

Implementing a contextual fitting version of SWPBS in the French Community of Belgium and examining its impact on school climate, behavior problems, attendance and academic outcomes



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INTRODUCTION

On the one hand, among teachers, perceived behavior problems with students have been raising over the past few years. Dealing with behavior problems can influence the choice of a teaching career mainly in the first five years of employment [1,2]. Literature has also proved behavior problems to be a strong predictor of school drop out as well as truancy and poor academic results [3]. On the other hand teachers' expectations are not correctly understood by every students every time. This situation can lead to a feeling of unfairness on the students' side and influence school climate [4,5]. SWPBS [6] is nowadays being used in more than 23 thousand schools in the USA and in many European countries among which Finland, Denmark, Norway and closer to us The Netherlands. We will develop a pilot project in 5 schools of the French Community of Belgium.

GENERAL AIMS OF THE PHD PROJECT

This quasi-experimental research design aims at measuring whether the adapted version of SWPBS fits the school context, create a better quality of school climate, reduces behavior problems, increases attendance and academic outcomes in the school system of the French Community of Belgium.

THEORETICAL FRAME

SWPBS is a flexible and positive whole school approach based on a multi-tiered system of support taking into account the different components of a school - people, practices, results, settings and data - in order to put up evidence-based strategies. SWPBS and its strategies intend to create a safer climate and reduce behavior problems so that every member of a school can grow, learn/teach and live in the best possible conditions.

Research proved the efficacy of SWPBS regarding school climate and behavior. According to literature the feeling of belonging to a community and the fairness of the rules used by SWPBS should reduce truancy and consequently drop out too [3]. The time reduction for handling with less behavior problems should lead to increased academic outcomes directly linked to a longer time devoted to teaching activities.

ROLE OF CONTEXTUAL FIT IN THE EFFICIENCY OF SWPBS

Research and practice have recently showed the importance of the match between the choice of an intervention and the place where it is being used. If an intervention is to be efficient, its components and the "values, needs, skills and resources available in a setting" [7] have to be consistent. Otherwise it is the quality and the results of the intervention that can be jeopardized. This element has to be kept present to the minds of researchers and policy makers. For SWPBS in the French Community of Belgium, it concretely means that every SWPBS version will be different from one another. The version of SWPBS implemented in a specific school will have to be adapted to its own culture.

SAMPLE & METHOD

QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY:

SAMPLE:

- 5 pilot schools in the French Community of Belgium on a voluntary basis among the list proposed by the Ministry of Education
- 5 control schools with corresponding size, SES and population in the French Community of Belgium still on a voluntary basis



| VARIABLES | INSTRUMENTS | SCALE/MODALITY |
|-------------------|--|--|
| School climate | Georgia School Climate Survey Suite | Self-reported likert scale |
| Behavior problems | Behavior Referral Form, teachers' observations | Teacher reported evaluation and observations |
| Attendance | School records | |
| Academic Outcomes | State assessments | Continuous score in reading/math |
| Fidelity | Tiered Fidelity Inventory, School-Wide Evaluation Tool | Self-reported evaluation (TFI), external evaluator (SET) |

CALENDER

| | 2017-2018 | | | 2018-2019 | | 2019-2020 | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Intervention group (n = 5) | Pretest | SWPBS Green level | Post-test 1 | SWPBS Green and yellow levels | Post-test 2 | SWPBS Green, yellow and red levels | Post-test 3 |
| Control group (n = 5) | Pretest | / | Post-test 1 | / | Post-test 2 | / | Post-test 3 |

The different measures in the pretest will assess school climate, behavior problems, attendance and academic outcomes for the intervention and the control group.

The different measures in the different post-test phases will assess school climate, behavior problems, attendance, academic outcomes and fidelity for the intervention group. Fidelity won't be tested in the control group.

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