other teachers have class*

*supervision duties and cannot focus on that child.*" CE stated that getting all teachers to support and agree with the behavior intervention was difficult. *"Parents are tough to work with, so the behavior program only works at school,"* said SC. The School D teacher struggled with parent collaboration. The school teachers said parents were less forthcoming about their child's condition.

The FGD results also revealed psychological issues. The School B teacher said managing students, especially those with emotional and behavioral problems, was exhausting.

#### 4.3.3 Teachers' needs

All participants agreed that PBS services for emotional and behavioral problems needed collaboration. They felt that teachers and parents had to participate in assessment, evaluation, and monitoring to collaborate in school. The School D teacher suggested collaboration on student assessment systems, intervention designs, and school support policies.

In addition, Schools A, C, and E teachers said that they needed more training on behavioral and emotional problems and effective interventions. In this regard, SA said: *"We need teacher training to understand students with emotional disorders."* Furthermore, SC said: *"Training is needed for classroom teachers and support teachers regarding children with special needs and how to handle them."*

## 5. Discussion

The participants' explanations of student behavior and emotional problems demonstrate their understanding. Teachers must identify students with emotional and behavioral problems because they work with students the most and influence their growth and behavior (Farmer et al., 2011). Although the accuracy of identification and behavior assessment has not been thoroughly researched, elementary schools must provide intensive assistance based on these techniques (Maggin et al., 2016). Identification and assessment teams must also be considered (Horner & Sugai, 2018). Teachers, especially at Tiers 2 and 3, need identification and assessment training and mentoring (Lewis et al., 2017).

The study found that at all five participating schools had students with behavioral, emotional, and learning behavior issues. Internalizing-problem behavior, which depends on the student's emotional state, is harder to recognize (Mitchell et al., 2019; Ogundele, 2018). Problem behavior can impair students' learning and their personal and functional abilities (Mitchell et al., 2019). Emotional and behavioral problems need to be identified using the appropriate instruments. This determines whether a student needs secondary (moderate) or tertiary (severe) treatment (Lane et al., 2014).

All participating schools implemented a PBS framework, even though School A (public school) did not explicitly mention it. The four private schools stated explicitly implementing PBS. PBS is a framework for student-centered behavior, social skills, and academic services (Sugai & Horner, 2020). PBS implementation

meets students' needs for services, program continuity, resources, and quality execution (Lindstrom Johnson et al., 2020).

Furthermore, every participating school promoted anti-bullying, a child-friendly school atmosphere, culturally based behavior programs, self-protection, living values, and multicultural activities. Elementary school students who follow school values behave better (Nelen et al., 2020; Sugai & Horner, 2020). All teachers should teach social and emotional learning behavior expectations (Nelen et al., 2020; Oliver et al., 2019). Social-emotional programs reduce classroom bullying and improve students' social skills (Yang et al., 2020). Furthermore, school engagement and student behavior are strongly correlated (Mahabbati et al., 2022).

Many of the participating schools used learning accommodations for classroom management as PBS intervention. School-based PBS relies on the proactive and preventive measures of the classroom management system (Nelen et al., 2020; Oliver et al., 2019). A well-run classroom fosters good student relationships, teaches social skills, has clear and reinforced behavior expectations, and enforces good behavior (Oliver et al., 2019).

None of the participating schools clearly distinguished between secondary and tertiary PBS implementation. However, participants mentioned a variety of secondary and tertiary services, such as guiding students in personalized services classes, setting up behavior contracts, and providing social and emotional support. In addition to the teacher's individual services, tertiary-level intensive services require professional assistance (Sugai & Horner, 2020). Participants also said that school psychologists (private schools) or family psychologists (public schools) provided individualized services. Students who show early signs of emotional and behavioral problems and are at risk of developing more severe problems receive behavior support at the secondary level, while those with clinically diagnosed disorders receive it at the tertiary level (Arora et al., 2019; Lane et al., 2014). Secondary interventions are most likely to be used in class and meet students' small-group needs (Cho Blair et al., 2021). Schools need a system to monitor student behavior to determine if they need level-appropriate or more intensive interventions (Cho Blair et al., 2021). Continuous behavior support improves teachers' behavior management skills (Lewis et al., 2017).

Participants also described their challenges, which included identifying behavior problems. Teachers' ability to identify and assess behavior problems is essential when making data-based decisions and setting measurable behavior goals (Nelen et al., 2020; Sink, 2016). Service success requires assessment (Lewis et al., 2017; Nelen et al., 2020; Sink, 2016). Assessments are used for screening, placement, and intervention (Weist et al., 2018) and sustainable data collection (Zaheer et al., 2019).

Participants struggled with behavior intervention, especially for severe behavior problems. Inefficient treatment by teachers often contributes to the problem (Cho Blair et al., 2021). Thus, teachers' integrated classroom services greatly influence students' positive behavior (Cho Blair et al., 2021; Oliver et al., 2019). Teachers can

consider school support, problem behaviors, and their own issues, such as anxiety and stress, when choosing treatments (Egan et al., 2019). The competences of teachers, along with interventions, students' needs and issues, classroom suitability, and school support, would affect PBS performance (Cho Blair et al., 2021).

Collaboration with the school team was also a challenge for the teachers in this study and a big issue in the PBS framework. Disagreements among teachers on behavior management could impede PBS (Mitchell et al., 2019). Schools often prioritize setting up services inside the school over working with outsiders (Nelen et al., 2020). In addition, parent cooperation is crucial to PBS success. Schools and parents must communicate about student-behavior expectations at home and at school (Strickland-Cohen et al., 2021). The interactive collaboration between school ecological stakeholders affects how well PBS is implemented for all students (Opartkiattikul et al., 2014). Conversely, the lack of support from these stakeholders is an obstacle to the success of PBS (Mitchell et al., 2019).

Implementation fidelity measures PBS success. PBS implementation and meeting all requirements measure fidelity (Nelen et al., 2020). Initial screening and behavior assessment assist those implementing PBS in comprehending cases; setting clear, measurable behavior expectations; providing dependable and consistent services; developing programs; and modifying student behavior through observation and evaluation (Sink, 2016; Zaheer et al., 2019). PBS fidelity begins with aligning student behavior with the knowledge and competency of teachers and school teams (Lewis et al., 2017). Strong government support and appropriate school leadership traits and policies guarantee the effectiveness of PBS (Cho Blair et al., 2021; Opartkiattikul et al., 2014).

This study advanced the knowledge of how to formulate school-based behavior support programs, especially for schools with students who have behavioral and emotional issues. Researchers, practitioners, and policymakers can employ the findings of this research to develop school-based behavior support programs. These programs will include the appropriate procedures and strategies, the characteristics and levels of emotional problems and behavioral problems in students, the development of teacher competencies in assessment and service provision, the school system support, and the collaboration needed among parents and other experts.

## **6. Limitations**

The study had limitations regarding the small sample of participants, which consisted of only eight teachers from five schools in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Participant status might not sufficiently represent the variety of schools and situations for teachers in other settings. As a result, it is not appropriate to generalize the findings of this study to other settings. It would be preferable to explore in depth other ways of collecting data, such as in-depth interviews and observations, to gain more authentic data. In addition, another study limitation was the data gathering method employed, where data were collected using FGDs only. Further research with a broader setting coverage that reflects the variety of

school settings and representative methodological variances is required. In addition, it is necessary to conduct more research with a focus on how to develop behavior support programs for schools that are appropriate for the particulars and needs of the designated study setting.

## 7. Conclusion

All the participating schools in this study used behavior support to respond to the emotional and behavioral problems of their students. The various types of problems that were identified by participants include behavioral problems, emotional problems, and learning behavior problems. The participants' experiences show that they support students who exhibit emotional and behavioral problems with their behavior, either in accordance with school policy or, if necessary, through improvisation. The implementation of school-based behavior support programs includes identifying and assessing the emotional and/or behavioral problem, setting strategies and procedures into practice within a multi-tiered system of support with less structure, and monitoring and evaluating how students progress over the period of the intervention. Teachers struggle to manage severe behavioral problems, assess students precisely, collaborate with other teachers, and work with parents. PBS must be used as an intervention framework by all stakeholders. However, this study indicated that managing school-based PBS requires a system that is adapted for all school conditions and needs. Every school should develop the consistency of PBS as a systematic and procedural framework for behavior intervention. They should also develop the standard of the school system's policies focusing on behavior support plans; and the quality of cooperation between the school, the parents, and other experts such as psychologists, psychiatrists, and special education professionals.

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## Appendix

### Questions discussed in the focus group

1. What kind of emotional and behavioral problems have students ever faced, or are facing in class, or among the students you support? Please identify one or more of the students that most impressed you in terms of emotional and behavioral issues.
2. In what ways do emotional problems and student behavior appear in detail?
3. Is there a school policy on behavioral support for students in your school?
4. How does the behavioral support policy address and deal with students' emotional and behavioral issues?
5. Do you have your own way, outside of the school's behavioral support policies, to address and respond to students' emotional and behavioral issues? Please elaborate.
6. How is the implementation of behavioral support aimed at all students?
7. How can school behavioral support practices be tailored to the level of student emotional and behavioral problems?
8. How are the results of behavioral support practices in your school monitored and evaluated?
9. What are the challenges you face in implementing behavioral support practices for students with emotional and behavioral problems?
10. What do you need for your tasks as a teacher to provide behavioral support programs for students with emotional and behavioral problems in school?